



## FACILITATOR VS. TEACHER

The distinction between teacher and facilitator can be understood by how participants receive information. The traditional, normative teaching approach views participants as “empty vessels” in which information is poured into students by teachers. A teacher-student dichotomy epitomizes the power relationship.

In contrast, a facilitator helps participants interpret the information presented by other participants. Facilitators do not use time to impart the “right answer”, but rather to create an environment that allows for the sharing of multiple perspectives and realities, mirroring what a respectful and equitable society looks like. In addition, facilitators manage group dynamics to best meet the participants’ needs.

In order to meet the needs of participants, facilitators need to be able to suspend judgment and meet people wherever they are in their own learning process. At times facilitators can be caught in their own judgments, such as thinking of participants as naïve, ignorant or stubborn. These judgements may reflect facilitators’ frustrations or stereotypes and can interfere with the ability to include everyone in the process. We endeavor to make the experience meaningful for all.

### **Facilitators have their own triggers:**

Triggers are experiences, incidents or words that elicit extremely strong emotional feelings. Triggers are unique to each facilitator and are based on life experiences and personal sensibilities. Facilitators openly reacting to triggers undermines a safe environment and can derail the discussion. Developing an awareness of personal triggers beforehand can help facilitators is an important step in managing group dynamics.

## FACILITATOR CORE COMPETENCIES

**Courageous** - Willing to engage. Everyone. And your own biases.

*“Be all things to all people.”*

**Capable** - Be Curious. Trust the Curriculum.

*“Be quick to listen, slow to speak.”*

**Culturally Intelligent** - Be teachable and sensitive.

*Oneness = Unity with diversity*

**Confident** - Begin with preparation. Don’t be derailed.

*“Always being prepared...”*

**Advocate** - Be willing to go there. Enter into the needs before you.

*“he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”*

**Shared Leadership** - Don’t go alone. Share the load. Multiply.

*“Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

## FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

There are many important behaviors and skills facilitators can employ to help guide a group towards a goal or learning point.

- **Bridging** - Making connections, tying one learning point to another
- **Checking for understanding** - making sure directions and questions are clear
- **Clarifying** - interpreting, clarifying misunderstandings, defining terms
- **Encouraging** - Prompting, nonjudgmental responses, open-ended questions, respectful probing
- **Evaluating** - asking questions that encourage group members to examine an issue from a different perspective
- **Gatekeeping** - managing time and group participation
- **Giving** - judiciously offering facts or personal experience to clarify a point
- **Modeling** - demonstrating a measured level of personal sharing, encourages participation
- **Naming Feelings** - interpreting and acknowledging emotional energy in the group
- **Orienting** - bring the group back to tasks, reiterating the question or topic
- **Resolving** - conciliating difference, cooperative problem solving
- **Seeking** - Asking for clarification, suggestions and more information
- **Summarizing** - pulling it all together, restating important points

## SAMPLE SESSION SCHEDULE

Template for a session lasting 1 hour 45 minutes

### Gather and Connect (5:00)

#### Getting Started (5:00)

- Highlight Core Value  
Read Key Quote
- Read or Paraphrase Session Overview
- Read or Paraphrase Session Aims
- Read Key Text (Great opportunity to delegate and get others engaged)
- Prayer (Another great opportunity to delegate)

#### Biblical Exploration: (30:00)

Questions around the Key Text that help explore the topic and core value from a Gospel center.

#### Skills building (20:00)

- Rules
- Confrontation Guidelines

#### Discussion (30:00)

- Discussion questions from weekly reading and core value
- Questions for reflection with ministry leaders, if consists of or includes leaders (10:00)

#### Reflection (10:00)

Think through the session or the previous weeks and note where you are on the journey

#### Wrap Up (5:00)

- **Next Steps** Personal reflection questions for next week's reading
- **Experience** Plan an action or experience that your group can do together or as individuals to further their understanding of the core value.
- **Prayer** challenge for the week