

Certification Facilitation Tips

Improving School Climate

Be sure the room is set up for dialogue to occur – this includes how the learners are grouped (you may need to create the learning groups so learners are nudged into their stretch zone and interact with different colleagues)

Know the desired “take away” for the learning task – this will help in deciding how much time to devote to each stage of processing

Remember – this is facilitation, not presentation. The goal is to be the “guide on the side”, NOT the “sage on the stage” – the focus should be on the learning, not the teaching; ask the question, step back and let the group engage in the learning

There is a difference between an “icebreaker” and a “warm up” – whereas an icebreaker is designed to create connections between group members and need not be connected to the learning, a warm up is designed to create connections between group members and with the learning to come

Stay out of the way of the learning – be sure everyone has the tools they need to complete the tasks given, be accessible, keep track of the energy of the group, but don’t hover to “make sure the groups are doing their work”

It’s okay to let learners struggle – true moments of learning always occur when learners are challenged in their thinking

The facilitator does not need to answer every question asked; turn it back on the learners (other than questions about the task itself and any confusion over directions)

There is a difference between an “activity” and a “learning task” – a learning task is an open question posed to a group of learners with the tools they need to respond; it involves interaction with the content and engagement in dialogue with other learners

When engaging groups is dialogue in small groups, facilitators need to be very aware of time and group energy; we don’t want to cut dialogue (and learning) short yet at the same time we don’t want to have small group conversation extend too long and have learners lose energy for the content

Every slide does not need to include an opportunity for questions and/or comments; some slides are information slides (not many, but there are some!) and are more impactful when the information is shared without embellishment

“Does anyone need more time?” to check in with learning groups and see they are ready to bring the conversation back to the group level while still allowing for more time if needed

Get comfortable with the silence – “3 Before Me” is a good reminder when deciding when to jump in with your own response

After small group or partnered learning tasks, we don’t necessarily need to get feedback / hear from every person or every table; highlights from individuals will provide a synthesis of the learning for the group

What are your questions? – This is a great open-ended question that invites dialogue and makes it safe to have a question. It is very helpful to ask this question after giving instructions to allow for any needed clarifications.