

**Lesson/Presentation Title:** Youth Leadership – Facilitation

**Time Required:** 30 minutes

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will learn basic principles and skills to engage in process-focused facilitation
- Student will learn how to organize and lead effective meetings

**Related National Standards:**

Trainings have been developed in alignment with Common Core Standards (CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.SL.11-12.1-5 and CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.SL.9-10.1-5)

**Materials Required:** Handouts, Facilitator Guidelines and Facilitation Discussion Guide

**Background for Facilitator and Assumed Prior Student Knowledge:**

Student Leaders have identified walking, active and alternative forms of transportation as an important and feasible component of reducing the school's carbon footprint.

The following activities are all possibilities for outreach and preliminary work that are recommended prior to the second youth leadership training session. Not all are required, but at least one or two should be conducted:

- In-class presentations to conduct outreach to students
- A Preliminary meeting with student group and/or other student leaders to assess interests and initial ideas to work on ECO<sub>2</sub>school and/or Safe Routes to School
- Identify Student Leaders and conduct the first Youth Leadership Training, team building.
- Conduct at least one outreach activity to build club membership like a club day or club outreach table.

Ideally this training happens after the club outreach activity and before the first club meeting so student leaders are prepared for their first club meeting.

**Teaching/Facilitation Strategy:**

Introductions: Provide an overview of what you are going to be doing during the session.

*Facilitator note: Many of the skills you will use in conducting this meeting are the same skills you are introducing to student leaders. As you conduct the meeting share your thinking and planning process about what you are doing and why.*

Activities:

Conduct an Icebreaker. Ask participants to say their name and answer one of the following questions or choose your own conversation starter question.

- How old were you when you learned to ride a bike and what color was the first bike you owned?
- What is the longest distance you have ever ridden on a bicycle?

An icebreaker is a facilitation tool for helping people feel comfortable and get to know each other. A good facilitator will have a couple icebreaker questions ready at the beginning of every meeting.

*Facilitator note: Since you and your leadership team already know each other an icebreaker as a “get-to-know-you” activity, may not be necessary, however, this is a key facilitation skill and a starting point for a discussion about what ice breakers are, what purpose they serve in engaging club participation.*

Decide as a group who will take meeting notes.

*Facilitator’s Note: Some students are great note takers; others have not yet developed this skill. This also is a key skill students will be learning in the training.*

Facilitation roles: In every meeting there are key roles that participants play. These roles include:

- **Facilitator:** The facilitator is a guide or discussion leader for the group who provides leadership and structure to a meeting to insure that the needed work gets done.
- **Note Taker:** The note taker or secretary records details of the meeting, any decisions or agreements that are made and next steps. This person also shares the information with club members who were not present. The note taker is often called upon to read key details at the beginning and end of each meeting.
- **Time Keeper:** The time keeper keeps the group on task and on schedule so all agenda items are met.
- **Participants:** This is an important role. Participants provide feedback, answer questions and share ideas.
- **Guest Speaker:** There may not be someone in this role at every meeting. It could be a person from an outside organization or a club member with specific information on a project or activity to share.

*Facilitator’s Note: Some clubs like to keep a club notebook. It is usually held by the club president or secretary and can be a helpful tool for keeping students organized.*

Decide who is going to play what role at the next club meeting.

*Facilitator’s Note: Club leaders may want to designate roles or they may want to rotate roles to give everyone multiple experiences. Deciding how the leadership team wants to organize itself moving forward should be part of the discussion.*

A good facilitator pays attention to time and space and makes sure that everyone gets to participate fully. A meeting is not a soap box rather it is an opportunity for input and discussion. The more you are able to engage others the more likely they will engage deeply with the work you want to accomplish.

Share the handout [Facilitator Guidelines](#) highlighting characteristics and practices you think the student leaders need to pay extra attention to.

*Facilitator's Note: This will change based on the personality and strengths of the student leaders you are working with.*

Agendas are a great way to organize yourself and communicate with other the goals and objectives of the meeting. Attaching times to agenda items is helpful for the time keeper and encourages all participants to say on task and on time.

- Make a list of the items you want to discuss
- Review it at the beginning of the meeting. Ask if anyone has anything to add.
- Leave time for discussion and questions

*Facilitator's Note: A typical school lunchtime is 35 minutes. This means the meeting can only be about 25 minutes. This goes faster than you think.*

Use the [Agenda Generator](#) to help you organize your first meeting.

*Facilitator's Note: Most often student leaders are not able to print and copy agendas before a meeting. They can write the agenda on the board.*

Closure: Set the next meeting. Acknowledge to the students what has been accomplished in the meeting and thank them for their time and effort.

Follow Up: Send a follow up email with the task list of what individuals have committed to and when and a reminder of the next meeting.

*Facilitator note: Make sure you include the teacher advisor in all communication so they can stay up to date on club activity.*

## **Facilitator Guidelines**

The facilitator is a guide or discussion leader for the group. The process of facilitation is a way of providing leadership without taking the reins. A facilitative leader focuses on both content and process and includes tips for facilitators, note takers and time keepers.

**Content:** What is the issue, question or task that is being looked at?

**Process:** What is the group dynamic? What are the methods or procedures that will be most useful to keep the discussion moving forward?

### **What does a facilitator do?**

- Pays attention to the time and the space
- Evokes participation and creativity
- Pays attention to the group dynamic, who talks, who isn't, taking turns
- Maintains ground rules of respect and tolerance for varying opinions
- Maintains personal integrity

### **Facilitator Characteristics**

- Initiates conversation
- Asks for other's opinions rather than always having to offer their own
- Listens without interrupting
- Looks people in the eye when talking to them
- Keeps the big picture in mind
- Is naturally curious about people, things and life in general
- Has a good understanding of the topic being discussed
- Is more like a coach than a sergeant

### **Participant Pitfalls**

- Confusion about the topic
- Dislike for the topic or adverse to the nature of the discussion
- Feelings of insecurity based on ability or others in the room
- Feelings of superiority to others in the room or towards the facilitator
- Fear of speaking or sharing of ideas in front of others

### **Facilitator Best Practice**

- Listen actively
- Ask questions
- Check for common understanding of terms and definitions
- Track discussions
- Summarize
- Use appropriate language
- Take notes

### **Communication between facilitators**

- Ask for help if you need it.
- Know the job division between you and your partner.
- Check in with each other often

## Agenda Generator

### Ice Breaker:

Ask people their name and your ice breaker question; go around the table and listen to answers.

### Ice Breaker Question:

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Agenda Items: Don't forget to ask participants if they have any additional agenda items.

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### Conversation Starter:

A conversation starter creates dialogue between you and the participants. Starters can be elusive and hard to think of and without them you can be left with awkward silence. A good starter is not a yes or no question but encourages participants to think and engage in the answer.

1. What do you already know about \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What do you want to know more about \_\_\_\_\_?
3. What interested you about this club?
4. What is already happening at school around \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Brainstorm related to an agenda item.

### End:

Share an interesting thing that you heard in the conversation and give everyone a take away.

Set the next meeting. Acknowledge to your team what has been accomplished in the meeting and thank them for their participation.

Follow Up: Note taker, send a follow up email or text with the task list of what individuals have committed to and when and a reminder of the next meeting.