

## MODULE 13: FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

### Cognitive Goals

At the completion of this module the student-instructor should be able to:

- 13.1 Use his or her own words to provide a description of facilitated learning
- 13.2 Describe why motivating students is an important factor in an environment that promotes facilitated learning
- 13.3 Identify classroom arrangements and formats that promote and enhance facilitation techniques
- 13.4 Explain why the standard lecturing method does not provide a facilitated learning environment
- 13.5 List methods to enhance the lecture method to make it a more facilitated learning experience
- 13.6 Explain the role of group work in a facilitated learning environment
- 13.7 List tips or methods to facilitate a discussion in the classroom
- 13.8 List tips for facilitating a practical (psychomotor) classroom session
- 13.9 Describe methods to maintain classroom control when using a facilitated learning environment

### Psychomotor Goals

At the completion of this module the student-instructor should be able to:

- 13.1 Apply the learning principles described in this module to facilitate a discussion of a small group (three-five participants) of student-instructors
- 13.2 Apply the learning principles described in this module to facilitate a psychomotor classroom session

### Affective Goals

At the completion of this module the student-instructor should be able to:

- 13.1 Value the need for providing a facilitated learning environment for adult students
- 13.3 Share techniques described within this module with other instructors to promote facilitated learning principles

### Declarative

- I. Why this module is important
  - A. Teaching is both an art and science
    1. Teaching science includes learning styles, learning theories and pedagogy
  - B. Development of your presentation style, presence in the classroom and rapport with the students is less easily found in science
    1. Facilitation is one method of reaching students in an effective manner that makes the learning experience more productive and enjoyable

- II. What is facilitation?
  - A. The word facilitate means to “make easier”
  - B. It is a method of interacting with students that enhances their learning
    - 1. A variety of techniques involving coaching, mentoring and positive reinforcement
  - C. Many terms describe the facilitated learning environment including; experiential learning, constructivist learning, and invitational learning
  - D. To be effective at facilitation you need to know and understand your audience
  
- III. Adults as learners
  - A. Adult learning styles are different from children
  - B. Most of us have not experienced excellence in education as adults
    - 1. When we have no reference point for excellence we rely upon traditional lecture and practical sessions
  - C. Adult learners need to see that professional development and their day-to-day activities are related and relevant
    - 1. Adults need to “buy-in” to the process
      - a. Making the learning meaningful is one method to promote this
  - D. Adult learners need direct, concrete experiences in which they apply learning in the real world
    - 1. Activities need to be thought out carefully so they integrate into the total learning experience
  - E. Adult learning has ego involvement
    - 1. Professional development must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgment by others
  - F. Adult learners need constant feedback
    - 1. Feedback should include performance evaluation and methods to improve performance
    - 2. Adults should be allowed input into the feedback process
      - a. Discuss the correct answer instead of telling them the correct answer
  - G. Adult learners need to participate in small group activities during the learning experience to move them through the various levels of the domains of learning
    - 1. Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated by the instructor
      - a. Transfer of learning refers to the process where adults move what they are learning from the lower domain levels into the higher domain levels
      - b. Coaching and other support methods are needed to enhance transference
  
- IV. Characteristics of adult learners
  - A. Adults are generally autonomous and self-directed
    - 1. The function best in a student centered environment instead of an instructor centered environment
      - a. Lectures are instructor centered
      - b. Small group activities are student centered
    - 2. They need to be free to direct themselves

3. When teachers act as facilitators this allows the student to retain control, or at least to have a stake in directing their learning
  4. Get student's perspectives about what to cover (cover a topic more or less fully based upon their feedback)
  5. Students who have say in some aspects of the program are more likely to support the process
- B. Adults have a foundation of life experiences
1. Work, family, and previous education all have shaped who they are today
    - a. This may enhance or detract from learning
  2. Instructor needs to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base
    - a. Engage students by drawing on their experience in class
    - b. Relate theories and concepts to the "real world"
- C. Adults are goal-oriented
1. Adults know why they are in the class
    - a. Determine if this conflicts with your expectations
  2. They appreciate organization and clearly defined goals and objectives
  3. The instructor should know what each of the student's goals are
- D. Adults are relevancy-oriented
1. Adults want to see the reason they are doing something
    - a. Place the learning in context to help motivate them
  2. Learning has to be applicable in order for it to have value
- E. Adults are practical
1. Instructor needs to show students how the content will be useful
  2. Students may only be interested in material they feel is crucial to learn and may not be interested in learning anything else
    - a. This may conflict with developing a desire in students for life-long learning
- F. Adults need to be shown respect
1. Recognize the wealth of experience students bring to the classroom
  2. Students should be treated as peers
  3. Encourage students to share their opinions and experiences
- V. Motivating the adult learner
- A. Module 15: Motivation has additional information
- B. One of the keys to being able to facilitate is to be able to motivate students
- C. The following are areas to consider for motivation
1. Social relationships: to make new friends or meet a need for association or friendship
  2. External expectations: to fulfill the expectations of someone of authority
  3. Social welfare: community service and to serve mankind
  4. Personal enhancement: achieve higher status at work, provide professional advancement, or stay abreast of competitors
  5. Escape/stimulation: to relieve boredom, provide a break from the routine at home or work, or provide contrast to the exacting details of life

6. Cognitive interest: to learn for the sake of learning, seek knowledge for its own sake, or satisfy a curious mind
- VI. Barriers to motivation
- A. Many barriers to motivation are present:
    1. Lack of time
    2. Lack of money
    3. Lack of confidence
    4. Scheduling problems
    5. "Red tape," bureaucracy, or politics
    6. Problems with child care
    7. Problems with transportation
  - B. Be aware barriers exist, but also understand those you can do something about in your role as a mentor, guide, and advocate and those you are not responsible for
    1. Can you mitigate any barriers?
    2. Should you mitigate any barriers?
  - C. The best way to motivate adult learners is to enhance their reasons for enrolling in the course and decrease barriers
- VII. Critical elements of adult learning
- A. Motivation
    1. Set an appropriate stress level: not too high and not too low
    2. Sometimes EMS classes promote higher stress because the student will eventually be responsible for human life
  - B. Reinforcement
    1. Reinforcement should be part of the normal routine of your class to maintain consistent positive behavior
    2. Positive reinforcement
      - a. Set an appropriate level of difficulty that is not too high or too low
      - b. Challenge students
        - i. It might be a slightly different level of difficulty for each student
      - c. Provide feedback from instructor, peers, and when appropriate, other students
      - d. When student is interested in the subject it increases their responsibility for learning
    3. Negative reinforcement
      - a. It is best to avoid negative reinforcement
      - b. The result of negative reinforcement is extinction of the undesirable behavior
        - i. It may also result in alienation of the student
  - C. Retention
    1. Students must retain the information from the class in order to benefit from the learning
      - a. Information must be retained before it can be transferred

2. The instructor's job is not to lecture – it is to help students retain information relevant to the course
  3. Retention is directly related to initial learning
    - a. If the student did not learn the information very well she will not retain it
    - b. Retention is effected by the amount of practice that occurs during learning
  - D. Transference
    1. Ability to use the information learned in a new setting
    2. Positive transference – student uses the behavior learned in the course
    3. Negative transference – student does not use the behavior learned or uses it incorrectly
    4. Positive transference is the goal
      - a. Reach the student in all three domains of learning; cognitive, affective and psychomotor to have the greatest transference occur
- VIII. Keys to facilitation
- A. Create action in the classroom
    1. Avoid lecturing
    2. Engage students in learning through activities
  - B. The classroom layout sets the tone
    1. See classroom layout from Module 6: The Learning Environment
    2. What layout is best for the desired setting?
      - a. Group work: tables and semi-private or secluded workspaces
      - b. Interaction between students and instructor: arranged so the focus is taken off of the instructor and placed on the group but still allowing interaction with the instructor
  - C. Create expectation in students that they will participate in learning
    1. This is difficult if students have been conditioned to be passive learners
      - a. Be patient and provide guidance and positive reinforcement
        - i. As students succeed they will change their expectations
        - ii. Some will continue to want to be passive learners despite your best efforts – do not be discouraged, eventually they may participate or other students may influence them to participate
- IX. Lecturing does not facilitate facilitation
- A. Lecturing is a time honored technique that places the focus on the instructor
    1. A method of disseminating a lot of information quickly with a lot of instructor control so it remains a common practice in the classroom
  - B. Lecturing will never lead to active learning
  - C. Move beyond simple lectures:
    1. Build interest
    2. Maximize understanding and retention
    3. Involve participants
    4. Reinforce what has been presented
  - D. How to add more interest to the lecture environment

1. Beginning of lecture: lead off with a story of a patient encounter, use an interesting visual aid, present a case study, or ask a test question
  2. Maximize understanding and retention by saying less and allowing students to do more
    - a. Give students the headlines – reduce lecture to major points
    - b. Alter your presentation so you present the highlights in lecture form to the whole class, but place students in small groups for reinforcement activities with several instructors
    - c. Add visual appeal to your presentations
    - d. Provide a handout with the pertinent points then focus on the practical aspects
  3. Involve participants in the presentation
    - a. Spot challenges and ask about concepts
    - b. Provide activities spaced throughout the lecture
    - c. Assign portions of the material to be presented by the students
      - i. Allow students adequate time to prepare
      - ii. Be prepared to intervene if they present incorrect information
  4. Reinforce the lecture
    - a. Review the material covered through the use of an activity
    - b. Provide an application problem and let the students solve the problem
    - c. Participants conduct a review
      - i. With each other or in groups – you can provide a template to follow
      - ii. Play games
- X. Group work
- A. One of the best methods of ensuring active learning is through group work
    1. Form groups quickly – time is precious
    2. In some settings, using the same group over and over again is best
      - a. In others the groups are better when changed
    3. Vary skill levels to even the level of each group
  - B. Creative ways to choose groups:
    1. Randomly: by counting off, using letters, colored stickers, etc.
      - a. Allows students some control in the sorting process but also lets it occur randomly
    2. Teacher controlled: instructor uses a strategy ahead of time to sort students
      - a. Can be effective when you wish to separate students, match students, or set up a group for specific characteristics
    3. Student controlled: students select how the groups form, individually or collectively
      - a. This option offers less instructor control, but may be effective when you want to solicit more active levels of student participation or to offer them some control
- XI. Assigning jobs in the class setting

- A. One method of increasing participation is to have students assist in some of the day to day activities of the course
    - 1. Setting up the room or bringing in the equipment
    - 2. Functioning as a “master at arms” and serving a minor disciplinary role, or by controlling when breaks begin and end
    - 3. Serve as recorders and note takers when not actively involved in a scenario or role-playing exercise with the purpose of providing constructive feedback
    - 4. Serve as mentors and coaches when they study together and help each other learn skills
  - B. Instructor may assign the task (leader, recorder, spokesperson, etc.)
    - 1. Use a creative selection strategy:
      - a. Alphabetical
      - b. Birth date
      - c. Date hired to work for the EMS service (oldest or youngest)
      - d. Color lottery (who is wearing the most blue?)
      - e. Close your eyes and point to someone
      - f. Random # (last 4 digits of phone number)
      - g. Sticker (on name tag, chair or handout)
  - C. Rotate duties equally among the student body to avoid favoritism
- XII. Managing groups effectively
- A. This strategy works best with teams of four members
    - 1. Peer facilitators may be added to group as a fifth member to help guide and mentor group and to problem solve conflicts
  - B. Groups work best when they agree upon the ground rules up front
    - 1. Provide the following ground rules as a foundation for the group:
      - a. Come to class on time every session
      - b. Come to class having done the assignment and prepared to discuss it
      - c. Must notify members of the group ahead of time if class will be missed
      - d. We willing to share information
      - e. Respect the views, values and ideas of other members of the group
      - f. Other rules as agreed upon by the members
  - C. Groups should rotate roles so everyone stays active
    - 1. Discussion leader: keeps group on track and maintains participation
    - 2. Recorder: records assignments, strategies, unresolved issues, data and convenes group outside of class
    - 3. Reporter: reports to whole class during discussions and writes up final draft of assignments
    - 4. Accuracy coach and timekeeper: checks understanding of the group, finds resources and manages time
  - D. Using groups in large classes or with inexperienced students
    - 1. Use well defined activities with clearly stated objectives
    - 2. Bring the class together for discussion and/or clarification at frequent intervals
    - 3. Plan both group and individual assignments
    - 4. Look for signs of behavior that undermine group function

5. Use peer facilitator to assist group
- XIII. Resolving conflict within groups
- A. Level 1: preventing escalation
    1. Monitor group for early signs of conflict
    2. Intervene immediately
    3. Use group evaluations to help control individual student behavior
    4. Encourage spontaneous verbal feedback
  - B. Level 2: empowering students
    1. Listen to student concerns
    2. Encourage students to resolve conflict
    3. Coach students on possible resolution strategies
  - C. Level 3: resolving conflict
    1. Establish ground rules for the discussion
    2. Ask each student to present point of view while others listen
    3. Ask each student to define ideal outcome
    4. Review group ground rules
    5. Facilitate discussion of possible outcomes
  - D. Level 4: instructor intervention
    1. Refer to course syllabus
    2. Refer to student manual
    3. Depending upon the severity of the situation, involve other members of the teaching team
- XIV. Facilitating discussions
- A. Discussion is one of the best forms of participatory lecturing
  - B. Effective for:
    1. Recertification or refresher classes during a review of concepts
    2. Topics involving opinions
    3. Getting started or wrapping up a classroom session
  - C. Tips for facilitating discussion:
    1. Get all of the students involved
      - a. Use small groups discussing the same idea to include all students
      - b. Inattentive students should be redirected back to the group
      - c. Move the discussion around the class (use a prop or some other strategy to facilitate this)
    2. You don't have to comment on each person's contribution
    3. Paraphrase: check your understanding and the students
    4. Compliment a good comment and redirect an inaccurate or incorrect statement to the class for correction
    5. Elaborate – suggest a new way, even when the student seems to have answered the question correctly
    6. Energize – quicken your responses, use appropriate humor, prod students for an answer
    7. Disagree (gently)



8. Mediate differences in opinion
    - a. Mediation is a balancing act; you are trying to keep the discussion going without interjecting yourself as the authority, which could damage momentum
    - b. Encourage students to back up their statements with facts
    - c. Remind everyone to respect differing opinions
  9. Pull together ideas
  10. Summarize what occurred in the discussion group
    - a. Provide follow-up information for additional study or reading
- XV. Practical (psychomotor) sessions
- A. Experiential (or practical) sessions help to make training active
    1. Remember: transference occurs with repeated practice
    2. Examples: role-playing, games, simulations, and problem-solving tasks
  - B. Tips for practical sessions:
    1. Explain the objectives
    2. Explain the benefits
    3. Divide students into groups
      - a. Small enough size so all participate
      - b. Students not active in the practice activity are recorders or peer evaluators
    4. Speak slowly when giving directions
      - a. Begin with a brief overview of the activity then provide specific information
        - i. This meets the learning style preferences of global and analytic learners
      - b. If the activity involves new equipment give directions before handing out the equipment or supplies so students concentrate on your directions
        - i. An alternative is to let them look over the equipment or setting for a minute before you begin giving your instructions
    5. Demonstrate complicated activities
      - a. Best accomplished if done one time for the entire group, including any adjunct faculty, to provide consistency
      - b. May require a repetition of the skill or steps once the students begin rotations through stations as a quick review
    6. Set a time limit and inform students of the time limit
    7. Keep the activity moving
    8. Challenge the students
      - a. Begin with simple or rote exercises and build towards critical thinking situations
    9. Recap and critique at the end of each session
      - a. Allow team leader or person performing the skill to give you their impression of what they did “good” and “bad” first
      - b. Allow other student participants to give feedback (partner, peer evaluators, “patients,” recorders, etc.)
      - c. You provide positive-negative-positive feedback

- i. Positive-negative-positive format: begin with specific positive statements followed by constrictive criticism and end with positive statements

XVI. Facilitating activities take time

- A. The objectives can often be met in a lecture format faster than in a facilitated learning format
  1. Remember: students retain more when they practice over and over again
  2. They do not argue with their own results of learning, if they discovered it for themselves - they own it
  3. The goal is to assist students to become professionals who think critically about what they do and move beyond the lower levels of thinking into the higher levels
    - a. This cannot be done with passive learning techniques
- B. Tips to save time during practical sessions:
  1. Start on time
  2. Give clear instructions one time
  3. Prepare visual information ahead of time
  4. Distribute handouts quickly
  5. Expedite group reporting
  6. Record on flip charts - no repeating of information from group to group
  7. Shorten discussion points – emphasize short answers
  8. Get volunteers rapidly
  9. Quicken the pace to create energy
  10. Come back from group work or breaks promptly

XVII. Classroom control issues with facilitation

- A. Instructors can easily lose control in an environment with a high amount of facilitation
  1. Students may perceive that you are “not doing your job” because they are participating more actively in their learning
    - a. Students are also more responsible for their learning
    - b. Co-workers may also believe this if they do not understand facilitated learning
  2. Ensure students stay on task
    - a. Conversations should be monitored to ensure they are on topic
  3. Students having difficulty may give up and quit working before asking for assistance
  4. Offer assistance in finding resources but do not get tricked into doing their work.
    - a. The “3 before me” technique works well in helping students become more independent
      - i. When they ask for assistance they should be able to inform you of at least three places they looked to find the information first

- ii. If they do not have three (or an appropriate) number of resources direct them to the appropriate resources instead of simply telling them the correct answer

XVIII. Tips for calling participants to order

- A. Regardless of what technique you use, start on time – whether students are back or not otherwise you reinforce that it is acceptable to be late
  - 1. Kitchen timer, watch alarm or laptop timer
  - 2. Flick light switch on and off
  - 3. “Now hear this” into the microphone
  - 4. Create a verbal wave – clap hands or everyone repeats “Time’s up”
  - 5. Play music
  - 6. Unique sounds – a gavel, a bell, a dinner gong
  - 7. Designate a time keeper for the breaks who calls students back to the room

XIX. Tips for maintaining order in the group:

- A. Group work is not purely freedom
- B. Signal nonverbally
  - 1. Use body language and eye contact to show students you are attentive
- C. Bring discussion back to the center when someone strays, argues, or monopolizes the discussion
- D. Encourage all students to participate
  - 1. Ask how many people have a response, and then call on someone who has not participated and whose hand is raised
  - 2. Occasionally restrict participation to people who have not spoken
- E. Each new comment must build on the previous idea
- F. Connect on a personal level
  - 1. When you know students, they tend to control their behavior better in your presence
- G. Change the method you are using
  - 1. Switch from full class to smaller groups or pairs
- H. Ignore small nuisances
- I. Discuss negative behaviors in private
- J. Do not take personally the difficulties you encounter in the classroom setting
- K. Seek support from other faculty members

### **Bibliographic References**

Johnson, Johnson & Smith. (1998). Maximizing instruction through cooperative learning. *AAHE Prism, February*.

Norman, G. R. & Schmidt, H. G. (1992). The psychological basis of problem-based learning: A review of the evidence. *Academic Medicine 67 (9), 557-565*.

Rideout, E. (2001). *Transforming nursing education through problem-based learning*.  
Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

Springer, Stanne & Donovan. (1999). *Review of Educational Research*.