

Center for Justice & Peacebuilding
Graduate Program in Conflict Transformation
Eastern Mennonite University
PAX 607: TECHNIQUES FOR GROUP FACILITATION
Spring 2012
Hartzler Library 121

Course Dates and times:

Friday and Saturday, 3-4 February, 2012

- Friday 3 February: 8:30-10:00 a.m., 10:30-12:30 p.m., 1:30-3:00 p.m., 3:15-5:00 p.m.
- Saturday 4 February: 8:30-10:00 a.m., 10:30-12:30 p.m., 1:30-3:00 p.m., 3:15-5:00 p.m.

Instructor:

Catherine Barnes, Ph.D.

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540-432-4579

Office Hours: Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (sign-up for a timeslot or stop by) or by appointment

Course Description

This intensive 2-day course is designed to develop participants' understanding of facilitation practice and their basic facilitation skills. We will begin by exploring conditions that enable people to work well in groups and the roles facilitators can play in enabling effective engagement. We will consider a variety of facilitator roles and functions and critically assess the ethics and appropriateness of these for different types of situations. We will focus on how to design effective processes for dialogue, deliberation and decision-making. Participants will be exposed to a variety of methods and tools to structure these processes. Working in pairs and in small groups, participants will have the opportunity to apply the principles we are exploring and to practice a range of core facilitation skills. While rooted in a North American peacebuilding paradigm, we will aim to also explore facilitation in other cultural traditions and raise awareness of the challenges of facilitating cross-culturally.

An important note: Because the course meets for only two full days, each hour represents a substantial portion of the material to be covered for the semester. It is important for students to plan to participate in the entire seminar. Missing portions of the course will be difficult to make up. While every effort will be made to accommodate religious commitments, students must make every effort to minimize the amount of course time missed even for religious commitments. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST A MINOR ADJUSTMENT TO THE TIME TABLE OUTLINED ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR SEVERAL WEEKS IN ADVANCE.

Course Objectives

1. Explore facilitation as a process tool for developing healthy group processes and for conflict transformation and prevention.

2. Consider essential concepts of group dynamics including, group norms, roles, power dynamics, diversity, and leadership.
3. Develop awareness of organizational and societal cultural norms governing group processes and roles in relation to facilitation.
4. Demonstrate basic facilitation techniques in role plays and other practice situations.
5. Understand different meeting functions and process strategies to help groups fulfill them.
6. Master the basics of effective meeting process design, including crafting agendas, using process tools appropriately, and enabling participatory decision making.
7. Students will observe and assess themselves and fellow students, providing feedback for improving facilitation skills and presence
8. Consider their personal strengths and areas of growth as participants and facilitators and create a personal growth plan.

Required Reading

The following are available for sale in the EMU bookstore:

- Kelsey, Dee and Pam Plumb. 2004. *Great Meetings! Great Results!* Portland, ME: Hanson Park Press.
- Sam Kaner et al. 2007. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. 2nd Edition. Jossey-Bass.
- Kraybill, Ron, and Evelyn Wright. 2007. *Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot. The Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

The following is available on moodle and online

- Robert Fritz "The Yin and Yang of Creating" *Oxford Leadership Journal*. June 2010, Vol 1 Issue 3.
http://www.oxfordleadership.com/journal/vol1_issue3/fritz.pdf

Supplemental reading for dialogue process design

- *Democratic Dialogue Handbook for Practitioners*
http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/we_do/democratic%20dialogue.pdf
- Schirch, Lisa, and David Campf. 2007. *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects: A Practical Hands-On Guide*. The Little Books of Justice & Peacebuilding. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Course Requirements

In addition to reading several key texts, course work will include observing a facilitated meeting and writing a short analytical critique, developing a meeting agenda with process notes, and preparing a short personal assessment and growth plan.

Schedule

Before First Class

1. Read all required texts by Kelsey and Plumb, Kaner et al, Kraybill and Wright, and Fritz and be prepared to share thoughts and ideas in class.
2. Critically observe a formally organized meeting and be prepared to discuss in class (see assignment notes, below, to prepare appropriately.)

During Class

3. Participate actively in class, demonstrating that you have read the required readings and can reflect analytically on the meeting you observed for this class. (40% of grade)

After Class - due Friday 24 February

4. Facilitation analysis paper with alternative meeting agenda and process notes (40% of grade).
5. Prepare a short personal assessment and growth plan (20% of grade, but on a 'pass / fail' basis)

Assignment Descriptions

Facilitation Analysis Paper + Alternate meeting agenda and process notes (40% of grade)

Paper due by Friday 24 February. Please send an electronic copy to Catherine.barnes@emu.edu.

Part 1. Facilitation analysis paper – length: maximum of 3-4 pages, single spaced

The purpose of this paper is to intentionally observe a meeting that involves facilitated decision-making where you do not have a stake in the outcome, to get comments about the experience of the meeting from the facilitator and participants (to the extent this is possible and not intrusive), and to reflect on the effectiveness of the process design and of the facilitator from the perspective of ideas you have encountered in the readings.

Plan ahead to attend the meeting before the class meets and be sure to take notes for your paper. The meeting you attend should be an organized meeting (in contrast with an ad hoc gathering of individuals). It could be church council, town or city council, a board meeting, or a staff meeting of a business or organization, a voluntary or community association or the meeting of a university group. Please see the moodle site for suggestions of possible meetings.

Guidance for preparing your facilitation analysis paper

Attend the meeting and observe carefully. Consider these types of issues, among others you may observe:

- What roles did the facilitator(s) seem to play? How would you assess their skill and judgment?
- What could you observe of the dynamics in the relationships between those in the meeting? How did the facilitator seem to interact with and help to channel these dynamics?
- Was the purpose of the meeting clear and well understood? Did participants seem to be informed of the agenda and to understand it?
- Did the process used seem well designed to achieve the meeting purpose?
- Was the time available used effectively?
- If a decision needed to be made, did the process seem to help the group work towards a good outcome – both in terms of content / task orientation and in terms of maintaining / strengthening relationships and group capacities?
- How did the facilitator respond to disagreement or tension, if it was present?
- What else was interesting / relevant from this meeting facilitation?

Aim to interview the facilitator and participants, if possible, to ask for their reflections on the meeting and to explore their satisfaction with the process and outcomes of the meeting.

In your paper, give a brief summary of the meeting and then discuss your observations, reflections, and comments made by the facilitator and participant(s). Use the required readings, along with other relevant texts, to support your observations and to help you select the criteria you would use to judge the effectiveness of the facilitator of the meeting you observe. Through your analysis, you should be able to demonstrate that you have understood concepts from our class and the readings and that you can apply them to the meeting you observed.

As a valuable addition, please include your thoughts on the organizational and societal 'cultural assumptions' implicit in the meeting process and the facilitator's role. Reflect briefly on whether and how the norms you witnessed would work in a very different organizational or societal culture with which you are familiar.

This section of the paper should conform to APA style and referencing requirements.

Part 2. Meeting agenda with process notes – length: maximum of 2-3 pages, formatted.

Design an alternate meeting agenda and process that you believe would be appropriate for achieving the implicit and explicit goals and objectives of the meeting you observed and analyzed in the first part of this assignment.

Samples of a meeting agenda with process notes will be available on the class moodle site. You can either use that format or develop your own. But you should include a timetable, list of who does what (roles not necessarily names), and enough description that I can 'follow along' to understand what you propose.

Personal Assessment and Growth Plan Paper (20% - graded on a pass/fail basis)

Paper due by Friday 24 February.

This paper should be no longer than 3-4 pages single spaced.

The purpose of this paper is to have you honestly evaluate your own personal strengths and challenges in group processes – both as a member of a group and as a facilitator or leader – in settings where you expect to find yourself in the future. Incorporate discussions from class and the readings throughout your paper, using proper citations for all references.

1. Define what you see as the attributes, skills, and knowledge areas of:
 - a) constructive group membership
 - b) being an effective facilitator
2. Assess yourself in light of these characteristics.
3. Create a short personal plan for how to develop strengths and how to address weaker areas, and ways to cultivate the specific skills and characteristics you feel you need in order to become the facilitator that you want to be.

In order to prepare for writing your paper, you should reflect on your experiences as participant and facilitator. Ask your friends and team members to provide feedback about your competencies and growth areas. Use insights you have developed from your readings to deepen your assessment.

Bibliography of additional resources

(Miscellaneous facilitation references, including some good ones* for skill building)

*Bens, Ingrid. 2005. *Facilitating with ease!* [electronic resource through our library] : core skills for facilitators, team leaders, and members, managers, consultants, and trainers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

*Cochran, Alice. 2004 *Roberta's Rules of Order: Sail Through Meetings for Stellar Results Without the Gavel*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Doyle, Michael and David Straus. 1976. *How to Make Meetings Work*. New York: Jove Books.

Forester, John. 1999. *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Hammond, Sue Annis. 1996. *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Plano, TX: Thin Book Publishing Co.

*Hunter, Dale, Anne Bailey and Bill Taylor. 1995 *The Art of facilitation: How to Create Group Synergy*. Tucson, AZ: Fisher Books.

Jenkins, John and Maureen. 2006. *The 9 Disciplines of a Facilitator*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kayser, Thomas. 1995. *Mining Group Gold: How to Cash in on the Collaborative Brain Power of a Group*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Levy, Daniel. 2010. *Group Dynamics for Teams*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Mennonite Conciliation Service. 2000. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

Mindell, Arnold. 1995. *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity*. Portland Oregon: Lao Tze Press.

*Putz, Gregory B. 1998. *Facilitation skills helping groups make decisions*. Bountiful, UT : Deep Space Technology, c1998.

*Rees, Fran. 2005. *The Facilitator Excellence Handbook*, Second Edition. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

*Schwartz, Roger M. 2005. *The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

*Webne-Behrman, Harry. 2008. *The Practice of Facilitation: Managing Group Process and Solving Problems*

Web Resources:

- Appreciative Inquiry: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/> and <http://www.iisd.org/ai/locating.htm>
- Basic Facilitation Skills Manual for International Association of Facilitators (IAF) <http://www.iafworld.org/files/public/FacilitatorMnl.pdf>
- Meeting Agenda http://web.mit.edu/hr/oed/learn/meetings/art_agenda.html
- Organizational Problem-Solving Approach: www.problemsolving2.com
- Public Conversations Project: www.publicconversations.org
- Search for Common Ground: www.itrainonline.org/itrainonline/-mmtk/cps.shtml
- Study Circles: www.StudyCircles.org
- World Café and Co-intelligence: www.co-intelligence.orgP-worldcafe.html and www.theworldcafe.com

Supplemental information for CJP graduate course syllabi:

Approved 3/20/06; updated 12/11

Writing Guidelines:

Writing will be a factor in evaluation: EMU has adopted a set of writing guidelines for graduate programs that include four sets of criteria: content, structure, conventions and style (see below). It is expected that graduates will be able to write at least a “good” level with 60% writing at an “excellent” level.

For the course papers, please follow the APA style described in CJP’s *GUIDELINES for GRADUATE PAPERS* (see student handbook or request a copy from the Academic Program Coordinator).

Academic Integrity Policy (AIP):

EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly before God. EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one’s own someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. (Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators). [Taken from “Academic Integrity,” 2011-12 Undergraduate Catalog.] This course will apply EMU’s AIP (see catalog, pp. 16-19) to any events of academic dishonesty. For more information see <http://www.emu.edu/academic-support/writing/academicintegritypolicy03-09.pdf> If you have doubts about what is appropriate, one useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Grading Scale & Feedback:

Grades will be based on an accumulation of numerical points that will be converted to a letter grade at the end of the course. Each assignment will receive a score expressed as a fraction, with the points received over the total points possible (e.g. 18/20). The following is the basic scale used for evaluation. *Points may be subtracted for missed deadlines.*

95-100 = A outstanding	90-94 = A- excellent
85-89 = B+ very good	80-84 = B good
75-79 = B- satisfactory	70-74 = C passing
Below 70 = F failing	

Graduate students are expected to earn A’s and B’s.

A GPA of 3.0 is the minimum requirement for graduation.

Regarding feedback on papers/projects: Students can expect to receive papers/assignments back in a class with faculty feedback before the next paper/assignment is due. This commitment from faculty assumes that the student has turned the paper in on the agreed upon due date.

Institutional Review Board:

All research conducted by or on EMU faculty, staff or students must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board to assure participant safety: <http://www.emu.edu/irb/>

Academic Support Center & Disability Support Services:

If you have received services in the past related to a learning disability or attention deficit disorder and/or you feel you may have such a problem in this course, please make an appointment to speak with the faculty member or with the Coordinator of Student Disability Support Services in the Academic Support Center, third floor of the Hartzler Library (432-4254). Please take advantage of the free individual tutoring from writing tutors. Writing tutors are strong writers who hold scheduled one-on-one sessions with students and are an excellent resource for writers at any level or at any stage in the writing process. Please remember that writing tutors do not provide editing or proofreading services. They will help you put what you learn into practice and will work with you to improve your own proofreading and editing skills. To make an appointment, please visit or call the Academic Support Center on the 3rd floor of the Sadie Hartzler Library or by accessing WOnline on myEMU portal.

Class Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. If unusual or emergency circumstances prevent class attendance, the student should notify the professor in advance if possible. Multiple absences from class will result in lower grades. The student is responsible for the material presented in classes missed. (EMU Graduate Catalog)

Students should be aware of the importance of regular class attendance, particularly in the case of CJP classes that meet weekly or over several weekends. Being absent for more than one class leads to a student missing a large portion of the class content. In addition to consistent class attendance, students should make every effort to arrive to class on time out of respect for the learning process, fellow students and faculty.

Course Extensions and Outstanding Grades:

For fall and spring semesters, all coursework is due by the end of the semester. If a student will not be able to complete a course on time, the student must submit a request one week before the end of the semester for an extension (up to 6 months) using a course extension form provided by the Academic Program Coordinator. If the request is granted the student will receive an "I (incomplete) for the course which will later be replaced by a final grade when the work has been turned in on the agreed upon date. If the request for an extension is denied, the student will receive a grade for the work that has been completed up until the time the course was expected to have been completed. If no work has been submitted, the final grade will be an F (or W under certain circumstances).

Extensions will be given only for legitimate and unusual situations. Extensions are contracted by the student with the program for up to a maximum of 6 months after the deadline for the course work. PLEASE NOTE: If the outstanding course work is received within the first 6 weeks of the extension, no grade reduction will be imposed; after 6 weeks any outstanding coursework will be reduced by ½ letter grade. If the extension deadline is not met, the student will receive a final grade for the work completed.

Writing Standards –Graduate Level (Grid Version)

Criteria	A excellent	B minimal expectations	C below expectations	Comments
Content (<i>quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows clarity of purpose - shows depth of content - applies insight and represents original thinking -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows clarity of purpose - shows substantial information and sufficient support - almost always represents original thinking - uses quality resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shows clarity of purpose - lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - represents little original thinking - uses mostly quality resources 	
Structure (<i>logical order or sequence of the writing</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically developed - uses very effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically developed - uses smooth transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed - uses some awkward transitions 	
Style (<i>appropriate attention to audience: effective word choice, sentence variety, voice; appropriate level of formality for academic writing vs. informal text messages and email</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is concise, eloquent, and rhetorically effective - composes varied sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - displays concern for careful expression - composes some varied sentence structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - displays some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted - composes little varied sentence structure - frequently uses jargon and clichés 	
Conventions (<i>adherence to grammar rules: usage, mechanics</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - composes well-constructed sentences -makes virtually no errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - almost always composes well-constructed sentences - makes minimal errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually has well-constructed sentences - makes several errors - makes word choices that distract the reader 	
Source Integrity (<i>appropriate acknowledgment of sources used in research</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cites sources for all quotations - composes credible paraphrases, cited correctly - includes reference page - makes virtually no errors in documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cites sources for all quotations - composes credible paraphrases, usually cited correctly - includes reference page - makes minimal errors in documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cites sources for all quotations - composes mostly credible paraphrases, sometimes cited correctly - includes reference page - makes several errors in documentation style 	
<p>The weighting of each of the five areas is dependent on the specific written assignment and the teacher's preference. Plagiarism occurs when a person presents as one's own "someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source" (adapted from Council of Writing Program Administrators).</p>				Grade

Approved by University Faculty

April 28, 2004

Revised by the Writing Committee

April 2008

Updated March 2009