



Training Tool Sheet Spring 2006

Introducing the Facilitation Model for Staff to Achieve Camp Outcomes

Facilitation helps campers realize what they have learned and think of ways to make behavior changes based on what they learned. It also provides structured opportunities for practicing new behavior choices with feedback and reinforcement from peers and staff. The facilitation model has been used effectively in adventure activities to create powerful, meaningful, behavior-changing learning experiences. The skills used and developed through processing experiences transfer to other aspects of camp. Facilitation can be as simple as intentionally starting and guiding discussions before, during, and after camp activities to help campers discover what has been or can be learned from these activities. Facilitation can also serve as a guide for structuring the entire activity: planning the activity with specific camper needs or camp outcomes in mind, leading the activity, debriefing after the activity, and guiding campers to think about how they might use what they have learned in other situations both during and after camp. Here is a basic outline to help staff implement the facilitation model during activities:

Planning: Intentionally design your activities with camper needs and camp goals and outcomes in mind. Include the “how” (process) as well as the “what” (activities or other program elements) in your planning.

- Base plans on general camper developmental characteristics and needs as well as specific individual needs.
- During the activities, or throughout the session, make changes as you observe changes in camper needs, and think about how it could be set up differently next time.
- Helpful questions to ask during planning might include:
 - How does this activity support the mission and philosophy of our camp?
 - What do we know about this age group and these individual campers that could affect their participation in this activity?
 - What do these campers need to learn and can this activity help them learn it?
 - How can we lead this activity so that it challenges campers to learn and grow in ways that are consistent with their developmental readiness?
 - How does this activity help campers to achieve the camp outcomes?

Participating: Present and lead the activities in a way that helps campers stay focused, refocus, and/or get past obstacles.

- At the beginning of the activity, get campers’ attention with a catchy phrase or introduction leading to questions, statements, and metaphors to direct campers’ attention to the reasons for doing this activity. This helps campers to know what to look for during the activity so that they are more likely to recognize and be able to reflect on what they learned from the experience.
- Observe and listen to campers, perhaps taking mental if not actual notes, during the experience. Use these observations to guide you in asking key questions or making suggestions during the activity that will help campers explore, solve problems, and get past sticking points.

Processing: Use a variety of appropriate processing techniques to help campers reflect on the experience. Processing helps campers recognize and think about what they learned and how they can use it. The “what?”; “So what?”; “Now what?” model is a simple, effective way to help campers with reflection (Gass & Gillis 2000).

- The “**what?**” questions focus campers’ thinking on what happened during the experience. These questions should relate to needs identified during the planning and participating processes.
- Staff members ask the “**so what**” questions so that campers will recognize the lessons learned and be more likely to apply the learning to other situations during and after camp.
- In the “**now what**” part of the process, staff members summarize the shared lessons and encourage campers to use “I” statements to commit to specific behavior changes. Ideally, this will include discussion about transferring these changes to other settings outside of camp. Provide some guided discussion time at the end of the camp day and/or session for campers to reflect on and share what they have learned and how they are doing with their learning goals. This helps to reinforce the learning for campers and helps staff to evaluate whether or not campers are really “getting” the outcomes that you say they are.

This is just a brief snapshot of how the facilitation process can be used. To access other resources, including more on the facilitation process, visit the ACA Web site using the links below.

Web Resources:

<http://www.acacamps.org/research/>
<http://www.acacamps.org/research/ydo.php>

References:

Gass, M. & Gillis, L. (2000). *The Essential Elements of Facilitation*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
Gass, M. (1995). *The Book of Metaphors*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.



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