LESSON 1 · UNIT 1 · LEADERSHIP & FACILITATION SKILLS · ~50 MINUTES

GUIDING SUCCESS

Mastering the Art of Facilitation

PREPARATION

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW	Facilitation is the skill of guiding a group so that everyone takes part and the group reaches a decision together. A facilitator guides and supports group discussions, activities, or meetings to achieve specific objectives by promoting participation, communication, and collaboration. This lesson lets the Team feel the difference a facilitator makes before anyone defines the word. Small groups make a decision twice: first with no facilitator, then with one member quietly carrying a card of four facilitator moves. Observers tally who talks, who never talks, and whether a decision actually gets made. The two tallies go on the board side by side, and the Team discovers that a group without a facilitator produces the loudest opinion, while a group with one produces a decision everyone owns. That is the skill every Forum small group depends on.
OBJECTIVE	Students experience the difference between a facilitated and an unfacilitated group decision, define facilitation and the qualities of an effective facilitator, and practice the four core facilitator moves they will use in every Forum small group.
MATERIALS	Decision cards, observer tally sheets, and facilitator move cards (all included) · whiteboard · timer · Student Workbook capture page (included).
SET UP	Print one tally sheet per observer and cut the facilitator move cards apart. Arrange the room so groups of five or six can sit in tight circles with one observer standing just outside each circle. Do not tell the Team that Round 2 will include a facilitator.
NOTES TO ADVISOR	Read the lesson through before teaching; adapt the timing to your class. Keep Round 1 short and let it be messy. The mess is the data. In Round 2, hand the facilitator card to a student who is not usually the loudest voice; the discovery lands harder when a quiet student runs the better meeting.

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Getting Started

4 MINUTES

- Ask: "Think of the last time a group you were in had to decide something. Who ended up deciding? How did the rest of the group feel about it?" Take two or three answers.
- Most stories end the same way: the fastest or loudest voice decided, and some people never said a word. Tell the Team that today they will run that meeting twice and measure it.

Round 1 — No Facilitator

8 MINUTES

- Form groups of five or six. Assign one observer per group and hand each observer a tally sheet. Observers do not speak.
- Give every group Decision Card A. Rule: reach a decision in five minutes. Nobody is in charge. Start the timer.
- Observers tally every time each member speaks, mark who never speaks, and note whether the group reached a decision and how many members agreed with it.
- At five minutes, stop. Each observer reports three numbers to the board: how many members spoke, how many never spoke, and whether a decision was reached. Do not discuss yet.

Round 2 — The Card

8 MINUTES

- Same groups, same observers. Give every group Decision Card B. Quietly hand one member of each group a facilitator move card and tell them to read it silently and use it. Do not announce this to the room.
- Same rule: reach a decision in five minutes. Observers tally the same three numbers.
- At five minutes, stop and post the Round 2 numbers beside the Round 1 numbers. In most rooms the number who never spoke drops to zero and the decision is reached with more members agreeing.

The Reveal

6 MINUTES

READ ALOUD

Same groups. Same five minutes. A question just as hard. Look at the board: in Round 1 the group produced an opinion, usually the loudest one, and left people out. In Round 2 almost everyone spoke and the decision belonged to the group. One thing changed. One person in each group had a card with four moves on it, and used them. That person was facilitating. Nobody told anybody what to think. Somebody made sure everybody got to think out loud. That is facilitation, and it is one of the core skills of this Team.

- Ask the facilitators to stand and read their card aloud. Ask the rest of each group: "Did you notice? What did it feel like from the inside?"

Direct Instruction — What a Facilitator Does

6 MINUTES

- Write the definition on the board: a facilitator guides and supports group discussions, activities, or meetings to achieve specific objectives by promoting participation, communication, and collaboration.
- Contrast a facilitator with a boss. A boss makes the call. A facilitator draws the answer out of the group and stays neutral about which answer wins.
- Name the four moves on the card as the qualities the Team will practice: the open question (asks, never tells), the pause for the quiet (invites a member who has not spoken), the summary (restates what has been said so the group can see it), and the traffic rule (keeps one voice from filling all the time). Add time management and neutrality as the two habits that hold the four moves together.
- Connect it to the work: every Forum small group has a Team facilitator. What the observers tallied today is exactly what a Forum participant experiences when the facilitator does the job well, or does not.

Team Time — Facilitator Rotation

12 MINUTES

- Same groups. Give each group Decision Card C and run three three-minute rounds with one minute of feedback after each. In each round a different member facilitates using the move card; the observer tallies as before.
- After each round, the observer gives the facilitator one sentence of feedback: which move they used most, and which move the group needed that they did not use.

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Applying What We Learn

4 MINUTES

- Each member logs on the workbook page the move they are best at and the move they will practice at the next Forum.
- Set the standard: from today on, every small-group discussion the Team runs, in class or at a Forum, has a named facilitator who uses the four moves. A group without one is Round 1.

Closing

2 MINUTES

READ ALOUD

You just watched the same group produce two different results, and the only difference was whether someone was facilitating. Forum participants will never see your card. They will only feel whether they got to speak and whether the decision was theirs. Make sure they feel Round 2.

FACILITATION IS A FORUM SKILL

Keep the tally sheets. Before each Forum, the Team can run a single Round 2 on a Forum question as its warm-up, and the observer tallies become the Team's own facilitation practice record. Green Activity connection: the Forum each month is where this skill is delivered to the campus.

COMMON QUESTIONS

- Round 1 went fine and everyone spoke. It happens with small, close groups. Post the numbers anyway and ask who kept it fair, then reveal that the card simply names what that person did by instinct. Run Round 2 as written; the difference usually still shows in how many members agreed with the decision.
- The facilitator took over and started deciding. Point at the card: the moves are questions, invitations, and summaries. A facilitator who argues for an answer has stepped out of the role. Have the observer flag it in feedback and rotate.
- A student says the facilitator is just a teacher's pet. The facilitator has no power over the answer, only over whether everyone gets to shape it. Ask the group whose decision Round 2 was. The answer is "ours," and that is the point.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADAPTATION

Use groups of four and run each round for three minutes on concrete decisions (which activity to run at lunch, which theme for spirit week). Teach two moves instead of four: the open question and the pause for the quiet. Have the observer count only two things: who spoke and who never spoke.

TAKE-HOMETHOUGHT

A boss makes the call. A facilitator makes sure everyone gets to make it.

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DECISION CARDS · OBSERVER TALLY SHEET · FACILITATOR MOVE CARD

Print one tally sheet per observer. Cut the facilitator move cards apart, one per group. Decision cards can be read aloud or printed.

DECISION CARDS — one per round, read aloud or hand to the group

CARD A — ROUND 1

Your group has been given one lunch period to run a school-wide activity next month. Decide what the activity is and where on campus it happens. You have five minutes. Nobody is in charge.

CARD B — ROUND 2

Your group must choose one campus problem for the Team to work on this cycle: crowded hallways, students eating alone, put-downs in class, or phone conflict. Pick one and give one reason. Five minutes.

CARD C — TEAM TIME

Your group is planning the first ten minutes of a Forum. Decide on the opening activity and who welcomes participants at the door. Three minutes per round, new facilitator each round.

OBSERVER TALLY SHEET — one per observer. Do not speak during the round.

MEMBER	TIMES SPOKE (tally)	NEVER SPOKE?	AGREED WITH FINAL DECISION?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Decision reached? ( ) Yes ( ) No · Members who spoke: ____ · Members who never spoke: ____ · Members who agreed: ____

FACILITATOR MOVE CARD — cut apart; hand one to a single member of each group

FACILITATOR MOVE CARD — READ SILENTLY

Your job is to help the group decide, not to decide for it. Use these four moves as often as needed:

1. The open question: "What do you think?" "What would make that work?"
2. The pause for the quiet: "We haven't heard from you yet. What's your take?"
3. The summary: "So far I'm hearing two ideas..."
4. The traffic rule: "Let's hear from someone else, then come back to you."

Stay neutral. Watch the clock. Tell no one you have this card until the Advisor says so.

FACILITATOR MOVE CARD — READ SILENTLY

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LESSON

GUIDING SUCCESS

Your group made a decision twice today, once with no facilitator and once with one. Record what you saw and what you will practice. Write in complete thoughts; you will use this page before your next Forum.

In Round 1, who decided, and who never spoke? Write what the observer's numbers showed for your group.

In Round 2, what did the facilitator do that changed the numbers? Name the move you noticed most.
the open question · the pause for the quiet · the summary · the traffic rule

The facilitator move I am already good at, and one time I have used it without knowing its name:

The facilitator move I will practice at the next Forum small group, and the exact words I will say:

Reflection: Think of a group where you were the one who never spoke. What would a facilitator have needed to do to bring you in?

TAKE-HOMETHOUGHT

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