

Facilitate for Impact

Final Reflections - Transcript

Hello and congratulations on completing this course. I want to take a few minutes to share a few final thoughts for my own facilitation journey. Throughout these modules we focused on practical tools and strategies that you can use to create meaningful learning experiences.

But great facilitation isn't just about techniques, it's also about mindset and awareness and the small choices we make in the moment with our learners. So in this final conversation I want to expand on a few ideas we touched on in the course and share a couple of examples from my own experience that might be helpful as you continue to develop your own facilitation style. In module one I encourage you to experiment with how you take notes.

Try something different and that concept can be very powerful. A spin on that strategy that I often use when facilitating multiple day sessions is encouraging learners to sit somewhere different each day. It may sound simple but sometimes looking at the same information from a different perspective helps your brain untangle what it's what it's seeing and hearing.

It's similar to working a jigsaw puzzle. Sometimes you just need to move to the other side of the table to see a piece and where it fits. And when something really isn't making sense, walk away for a bit and come back later.

Let your brain reset. Those small shifts can often make a big difference and they're habits with encouraging your learners to develop as well. In module three we talked about self-determination theory and the three fundamental learner needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

When those needs are met, motivation shifts from have to to want to. Here's the key point. Everyone wants some level of control over their experience.

Even if you can't design an elaborate choice activities, small choices matter. I once facilitated a four-week leadership program with a 12 learners and because of time constraints and a small venue, I couldn't build in all the interactive elements that I normally would. But I still built in small choices.

For example, I gave them colored index cards to use for to create flashcards and I let them choose their colors. After breaks, I would draw a name from a cup and that person would decide whether we started with the recap or just jump right back into the curriculum. Those may seem like small things but they created camaraderie.

They gave each learner a moment of control and it kept the energy in the room moving. So autonomy doesn't always have to be big to be meaningful. In module six we talked about the quiet learner.

The one who doesn't raise their hand or volunteer much for group activities. They avoid eye contact because they don't want to be called on. Two important things to remember with this quiet learner.

First, do not label them. Do not put them in a box. Don't assume you know why they're quiet.

Don't assume they're always quiet. I once attended a training shortly after placing my mother in hospice and normally I'm an active learner asking questions and participating and everything but that day just didn't have the bandwidth. I was quiet.

I was still listening. I was still learning and I was still absorbing the material but I was not my typical learner self that day. Somebody had labeled me as disengaged or introverted.

They'd have been completely wrong. So avoid those assumptions. Don't assume you know what's going on in someone's world.

Let them learn the way they want to learn and then secondly let that quiet learner know privately that you're available if they want to talk during a break or after the session. That simple invitation can mean a lot. I try to gather cell phone numbers early in the session and sometimes that's how I reach out to that quiet learner with a text message that just says I support you in learning however you learn best but I'm here for you if you need me.

Let me know. Something like that. In module seven we talked about self-directed learning as a mindset.

Anytime you watch a video or learn how to do something or read a how-to guide that's self-directed learning and more and more learners prefer it because they have control over the pace and the timing. That's why with many of my private clients I also include follow-up work between sessions. After we learn the fundamentals together give participants a list of learning options, self-work options, articles, videos, conversations, exercises and ask them to choose two or three of those before our next session and then when we meet again everybody shares what they've learned on their own.

Two things make this work well. First that list of options has to be diverse. It can't be all articles or all videos.

It's got to be diverse and two or thirds there needs to be accountability, group accountability, personal accountability, some way of validating that they completed their self-work and are given an opportunity to share what they learned. In module eight we talked about the four steps of self-directed learning. Assessing readiness, setting goals, engaging and evaluating but remember this isn't a checklist it's a cycle so it's what we keep going.

So think about your own watch later list on YouTube or TikTok. If you're like me it's a long list because we all say things that we want to learn but until we have the time and the tools for the mental space we're not ready to engage. We're not ready to learn.

Readiness matters more often than we realize so don't forget to factor that into your facilitation plans. We also talked about gamification and I am a huge fan of that when it's well done. In a one week long leadership program with 43 managers I designed scavenger hunt activity where participants could choose how they completed it.

They could complete it entirely online, entirely in person or in the combination of the two and they loved having that choice. It respected different learning preferences while still achieving the learning outcomes and that choice made it work. We also talked about Bloom's taxonomy.

We explored how it reminds us that adults don't want to be filled with information they want to be equipped with it. They want to be able to use it so when you design learning experiences with Bloom's levels in mind naturally shift from talking at the learners to guiding them through the discovery which is huge. Balancing those levels can be challenging though especially when learners arrive with different knowledge levels.

It can be one of the most challenging things that you deal with having a learner that is maybe stuck on level one where other learners in the group are in a different level. They've progressed to level two or three. Managing that so that the level one learners don't feel embarrassed because they haven't moved past that yet and managing it so that the level two or three learners don't get bored because you're still talking about or you're still trying to help the level one learners move on.

So it can be really difficult. It's one of the hardest things that we do as facilitators and I'm always happy to help you think through strategies. We'll have more time to talk about it today but reach out if that is one of the areas that you struggle with.

Now I want to answer the question I'm asked most by new facilitators and that question is what is the most important thing to do when facilitating a session? Now my answers changed over the years. Early in my career it's about covering the material. Later it was about engagement techniques and not lecturing all the time but for the past decade the answers stayed the same.

The most important thing we can do as a facilitator is be yourself. Don't pretend to know something you don't. Don't pretend to be something you're not.

Don't try to perform a version of yourself that isn't natural. Authenticity builds trust, confidence and connection. I facilitated sessions where I was far outside my comfort zone and way outside my knowledge depth.

The only reason those sessions didn't fall apart was because I stayed honest and authentic with the learners and fortunately for me those clients invited me back but it was because I maintained that authenticity. Now if you want to know how to tell if you're being authentic or not because sometimes we don't know. Sometimes we don't realize we're putting on a facade.

If you want a little tidbit, a little tip for knowing when you may be not as authentic as you should be. You get through with a session and you do one of these but last person left and you're like that that means in a lot of cases that you've been doing something or being something or acting in a way that's not natural to you. When we act naturally, when we are authentically us, it doesn't take much energy.

When we try to be someone we're not, it takes a huge amount of energy. So if you get to the end of a session and you are extremely spent or just exhausted, look back on your

interactions and I bet you will find that there was at least some part of the facilitation process that you were not being authentic with. Something to think about.

Facilitation isn't about having all the answers. It's about creating the space where learning can happen and if you can do that thoughtfully, intentionally, and authentically, you'll make a difference in every room you walk into. Thank you for spending this time learning with me.

I'm already looking forward to our next learning adventure.