Facilitation Tips

Below are some facilitation hints you will find useful in delivering this program:

General

- Set a positive, enthusiastic tone for the session.
- Establish/Maintain participant expectations of what the session will and will not accomplish.
- Encourage participants to share ideas and experiences that apply to the concepts they're learning.
- Acknowledge participant's comments and ideas during discussions.
- Avoid statements that lower participants' sense of self-esteem or that demeans in any way.
- Actively listen to comments and questions without interrupting.
- Paraphrase participant comments to ensure understanding and clarification.
- Ask students to paraphrase each other's comments as a means of increasing participation.
- Maintain eye contact with participants. (Do not read directly from slides or flipcharts)
- Ask open-ended questions. (Avoid 'Yes' and 'No' questions)
- Create a "Parking Lot" chart for questions or comments that cannot be addressed in the session AND require follow up discussions with others to answer or resolve.

Common Classroom Situations

Lack of Participation:

- If asking questions, restate/rephrase in other ways.
- Call on a specific individual to participate, usually someone you know that will not be shy or embarrassed. If that person has no response, move to another person.

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Too Much Participation:

- Reiterate that this program is intended to focus on the basics and that issues requiring more time than our schedule allows will be placed in the 'Parking Lot' for review.
- Make statements such as: "Those are important comments and I can see that they are relevant, but we need to move on and look at/talk about…" or "Excellent, now let's take one more response before we move on."
- Ask for help in staying on track and staying within the time allotted.
- If one person tends to monopolize the discussion, specifically call on others to respond.

Disruptions: (i.e. side conversations, complaining, tangents, etc.)

- Move around the room. Move towards those carrying on side conversations without acknowledging the issue.
- Organize the seating ahead of time to avoid potential situations of this nature.
- Gain attention by raising the volume of your voice or changing you physical position.
- Suggest another venue for discussing a particular issue with a team member (i.e. "That sounds very important to you. I'd be happy to discuss it with you after the session").