

# Facilitate for Impact

## Module 4 Transcript

Hey there, welcome back. Welcome to module four. Now, let's be honest.

Adults can be some of the hardest learners to work with, and they bring a lot of experience to the table, which is a blessing, but it can also be a barrier. I mean, depending on how long they've been doing their job, some may have actually forgotten how to learn something new. That might sound ridiculous, but think about it.

When we stop learning, we stop growing, and when we stop growing, we lose that natural curiosity that keeps us open to new ideas. We slip into the way we've always done in the abyss, and we stay there sometimes, unless something breaks badly enough to force us out. Now, let's also face it.

Sometimes our brains just feel full, like, please don't make me learn one more thing. We get overwhelmed, we get tired, and maybe even a little skeptical that whatever's being taught maybe doesn't even apply to us. And that's where we, as facilitators, come in.

Our job is to help adult learners remember how to learn, to help them celebrate what they do know, and just as importantly, gently remind them how much they don't know. Now, we can't magically create self-awareness in one session, but we can absolutely create the right environment for it to grow, and that starts with one word, engagement. And engagement isn't optional.

It's everything. To engage adults, we have to tap into what motivates them. Remember those three things we talked about with SDT, those components, competence, autonomy, relatedness.

They are your best friends here. Start by letting your learners know that you see them. Show them you see them.

Recognize their experience, their success, their recent promotions, whatever makes them feel valued. Make them feel confident and respected. This can be challenging if you're facilitating a virtual learning session, especially if it's a large group.

Use the technology that you have to help you. Ask those who are present and have expertise in a particular area to raise their hand, their virtual hand, or type me in the chat box or something similar to that. Ask who knows what, who has mastered what, who's an expert in what area, and then demonstrate that you're learning right alongside them.

You don't have to say it. Just show it. Ask questions.

Be curious. Let them see that you value their insights too. If someone shares a great idea, say that.

Wow, Jonathan, that's a brilliant idea. I'm definitely going to try that one. Or if it's a virtual setting, Jonathan just shared a brilliant idea in the chat box, and then repeat it out loud for everybody to hear.

Give them choices throughout the session, how they participate, which examples they connect to, even how they share feedback. Adults love autonomy. It's one of those three big components that we looked at.

It signals respect. It gives them choices. It gives them control.

Even in that virtual session, you can let them choose how they share ideas or ask questions, either in the chat box or raise their hand, unmute, ask it out loud. Work with a moderator or a producer who can help you keep an eye on the chat and the Q&A functions. Make sure that the learners know how to send private messages to the moderator.

Those types of things. Share the learning strategies that typically lead to success in the course or session you're facilitating, and invite the learners to reflect on how they might use those same approaches. Offer real insight into what's worked before.

What have past participants done to succeed? How have they prepared? Were there any tips or advice that helped them along the way that you can share with the learners in your current session? Create space for learners to share their own learning challenges. But set the tone first. And this isn't about, I'm not good at math or I don't take good exams.

Instead, guide them toward more constructive reflections. Like, I struggle to focus on complex topics when a large group is around. Or, I find it harder to learn in noisy environments.

Give them an outlet for sharing those learning challenges. And setting some gentle boundaries about negativity and self-defeating talk can help you keep the discussion open and productive. But giving them the option to share those learning challenges puts it out there, lets them see they're not alone.

And it may even help them with some insight from someone else in the group that has experienced that same challenge but overcome it. And then finally, make them feel like they belong. Relate to them.

Smile. Show that you're genuinely glad they showed up. Because if they feel like they belong, they'll lean in instead of tuning you out.

Now, if you're working with your own team or a group within your organization, you might want to consider giving them a short, non-graded pre-test that ties to the learning outcomes. It's a simple way to help learners see what they already know and what they don't. If your organization uses an LMS, check with your course provider.

They may already have a way to build one for you. Or they can show you how to upload one you've created yourself. And we're not talking about 100 question exams.

Think more like 10 to 12 thoughtful questions that keep people reflecting on the topic before the session even starts. Now, if you're working with a group you don't know, maybe

you're volunteering or it's a conference or it's a one-off workshop, you're going to have to do a little recon first. Ask for the attendee list.

Look at the roles and the departments. Look at the areas of expertise. Now, you're not stalking.

We're not talking about stalking them and looking at all their socials and all that. We're talking about preparing. So looking at those roles, looking at the departments, maybe even if you can get the information, figure out how long they've been doing their current job.

And if you can't find that information ahead of time, in the moment when the course starts, when the session starts, ask in the moment, what made you choose this session? What are you hoping to learn? What are your interests about this topic? What about the title of this session sparked your interest? If it's virtual, ask learners to put their answers in the chat feature so that everybody can see that they're not alone. Maybe it's a large group and you can't really ask individuals those questions. Let them raise their hand.

Raise your hand if you're here because you love learning. Raise your hand if you have made a few, if it's a leadership session. Let's say, raise your hand if you've made a few leadership mistakes along the way.

Raise your hand if you've already mastered leadership, but the title of this session sounded better than the one across the hall. Things like that. And those quick moments can build connection.

They can also give you some valuable insight that you can use to tailor the conversation throughout the session. Now, even though you can't rewrite your session plan on the fly, you can adjust the emphasis. So, if most hands go up for I've already mastered leadership, we can skip some of the basics and dive more into some of the innovation.

But if hardly anybody's hand went up, now we know that they're newer and we need to build more context and focus more on the fundamentals. So, we have to get them in the right frame of mind, the right mindset. Engagement's not just about attention.

It is about that mindset. And here's one of my favorite techniques for opening up minds early in a session. And bonus, it works for a virtual session or live sessions.

So, either give them a handout or have them make one where they've just got three simple columns. And we're going to label those columns before, questions and concerns, and then after. And then ask them in that before column, write down anything they think they know about the topic.

Give them time, give them a few minutes or two, depending on how large the group is and what the topic is. Give them some time to fill in that column, everything you know about the topic. And then in the second column, ask them to write down any questions they have, any concerns they have, anything they're unsure about, anything that they're curious about.

And then we're going to leave that third column blank for right now. Give them some time to do that. This small step does big things.

It validates what they already know, so that goes to competence. It gives them permission to wonder, which is autonomy. And it sparks self-awareness.

And here's a little psychological bonus. Once we write down a question, our brains want to find the answer. So this exercise keeps them tuned in, because they want to answer those questions that they wrote in that middle column.

Few things will pry open a closed mind, like the desire to cross something off their list. And at the end of the session, circle back. Have them pull out that sheet or that handout and dig into the after column.

Have them note their insights in that after column. What are the new insights? What are the aha moments they experienced? What techniques are they going to apply? And then lastly, have them go back to that center column and write down the answers or the resources for the answers to the questions and concerns that they put there. And then you have the opportunity to address any concerns or questions that didn't get covered in the session.

If you don't have time in the session, you may have those conversations sidebar. There's still valuable conversations to have. So that exercise is simple.

It's powerful. And it brings everything back full circle, turning participation into reflection and reflection into action. All right.

So we're at the learner prompt time. Learner prompt number four in your workbook is going to prompt you to conduct a start, stop, continue activity. And I'm going to encourage you to do that.

It is a wonderful way to figure out what you need to do, what maybe you need to stop doing, and then celebrating what you're already doing that is working or in keeping with the techniques that we talked about. Now, when adults feel seen, when they feel respected and invited to contribute, they're going to engage. When they engage, they'll learn.

When they learn, they'll grow. And that is the magic of facilitation, helping people remember how to learn. We'll see you in the next module.