UNIT 2

Facilitating Learning Teams

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Learning objectives

Learners will be able to…

- Understand the responsibilities and skills needed by facilitators and other roles that contribute to a team's success.

- Understand how groups develop in order to be able to address members' needs at each stage of team development.

- Acquire skills and strategies for facilitating learning teams, such as forming agreements, using purpose and nonpurpose, managing challenging situations, and assessing team effectiveness and efficiency.

- Develop strategies for assessing learning team members' contributions, the team's effectiveness, and the results of the team's work.

UNIT **2**

Agenda

Time: 3 1/4 hours

SECTION	TIME	TOPIC	PURPOSE
1	15 min.	Overview, introductions, agenda, objectives, purpose, and working agreements	Build connections to the learning content and establish a comfortable environment Introduce participants Create a common set of agreements
2	10 min.	Conditions for a successful collaborative learning team	Clarify the conditions that lead to a learning team's success
3	40 min.	Define facilitator, facilitator responsibilities and attributes, and other roles	Define facilitator Describe facilitator responsibilities Discover attributes of facilitators Discuss other roles in a team
4	30 min.	Stages of team development and how facilitators help the team develop at each stage	Understand how teams develop over time
5	20 min.	Agreements	Establish agreements among team members to develop a culture that promotes learning, experimentation, and risk taking by ensuring safety, trust, and respect for each member Review a process for establishing agreements
6	20 min.	Purpose and nonpurpose	Focus the meeting to increase accountability for achieving goals
7	30 min.	Strategies for addressing challenges in teams	Acquire strategies for addressing issues and challenges that occur
8	20 min.	Assessing teamwork and members' contributions for improvement	Identifying tools and processes for assessing strengths and areas for improvement in team's work and individual members' contributions
9	5 min.	Wrap-up	Summarize learning and plan next actions

Facilitating learning teams

Essential questions

Read the essential questions on Handout 1.3 and put a check mark next to those that are **most important** to you to answer today.

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Agreements

- Be open to learning new strategies.

- Be an active participant.

- Take responsibility for your learning.

- Honor your colleagues' learning needs.

- Respect our time schedule.

- Think of how you might use these resources to develop others' capacity to facilitate.

Effective vs. ineffective teams

- Introduce yourself.

- Share your current role.

- Share one reason for attending.

- Share one essential question you want to answer.

- Identify a personal learning goal:

    What do I hope to learn today?

    What will I contribute to today's learning?

Conditions for an effective team

- Clear roles and responsibilities

- Agreements for interaction

- A shared vision and mission

- A clear purpose

- Defined processes for accomplishing goals

- A clear decision-making process

Mini-dialogue

- Suspend judgment.

- Listen with the intent of learning and expanding your own view.

- Speak briefly.

- Balance who speaks.

- Honor all points of view.

Because the conditions for effective teams typically are not present in all teams, especially new ones, most collaborative learning teams will struggle.

Facilitating learning teams

Definition of facilitator

- Read the definition of facilitator.

- Consider what you would add to the definition offered.

- At your table, discuss how a facilitator differs from a presenter or trainer.

Facilitating learning teams

What facilitators know, do, and believe

After reading the list of facilitator responsibilities, generate a list of what facilitators need to know, do, and believe to accomplish their responsibilities.

Use Handout 3.2 to record your ideas.

Team roles

- Assign roles to your team members.

- Read one or more role descriptions and share with your team:

  - A description of the role.

  - An explanation of how this role helps the team be effective and efficient.

- Determine which roles are priorities for your team.

Learning task 1

- At your table, discuss how assigning team members to specific roles increases the team's effectiveness and efficiency.

- Discuss the potential downside of assigning team members to specific roles.

- Identify possible ways to address the downsides.

Learning task 2

- Privately, assess your own strengths and areas for growth as a facilitator.

- Name two strengths you have and how you know they are strengths.

- Identify one area you want to develop and steps you might take to do so.

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Stages of team development

Forming

- High concern for authority and rules

- Push to conform

- Team members display "nice" behavior

Stages of team development

Storming

- Primary concern is personal and individual survival

- Fight/flight or counter dependent behavior

- Multiple sources of tension

- Disagreement

Stages of team development

Norming

- Commitment to agreements

- Structures and process leading to smooth operation

- Increased collegiality

- Increased attention to achieving goals

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Stages of team development

Performing

- Genuine opportunity to learn and discover best solutions

- Shared believe that difference + conflict = strength

- Focus on goals

Learning task

- With a partner, briefly describe a team outside your school that you are a member of and the team's current stage of development.

- Explain what evidence you used to determine the team's stage of development.

- Identify one action you think is needed to move the team to the next stage of development.

Agreements

- Agreements are the explicit promises members of a team make to one another about how they operate as a team.

- Agreements describe how team members will interact and what they want from each other to maintain safety, trust, and respect, as well as to be effective and efficient in accomplishing their work.

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Areas for agreements

Decision making	Interaction/support
Problem solving	Communication and participation
Disagreement/ conflict	Time and attendance
Confidentiality	Productivity

Sample agreements

- Read the sample agreements in Handout 5.3.

- Label each agreement in one set of agreements by the type of agreement.

- Consider which areas are not addressed, and recommend agreements for those areas for this type of team.

Forming agreements

- Identify and share individual needs.

- Clarify what abstract norms look like and sound like.

- Ask for missing norms. Recommend some or prompt others to do so.

- Ask for the total team to agree.

- Work toward consensus with the norms.

- Commit to giving feedback.

- Have all members pledge to follow the norms.

- Post the norms and review them frequently.

Learning task

- In triads, discuss the value of agreements and what happens in teams when agreements are absent or broken.

- Identify several ways facilitators can gently remind team members about their agreements if agreements are broken.

Purpose/nonpurpose

- **Purpose**: A description of the meeting's focus, the objective the group wants to accomplish, and explanation of how the team's work relates to its overarching goal. The meeting purpose keeps team members focused on what they are expected to accomplish by the end of the meeting.

- **Nonpurpose**: Describes what the team might be tempted to do because it is related yet is likely to take members off track.

Purpose/nonpurpose

- Read through the purpose and nonpurpose for the eight meetings described in Handout 6.1.

- Add additional statements of nonpurpose that are likely to apply to similar meetings in your school.

- Form a summary statement about the value of purpose and nonpurpose statements for collaborative learning team meetings.

Learning task

- Write the purpose and nonpurpose of the meeting for a meeting you will attend or facilitate in the near future.

- Share your purpose and nonpurpose with a colleague and ask for feedback on the clarity and specificity of the purpose and on the appropriateness of the nonpurpose.

Types of challenges in teams

- Conflict between or among members.

- Different values.

- Unproductive behaviors, such as interrupting, dominating, and so on.

- Uneven engagement.

- Others . . .

Mandatory strategies

- Remain neutral.

- Listen carefully to what is said by the person or persons presenting the challenge.

- Seek to understand the source of the challenge.

- Honor the situation; acknowledge that the situation is uncomfortable for everyone.

Optional strategies

- Read through additional options on Handout 7.1.

- Star those that feel comfortable to you.

- Check those that feel uncomfortable to you.

- Consider what makes some strategies feel more comfortable for you and others less comfortable.

Learning task

Reflect individually and make notes:

- As you review the facilitator's responsibilities and challenges, what is your greatest worry or concern?

- What reminders might you give yourself when challenges occur?

- What supports will help you succeed in challenging situations?

Assessing teams

- Effectiveness *(results)*

- Efficiency *(operations)*

- Member contributions *(behaviors)*

Learning task

- In a group of four, look through the tools offered for assessing learning teams. Identify one you want to use.

- Describe your reasons for selecting a tool and the team you want to use it in.

Wrap-up

- Review essential questions on Handout 1.3.

- Find a partner. Together, answer one essential question.

- Rotate to another partner and answer another essential question.

- Repeat this process until time is up.