

Facilitate for Impact

Module 6 Transcript

Welcome back to Facilitate for Impact. This is module six. And knowing what motivates adults to learn is one thing.

Knowing how to use that knowledge in real time in a room full of different personalities and learning styles, and I already know this kind of attitude is a whole nother story. And that's where this module comes into play. We're gonna take self-determination theory and turn it into something that you can actually apply in your facilitation sessions.

Now, every facilitator has their own rhythm and personality and your approach to applying self-determination theory should reflect that. There's no single formula. There are strategies that consistently help adults feel more in control and more capable and more connected.

There's not a cookie cutter approach here. You have to adjust it to fit your style and your personality. Now, we're gonna walk through all three categories of self-determination theory, autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

And I'm gonna share techniques that work in classrooms, corporate settings, virtual sessions, and even short conference breakouts. So use what fits your style and your learner's needs. All right, so let's talk about supporting autonomy.

Before and during the session, give your learners options. Let them choose whether to work solo or in pairs or with a group. Forcing a lone wolf into a work group is almost guaranteed disengagement.

If it's a virtual session, set up some virtual breakout rooms so they can choose to work with others if they want to, but then they can also choose to work on their own. The breakout rooms will just help those that want to work with someone else be able to connect with them easily. Emphasize personal goals.

Remember the questions we talked about in module four when we were discussing how to prepare. If you haven't already, ask your learners why they're in your session. What made them sign up? What made them choose you? Was it a choice? Was it a requirement? Once you know, help them connect what they're learning to their own goals.

That connection builds ownership. Avoid controlling language. Things like, write this down or put your phone away or sit here.

All of those sound a little too much like high school. And instead of framing instructions as directives, let's try framing them as invitations. You might want to jot this down.

This next point is pretty complex. Let's try to focus for the next few minutes or something like that. Not write this down, do this, don't do that.

All of those things take their choices away and lead to disengagement. Give them flexible prep work. If pre-reading or prep of some sort would be helpful, give them options.

Maybe a short article or a video or a podcast, different paths to the same goal. For accountability, you can ask them to jot down two or three questions that they learned when they read that article or watched that video. That way they walk in ready to talk about the topic, but it still gives them choices they're still in control.

And yeah, sometimes that means a little legwork, like asking the host organization for the attendee list ahead of time, so you can send out that pre-class assignment. You might remember that from module four when we talked about it, but the payoff is that learners arrive more ready, more confident, and more engaged. And we focus on giving them choices.

We've just upscaled our learning experience tremendously. Now to support competence, celebrate their superpowers. During the introductions, invite each person, tell us a skill they've mastered or something that they're an expert at, something that they're proud of.

It might be, you know, I'm great at diffusing conflict, or I can read people quickly, things like that. But those public acknowledgments instantly boosts competence and primes the room for peer respect, which shoots your engagement way up. Foster a growth mindset.

I mean, after a break, maybe try asking learners to share a nugget of something you've learned with the person next to you, or jot it on the back of your name card. That tiny moment of reminding them something that they have already learned validates growth, reinforces that learning, and it quietly says, you know what? You're doing great. This was a good choice to be here.

Let's keep learning. Remember, it's about them. Your expertise matters, but your learners' experience matters more.

Your job isn't to outshine them or to prove how much you know. It's to validate what they already do well while introducing new ideas that stretches them even further. Balance that confidence with humility.

And then there's relatedness. We need to encourage reflection. I suggest skipping that generic end of class, how did I do kind of survey.

Instead, ask your learners to reflect on their growth. What's one idea you're taking with you, or what felt most relevant to your work today? Those reflections build connection between the learning and their real world, and that's really gonna tell you as much as any how did I do survey. Did you got learners in your group that can't come up with something that they've learned? You know you didn't do a very good job, right? But if they're all like, oh, well, I've learned this and this, and you know that your message, your approach was successful.

Respect those quiet learners in your group. Don't call them out in front of everyone ever. Don't ever call out that wallflower.

Check in with them privately, maybe during a break. Respect those quiet learners. Don't call them out in front of everybody.

Don't ever do that. That is a quick trip to disengagement for that person. Instead, check in with them privately during a break or during an exercise.

Ask them if they have any questions or if there's a way that you can make participation more comfortable for them. That single act of respect can open the door for future engagement, and it can keep them engaged with you through the whole thing versus them shutting down because you're forcing them out of their comfort zone. Be thoughtful about your groups.

Unless group work is absolutely necessary, let people choose how to engage. We've mentioned that. For the love of adult learning, skip that.

Go around the room and tell everybody, introduce yourself kind of circle. That's uncomfortable for a lot of people. Find creative alternatives.

Quick partner interviews or paired intros or shared sticky note walls where introverts have an opportunity to meet other people but not put themselves on display in the spotlight. The same with working in exercises or activities. Give them options.

Don't force them into groups or pairs. Use extrinsic rewards wisely. Recognition's great, but too much of it, too much focus on those external rewards like scores or certificates or passing the exam, that can actually undercut those intrinsic motivations.

And remember, we said intrinsic motivation is what comes from within. It's what's inside of them. It's what's in you that motivates you personally based on your values and your experiences.

Acknowledge effort, but make sure that the lie stays anchored in that personal growth and pride, not just in those external validations. Let's try to foster early engagement. If possible, connect with your love before the class even starts.

Maybe it's a pre-session chat thread or a social media post with some comments or maybe even a mini prompt, something like share one thing you hope to take away from this class. Even if it's right before the session, even if it's you getting there early enough to interact with your learners before the session starts to have some of these conversations, what do you hope to take away or how do you feel about being here this morning? Are you excited to be here? Things like that helps build community early and helps them see their peers as resources, not rivals, helps them see you as a resource, not just the person standing in front of the room. Share your success strategies.

Open your sessions with practical advice from others who've succeeded in that topic or course. Ask your learners how they might personalize those strategies that you share with them. So, for instance, when I'm teaching certification courses, there's an exam involved and sometimes it's a pretty challenging exam.

So I will share with the learners right off the bat some of the exam strategies that others have found successful and then I'll give them time to think about that and then I'll say, OK, how can you use that strategy? How can you personalize it to fit your needs? It creates calm

for the anxious. It creates motivation for those that are competent. So it's autonomy, competence and connection all in one thing.

And let them tell stories. Let them share their experiences. Adults love sharing their experiences.

Give them room to contribute examples and stories and lessons learned. If you have developed your curriculum so robust that there is no time for a learner sharing in your time slot, you need to take a different strategy and a different approach to developing your curriculum. There has got to be room for those stories and lessons learned.

Facilitation is never about proving how much you know. It's about unlocking what they know and then weaving it all together. So you want to think of yourself as less of a teacher and more of a guy.

You're not there to fix, rescue or preach. Please don't do any of those things. You're there to create space for discovery and being intentional about how you apply these STT principles, empower learners to create their own experience, to learn from their own experience.

It gives them room to self-advocate and explore. And small, consistent actions build lasting motivation far better than those one-off enthusiasms. When learners feel autonomous, confident and connected, they don't just learn, they transform.

I'm going to encourage you to tackle the learner prompt. And before we move on to the next module, just want to wrap up with this. When we intentionally apply self-determination theory, we create learning experience that feel human, not canned, not forced.

Just think about this. Autonomy fuels ownership. Competence builds confidence and relatedness sparks connection.

And when all three of those collide, that's facilitation magic. So that's it for this module. Remember, great facilitation isn't about teaching perfectly.

It's about sparking growth. And we will see you in the next module.