

# The Art & Science of Facilitation

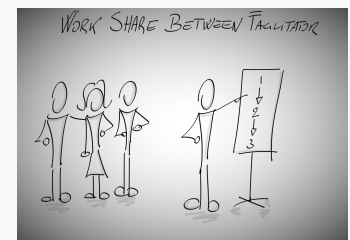
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One of the most important skills an educator acquires is that of effective facilitation. Facilitation is all about helping others learn, which is at the heart of education. And like many other things, facilitation is something you get better at the more you practice.

So, what are the key components of effective facilitation? Effective facilitation means that we should be mindful of all learners and plan accordingly. Effective facilitators...



1. **Plan:** Whether facilitating a lesson, a workshop, or a meeting, an effective facilitator creates and follows a plan. The key is to have a goal (or goals) in mind for a given audience and to work towards achieving said goal(s) using a variety of strategies/activities. A good plan also includes 'Plan B.' For example, we've all had the experience of planning an awesome online activity only to have the network go down just at the exact moment we want to try the activity. Ask yourself how else you could facilitate the activity, and have the alternative ready as a backup.
2. **Implement:** Here we rely on our facilitation toolkit or 'Bag of Tricks.' An effective facilitator guides learning. The key is to provide just enough guidance to help individuals reach the intended learning goal for themselves. That invariably means creating a safe, comfortable learning space for students to engage with each other via relevant, meaningful activities (emphasis on the active part).
3. **Adjust:** Even the most well thought-out sessions never go exactly as planned. There are too many variables involved. Effective facilitators 'feel the room' and know when to adjust as needed. How many of us have had the experience of a lesson going really well in one section of a course but failing miserably in another section? The key here is flexibility, i.e., using our bag of tricks and experience to change things up. And this brings us to probably the number one attribute of an effective facilitator: creativity.

Effective facilitation is a creative activity. Effective facilitators rely on evidence to inform their practice. Therefore, there is certainly an art and science to facilitation.

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