

# Facilitating with Confidence

How to Run Dynamic and Productive Workshops,  
Webinars and Meetings



**Course Book**

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....3

Module 1 - Facilitation Skills for In-Person Workshops .....

Module 2 – Creating Engaging Webinars .....

Module 3 – Facilitate Your Conference Calls and Meetings for Better Engagement .....

Conclusion and Next Steps .....

Sample

# Introduction

"The facilitator's job is to *support everyone to do their best thinking*. To do this, the facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding, and cultivates shared responsibility."

- *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making* by Sam Kaner, et al.

**F**acilitation is a process in which a leader guides a group toward sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences to achieve a common goal. That group leader is called a 'facilitator'.

Facilitation skills can help you make training sessions, webinars, audio or conference calls, and meetings much more effective and fruitful. You will see deeper engagement among group members, build better relationships with participants, see greater implementation of learning, generate more leads, and gather more feedback. Facilitation skills can help you achieve the goal of any group session you lead, whatever the main purpose is.

For those running courses, webinars and workshops, facilitation skills are critical for helping students thoroughly understand a topic and move forward to implement it. Such skills are valuable for small business owners and entrepreneurs in their search for new ways to connect with prospective customers and clients. Small business owners and team leaders can also use facilitation skills in additional situations such as conference presentations, meeting customers and prospects in-person.

## Engaging Others

A critical skill in today's world is the ability to engage your audience. Engagement simply means that your audience is fully involved in the encounter. Engagement is paramount in any situation where you want group participation. In these settings, information sharing and discussion should be collaborative and reciprocal. Many people still use an "instructor" approach here, which is top-down and which offers few opportunities for participation.

If your business meetings or seminars have you at the center doing all of the talking, this is a warning sign that you are failing to engage your audience and you need to refresh your approach.

Even if you're successfully engaging your participants, the application of new facilitation skills can help you find further ways to improve. Facilitation skills can also be used to enhance the team dynamics among your staff, virtual employees, or colleagues.

## Facilitating vs. Presenting

For many people, when they hear the word "facilitating," they picture a classroom led by an instructor or a presentation they have attended. They may erroneously think that facilitating and presenting are the same thing, but the two are markedly different.

A good analogy for understanding the difference is that a presenter is a "sage at the stage" while a facilitator is a "guide by the side." Each has their merits, but there are big problems when facilitators use presentation skills alone. Here is a summary of some of the key differences:

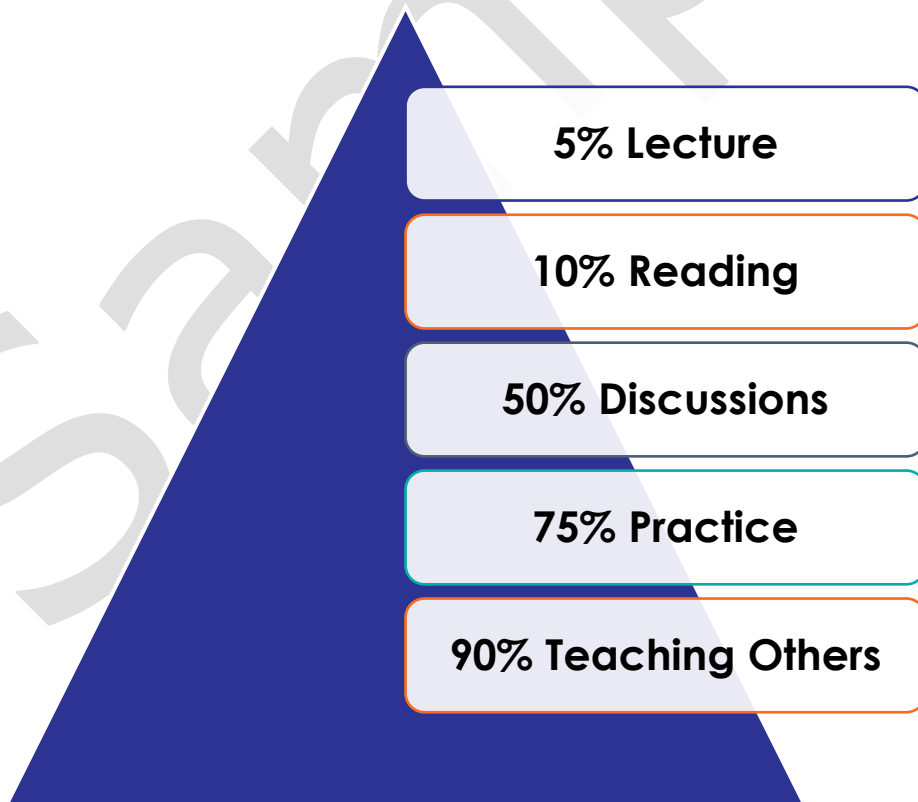
FACILITATING WITH CONFIDENCE

<b>Presenting</b>	<b>Facilitating</b>
The presenter does most of the talking (approx. 80%+)	The participants do more of the talking (approx. 50%+)
The presenter is the 'center,' the 'star,' or the 'expert' of the show	The audience and facilitator share stories, experiences, or ideas. The facilitator is comfortable allowing the group to shine. A facilitator might have participants who understand the material play a larger role in helping/teaching others. Power is shared.
The presenter uses media, stories, and some audience participation to keep the energy high	The facilitator uses media and stories but relies on audience reaction, dialogue, and participation to keep the conversation flowing
The content or message is pre-determined	The meaning/ learning may be planned ahead of time but evolves and emerges based on the group dynamics and conversation
A presentation is linear with a clear beginning, middle, and end	The content is circular. The facilitator is always checking back to ensure that the participants are moving ahead.
The audience is passive	The audience is active
The audience consumes the message presented by the presenter	The audience constructs knowledge or ideas based on the interactions with the facilitator's content and peer collaboration

To increase the engagement level in your own group sessions, you need to move from a presenter or lecture-based model of interaction to a participatory, facilitation model.

Education expert Edgar Dale put forward the idea of a "cone of learning" or "learning pyramid" to show how people are most likely to learn. The idea states that people learn:

- 5% by lecture
- 10% by reading
- 50% by discussions
- 75% by practice
- 90% by teaching others



This model makes it clear that it's in your best interest to use a facilitative style for the best retention possible. Your audience will be more likely to remember what you've taught them.

There are also clear generational trends. Older audiences may be more comfortable and successful with passive learning styles, but younger audiences increasingly expect to be actively involved.

In addition to better retention on the part of your audience, other major benefits of facilitation include:

- **Competitive advantage.** Using strong facilitation skills can set you apart from your competitors since you'll see better results from any live group sessions.
- **Better relationships.** By improving your facilitation skills, you can connect better with your audience. The result is an improvement of the quality of your relationships and interactions, leading to more business.
- **Learning experiences.** Effective facilitation leads to a more engaged audience, which affords more learning opportunities. You don't have to focus so much on being an expert. Instead, you can learn and gain insights from your audience while they each internalize the concepts you're teaching in their own way.
- **Multi-way communication.** Facilitation is the shift from one-way to multi-way communication. You will bring your audience into the conversation.

## Learning Objectives:

By the time you complete this course, you'll be able to:

- Deliver engaging in-person workshops that keep your audience interested, involved, and focused on actionable learning

**ATTENTION:**

This is only an excerpt from our full course Facilitating with Confidence. The full, customizable course contains 3 modules and an introduction & conclusion module.

When you purchase a license for the course, you'll receive the editable files for the Course Book, Action Guide, graphics, tweets, and other resources.

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