

ONLINE FACILITATION ESSENTIALS

CILT EVENT: 13 September 2017

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University of Cape Town

Balance Structure and Flexibility



Paul Stevenson [Details](#)

Heart:

Structures, such as a clear agenda, time limits, or raising hands before speaking, can create safety, focus, and a form for the group's energy to pour into. Yet to sustain the life of a group, this must be balanced with a great openness to change, dancing between the two as needed.

The Journey

Setting the scene: Why are we here?

What is facilitation?

Onto online facilitation

What online facilitators do

A facilitation dilemma

Some advice for when it is wanted

A few tools

What is facilitation?

"the act of engaging participants in creating, discovering and applying learning insights"

Huggett and Wilkinson (2014) in the ASTD Handbook: The Definitive Reference for Training & Development, 2nd Edition

What is facilitation?

“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”.

Kaner 1996, p32

Liberating Structures

INCLUDING AND UNLEASHING EVERYONE

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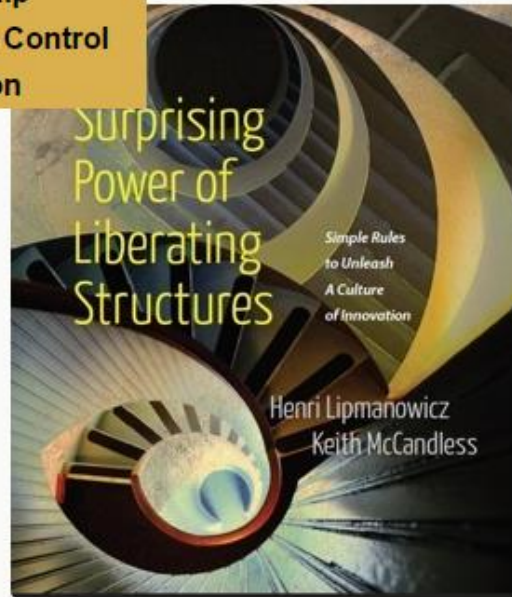


Introduction

When you feel included and engaged, do you do a better job? Do you think teams in which people work well together produce much better results? Have you noticed the best ideas often come from unexpected sources? Do you want to work at the top of your intelligence and give the same opportunity to others?

If YES, we have found this is the kind of organization and community that people want to be part of. AND, Liberating Structures help make it happen.

Health Care
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Innovation



The Liberating Structures book is now available. Learn how simple rules can unleash a culture of innovation.

Some
resources
for
innovative
facilitators



group works

A Pattern Language for Bringing Life to Meetings and Other Gatherings

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Welcome to the Group Pattern Language Project

Why is it that some meetings bring life to your soul, while others leave you wishing you'd never stepped in the room? What happens at the best ones, that makes them productive, fulfilling, sometimes even magic?

The **Group Works** deck of 100 full-colour cards (91 patterns + 9 category cards) names what skilled facilitators and other participants do to make things work. The content is more specific than values and less specific than tips and techniques, cutting across existing methodologies with a designer's eye to capture the patterns that repeat. The deck can be used to plan sessions, reflect on and debrief them, provide guidance, and share responsibility for making the process go well. It has the potential to provide a common reference point for practitioners, and serve as a framework and learning tool for those studying the field.

<http://groupworksdeck.org/>



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Reflection-Action Cycle



Heart:

Mike Baird [Details](#)

Consider. Enact. Debrief. Experiment further. Effective processes that move groups forward often involve cycles of reflection, followed by action, leading to additional reflection, and so on. Alternating in this manner fosters engagement and integration, deepens experiential learning, and promotes adaptive problem-solving.

What is online facilitation?

“the process of encouraging interaction with and between students, supporting learning activities and helping make the use of technology 'easier' for the people we are working with, in order to foster greater engagement and learning”

Downing, Pittaway and Osborne, 2014

What is online facilitation?

“a **balance** between functions that enhance the environment and content, create openness and opportunity, and functions that protect the members from harassment. It involves the sacred rituals around freedom of individual expression while preserving something of "the common good. It is **juggling, tight-rope walking**, often without a net”

White 2002, p5

Howard Rheingold: Art of Hosting

“like a host at a party”

“an authority”

“an exemplar”

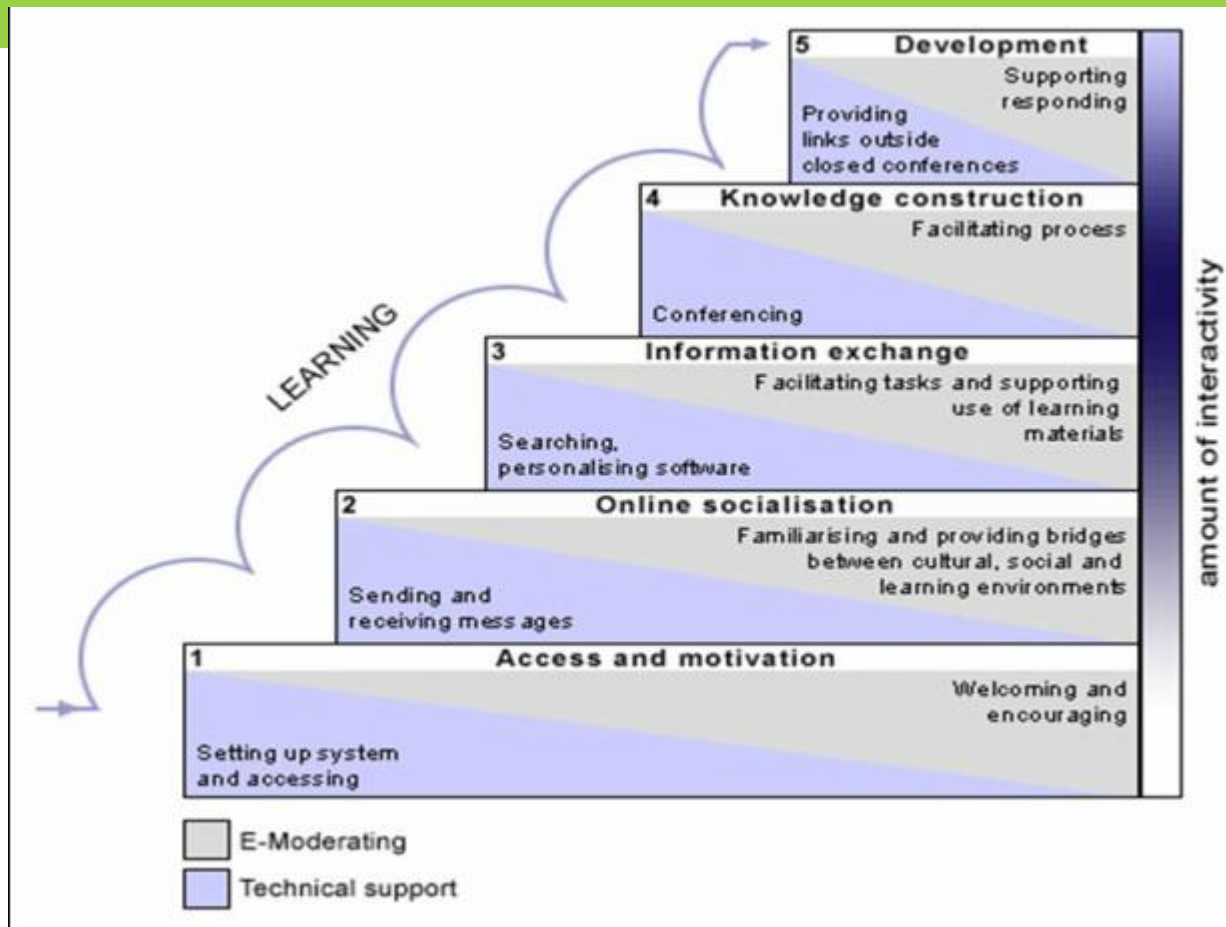
“a cybrarian”

“the show is collaborative improvisation”

“members of a community of hosts”

Rheingold (1998)

From Gilly Salmon

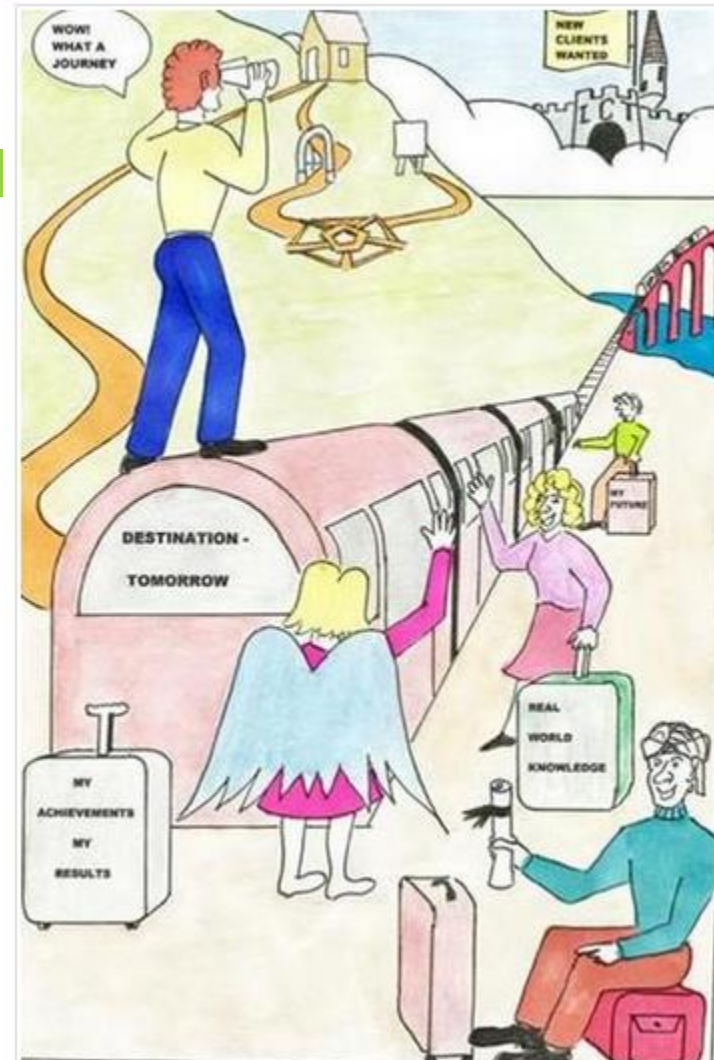


<http://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html>

STAGE 1- ACCESS AND MOTIVATION



STAGE 5- DEVELOPMENT



<http://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html>

Opening and Welcome



saradent.ca [Details](#)

Heart:

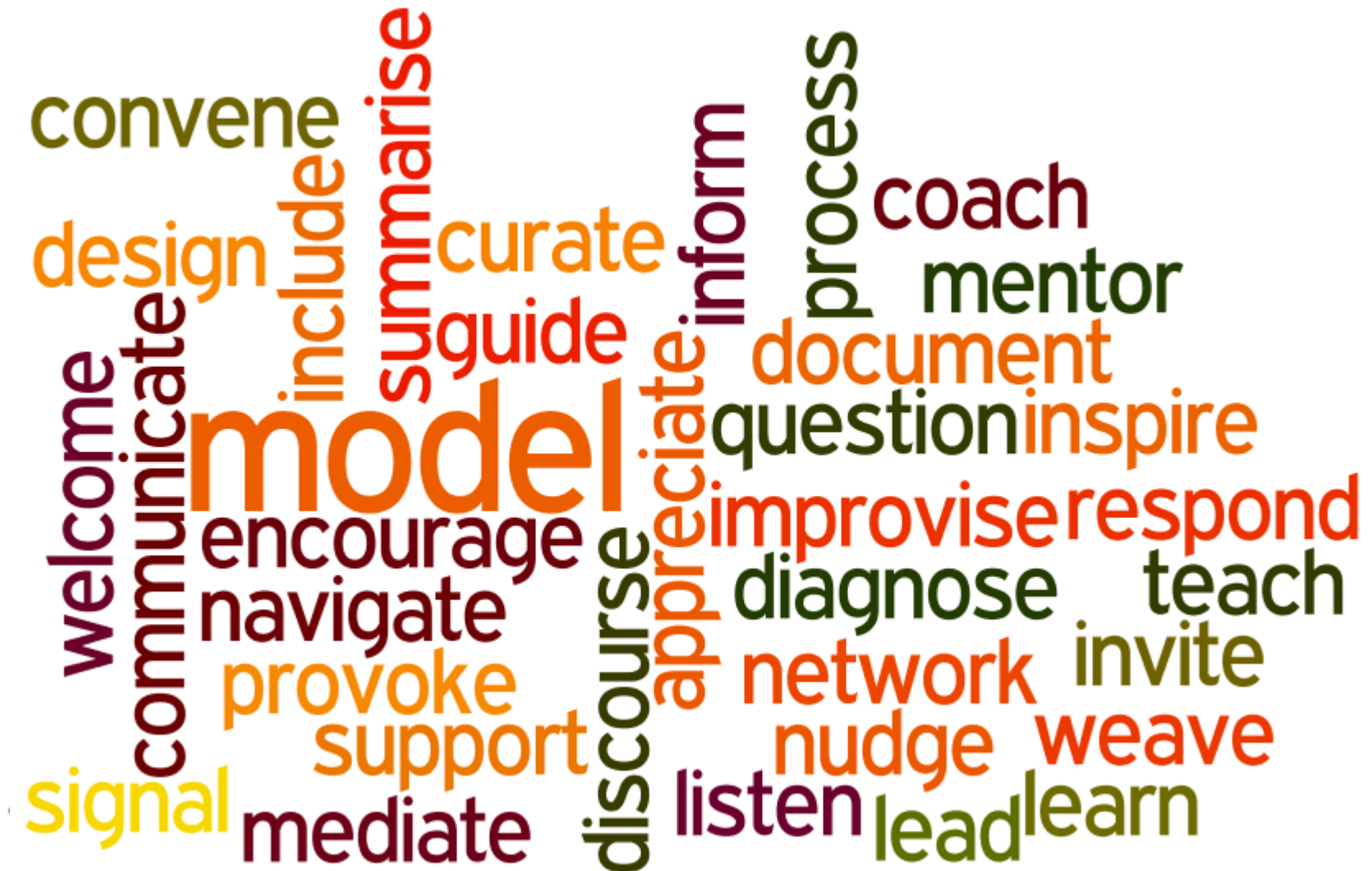
The beginning sets the tone. Start intentionally, in a manner that invites group members to connect with one another, enter their voice into the circle, and participate as their authentic selves. Attend to building enthusiasm, focus, and commitment for the work to come.

Community of Inquiry Framework



Fig. 1. Community of inquiry framework.

What online facilitators do





- supporting online learning
- social skills
- online communication skills
- technical skills
- social networking skills

Capabilities of online facilitators

Carr, Jaffer and Smuts 2009, p4

The facilitative stance

Self-awareness

Tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty

Ability to sense nuance and subtlety

Well-practiced questioning and “listening” skills

Ability to work with and across diverse cultures and styles.

Good judgment to deal with the “darker side” of online interactions

Selected from White (2010) p4

What would you do?

- A student who has been making very insightful and useful contributions to online discussions suddenly starts posting lots of messages advertising their freelance work and responds angrily when their peers object to this.
- What would you do as an online facilitator of the course?

What would you do?

- Its three days since the last face to face class on campus and you are receiving e-mails from several of your students complaining about the suspension of face to face lectures. One student said: "If I had wanted to do distance education I would have saved my parents a lot of money by going to Unisa instead." Some of the other messages use less polite language.
- What would you do as an online facilitator of the course?

The challenge of social media

"the use of social media matches a different perspective on learning focusing on co-creation, self-directed learning by participants and the importance of interaction and conversation between participants. Social media encourage networking, sharing ideas and experiences"

Hulsebosch 2011

Follow the Energy



Heart:

"Aristocrats-hat" [Details](#)

What does the group really want in this moment? Let your observation of cues and "vibes" guide your response and steering of topics and process. Paying attention to where the life is, you help it flower.

Some recent research



Facilitators as co-learners

"The facilitators played a vital role in establishing a sense of community by creating, extending and modelling opportunities for conversation and exchange, showing interest and care through supporting learners as well as each other."

Nerantzi, Middleton and Beckingham 2014

Guidelines Towards Facilitation

teaching staff needed training to become familiar with constructivist and observational approaches and the use of social media which could enable them to facilitate student engagement

Mbati and Minnaar 2015

Student perceptions of peer versus instructor facilitation

the students generally preferred instructor facilitation to guide their learning and because of the instructor's authority "to keep the discussion on track". However peer facilitation was preferred when the participants wanted more ownership of the discussion or more experience of facilitation.

Kew 2015

Affective feedforward in online tutoring

"it was centred on affective needs, was frank and trusting, and was one within which feedforward was given, received and acted upon."

Chen, Chou and Cowan 2014, p705

Statements from online facilitators



Jolanda Morkel

CPUT

studio



Esther Gacicio

KICD

connection



Gerrit Wissing

Wits

voice, control



A professional development network



e/merge africa

Holding Space



Heart:

"alegri" Details

Be fully present, aware of what's happening in the whole gathering right now--physically, energetically, emotionally, and intellectually. Open and hold the psychological and spiritual space to provide a steady centre and container. Calmly maintain trust, safety, and focus.

Conclusion

Online facilitation has had a long run which isn't over yet

Connecting students to each other, to educators and to learning

Becoming crucial to the effectiveness of mainstream university educators

Facilitating Online Course in 2017



The final run of Facilitating Online in 2017 will be from 2 October – 24 November. **Applications** close on 13 September.

About the course

Facilitating Online provides a solid foundation for facilitating online events and courses. It is registered as a short course at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Facilitating Online was developed by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) at UCT and is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York as part of its support for the *e/merge Africa* network. It is convened by Tony Carr and Nicola Pallitt and co-facilitated by facilitators from across Africa.

Recommendations by participants

“I learned many facilitation skills that I am now able to apply with my own students. I would recommend the course highly to anyone embarking on the online teaching and learning journey.”

Dr Judith McKenzie, Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Cape Town.



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Teaching Resources

During the course of our work at CILT, we produce resources to facilitate and support teaching and learning at UCT. While these are not specifically produced for formal publication, they are often useful to others. They are shared in various formats in the following areas: Teaching & Learning Strategies; Engagement & Participation; Multimodal Ways of Teaching & Learning; Assessment; Enabling Teaching; Being an Online Scholar or Student; and The Curriculum.

Online and Blended Teaching



[Teaching in online and blended environments: An overview guide for UCT lecturers](#)

[Questions for tech access](#)



3. PLAN INTERACTION

3.1 Check concepts

Lessons: Ask a question tool on Vula

e.g. MCQ or short question. Can provide correct/model answer. Allows for grading.

Polls on Vula

Allows students to see others response. Responses are anonymous.

Test & Quizzes on Vula

Can take more time to setup, but allows for online assessment.

3.2 Elicit questions

Lessons: Comment tool on Vula

Students can comment below Lessons content.

Q&A tool on Vula

Students can ask questions & anyone can respond. Anonymous option.

Forums on Vula

Allows for grading, to encourage participation.

Chatroom on Vula (or Whatsapp)

Organise session at set time for Q&A. Use different rooms for large classes.

Shared Google Doc

3.3 Enable student content

Lessons: Student Content tool on Vula

For individuals or groups content. Allows for grading, peer review & self-grade.

Blogs on Vula

e.g. used as weekly self-reflection. Class can add comments.

Wiki or shared Google Doc

Google docs allows for collaborative editing. Track changes (edits) of logged-in users.

NB: All students will need stable internet access. Some may need to guide students into using the tools.

Beyond Vula



Google Drive



Some advice for when it is wanted



Content is essential

Content isn't enough




Know your students



Set your objectives

Set up the course network



Choose the right spaces and tools



Support students to achieve access



Test while the stakes are low



Frame your invitation



Show who you are



Stay connected



Show some empathy



Include student voices and perspectives



Hold the space

Ask generative questions



Be a coach



Make yourself available



Know your limits



Support peer learning



Set a heartbeat of regular updates for the course community



Keep the doors open



You are not alone

Your feedback

- What are your takeaways?
- Insights?
- Reflections?
- Questions?
- Anything that you want to do?

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