

## TEACHING & LEARNING THE FACILITATION PROCESS

**Peter M. Markulis**  
**SUNY Geneseo**  
**Markulis@Geneseo.Edu**

**S. Dolly Malik**  
**Dmalik@rochester.rr.com**

**Barbara Howard**  
**SUNY Geneseo**  
**HowardB@Geneseo.Edu**

**Daniel R. Strang**  
**SUNY Geneseo**  
**Strang@Geneseo.Edu**

### ABSTRACT

*Facilitation is an important aspect of active learning. This interactive session will focus on how to become a better facilitator. The session will provide an overview of the importance of facilitation and how it relates to various pedagogies, particularly those relating to experiential exercises and computerized simulation. The session participants will gain hands-on experience in learning about and practicing facilitation skills.*

**Basic Objective(s).** The Objective of this session is to give the participants practice at learning how to become better facilitators. The participants will gain experience in understanding the skills, traits, and practices of sound facilitation.

**Theoretical Grounding.** Facilitation of groups is an important and valuable pedagogical skill. Most educators have had scant training in the art (and science) of facilitation. Facilitation is a complement to many educational settings. It can be used as part of a debriefing session, group discussion, case discussion or experiential exercise. The authors believe that facilitation falls in the philosophy of *active learning* and will be presented in that light. Learning how to become a better facilitator also is part of the collaborative learning process. Role-playing, observer feedback and collaboration will be used to enhance the session.

**Pedagogical Implications.** Participants can expect to leave the session with a better understanding and appreciation of

facilitation. The session will have all participants learning about and practicing facilitation. Handouts will provide participants with ample material on the subject, as well as the actual experience they receive.

**Methodology.** Participants will be divided up into two groups. The first group (3-4 participants) will serve as the teaching group (T-group) and the second group (or subgroups depending upon the number of participants) will serve as the learning group or groups (L-group). T-group will get the L-group to derive a list of traits and behaviors of a “good” facilitator. The T-group will meet to determine how to get the L-group to do this. The L-group will work on deriving the list of traits and behaviors for “good” facilitators. Some of their information will come from one or more of the handouts, which list many of these traits and behaviors. After the list or lists are generated, the T-group will then “facilitate” the process of putting together a “good” list by actually facilitating the process itself. In other words, part of the T-group’s task will be to model the facilitation process. In order to provide both groups with a valid and exemplary learning experience, both groups will have to establish assessment measures for their respective roles and learning objectives. The assessment measures will also serve to help ground and solidify the practice and skill development of facilitation. So as to maximize the experience, individual members of each group will be assigned (or assign themselves) to various roles. For example, one member will play *coach* during the facilitation process, another member will play *feedback observer* while another member will play *clarifier*.

## **Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 30, 2003**

**Number of participants.** Minimum = 8; maximum = 20

**Time.** Approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

**Materials.** Several handouts will be provided. They include:

- ◆ Facilitator responsibilities;
- ◆ Criteria for measuring quality of a facilitator;
- ◆ Facilitator strengths;
- ◆ Facilitation tips;
- ◆ Discoveries about facilitation;
- ◆ Constructive interventions;
- ◆ Key tools to use during a facilitation.