

Facilitation Skills Handouts for Class Participants

Apply Questioning Techniques

Technique	Definition	Examples
1. Direct	<p>The facilitator directs a question at a learner/group</p> <p>Ask direct questions when you know the person or group can respond</p> <p>Refer to the learner/group by name</p>	<p>Jane, tell me, what is the definition of training?</p> <p>For the folks at this table, what are the 6 steps of the learning strategy?</p>
2. Overhead	<p>The facilitator asks a question that anyone is free to answer</p> <p>Ask overhead questions to generate random responses from the group</p> <p>If a few learners start to answer most of the questions, change questioning techniques</p>	<p>What is the definition of training?</p> <p>What are the 6 steps of the learning strategy?</p>
3. Relay	<p>The facilitator relays a question from one learner/group to another learner/group</p> <p>Ask relay questions to draw upon the knowledge and experience of other learners</p> <p>If you do not know the immediate answer to a question, this technique gives you time to formulate an answer</p>	<p>Group 5 has asked a challenging question. I have a feeling that others have dealt with the same situation. Group 2, what experience can you share about this situation?</p>
4. Reverse	<p>The facilitator returns a question back to the learner/group who asked it</p> <p>Ask reverse questions to challenge learners and generate greater discussion</p> <p>If you do not know the immediate answer to a question, this technique also gives you time to formulate an answer</p>	<p>John, that's a great question. Before I answer, tell me what do you think?</p>

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Handle Challenging Questions

Question Type	Tips
1. Know-it-All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer briefly, and then move on to the next question.
2. Off-the-subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask if anyone else has a similar concern, and if they do, answer the question briefly• If not, ask if you can hold the question until the end, “if there is time”- Use Parking lot• Tell the questioner that you hadn’t expected a question such as the one posed during this presentation but that you’d like to discuss it with them later, one on one. They’ll usually be satisfied by the personal attention.
3. Limited Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to bridge the question to the larger issue of concern• Ask if anyone else has the same concern and wait for a response; if no one responds, address it briefly then offer to meet one on one afterwards to discuss the question. Then break eye contact and move on to another question
4. Long-Winded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use body language to try to get the listener to cut to the chase. Nod your head to indicate that you understand the question, back away from the questioner a bit, or break eye contact and look back towards the rest of the group to signal that you are ready to answer.• If needed, interrupt politely by saying something like, “Excuse me, but I think I understand your question to be...”• Capture highlights on white board or flip chart so that they know you heard them.
5. Hard-to-Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick one phrase or part of the question that you did understand and use it to frame a new question
6. Bundled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answer the questions you remember, answer the last one, answer the most important one, or ask the questioner to repeat the questions slowly so you can write them down• Defer some of the questions. E.g. “if I’ve understood you correctly, you’ve asked me four great questions. Let me answer the first two and come back to the other two later on if we have time.”

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Identify Non-Verbal Behavior

Precautions

1. An isolated non-verbal behavior is not usually reliable. A number of non-verbal cues are more meaningful than one alone (e.g. crossed arms alone may mean nothing, but a combination of crossed arms, downcast eyes, and facing away from the facilitator is more likely to have meaning.)
2. People have non-verbal behaviors that exist as part of their “personality” (e.g. someone leaning back from the table may be rejecting the message, but another person doing the same thing may simply be relaxing.)
3. If more than one person is communicating a message, it is more likely to be meaningful (e.g. if three or four people look bored and restless, the facilitator should be more concerned than if only one person looks this way.)

Non-verbal cues

There are numerous non-verbal cues in a room at any one time. Even a highly perceptive facilitator can expect to miss most of these cues but even a few observations can be revealing.

Positive cues	Negative cues
1. Smiling	1. Dead expression on face
2. Nodding in agreement	2. Tight lips
3. Eye contact	3. Frowning
4. Relaxed posture	4. Avoiding eye contact
5. Facing you directly	5. Squirming
6. Unbuttoned jackets	6. Doodling
7. Leaning forward	7. Fidgeting
8. Sitting on edge of chair	8. Hands clenched or wringing
9. Hands in open position	9. Turning away
10. Legs and arms uncrossed	10. Stiff or slumping posture
11. Animated facial expression	11. Sitting or leaning back
12. Head up	12. Crossed legs or arms

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Facilitate Discussions

Preparation

- Arrange seating to allow for good eye contact
- Provide equipment for recording (e.g. flipchart)
- Prepare a series of key discussion questions
- Sub-divide the large group, if appropriate
- State the objective or purpose clearly

Time Management

- State the time available
- Remind the group about the time limits, as necessary
- Keep the discussion on track and on topic
- Employ only brief comments and questions
- Maintain a brisk pace
- Move on when topics are exhausted

Group Dynamics and Participation

- Maintain subtle control
- Maintain a casual, yet focused style when leading
- Prevent people from dominating
- Pay attention to quiet group members
- Reinforce participation
- Get input for, all group members
- Stay neutral and objective when dealing with different viewpoints
- Offer your input only after other individuals have had an opportunity to speak
- Refrain from expressing opinions, if possible
- Allow the group to address challenges on its own before interjecting
- Relay questions back to the group
- Intervene when necessary
- Allocate time for summarizing the groups output (e.g. charting key points)
- Note items to return to, if discussion is incomplete