

### *Skills Required*

- *Listening.* The facilitator should be able to listen actively in order to hear what every team member is saying.
- *Questioning.* The facilitator should be skilled at asking questions. The *IA Leaders' Guide* provides the questions – the facilitator should skillfully phrase the questions and reword as necessary to get maximum involvement.
- *Sharing.* The facilitator should create an atmosphere in which team members are willing to share their feelings and opinions.
- *Problem Solving.* When presented with a problem, the facilitator should help the group identify a solution, rather than focus on the negative.
- *Resolving Conflict.* Recognize that participants will have diverse backgrounds and opinions. Conflict among governors-elect should not be suppressed. Instead, it should be expected and dealt with constructively.
- *Using a participative style.* The facilitator should be able to encourage all team members to participate in the discussion.
- *Accepting others.* The facilitator should maintain an open mind and remain neutral, not criticizing the ideas and suggestions of the governors-elect.
- *Empathizing.* The facilitator should be able to consider the issue from a variety of perspectives.
- *Leading.* The facilitator must be able to keep the group focused and the discussion on target.
- *Time Management.* The facilitator must ensure all material is equitably covered.

The following guidelines are adapted from *The Facilitator's Fieldbook* by Thomas Justice and David W. Jamieson. Review these statements each morning to remind yourself of the role of a facilitator.

## Facilitation Fundamentals:

- Listen intensely. Be a role model for listening, often paraphrasing and “mirroring” what was said.
- Maintain good eye contact and stay connected to the group and each of its members.
- Trust in the resources of the group. Keep focused on the discussion.
- Use people’s names.
- Stay alert and involved at each moment.
- Organize, connect, and summarize to achieve closure and a sense of completion.
- Protect each and every idea offered. Do not allow ideas to be attacked.
- Be a facilitator, not a performer. Be interested, not interesting.
- Encourage everyone to express themselves, and validate varying points of view offered. Keep track of who talks and who does not, encouraging balanced participation.
- Be the guide, not the group leader.
- Be aware of the outcomes of the session and flexible in approach to helping achieve those outcomes.

# Characteristics of Adult Learners<sup>1</sup>

It is important for facilitators to know how people learn. Learning involves:

- Taking in information
- Processing information
- Gaining understanding or insight
- Retaining what has been learned

## *Chinese Proverb*

*I hear and I forget.  
I see and I remember.  
I do and I understand.*

Understanding principles of adult learning helps the facilitator fulfill his/her critical role. The purpose of adult education is to help them to learn, not to teach them what you want the participants to know. The *International Assembly Leaders' Guide* is based on the principle of facilitated learning – not teaching.

## *Important considerations when training adult learners*

- Adult learners are usually self-directed.
- The trainer functions as a facilitator rather than an academic instructor.
- Learners have individual needs and learning styles.
- Create a climate conducive to learning.
- Learners' past experiences are useful in the learning process.
- Learning activities should have some relevance to the learners' circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> This information is adapted from Dr. Malcom Knowles III's research in *The Adult Learner*.

# Nonverbal Communication

Albert Mehrabian, who spent a career in nonverbal research, wrote that seven percent (7%) of one's perceived attitude is conveyed verbally and ninety-three percent (93%) nonverbally. Of the ninety-three percent, thirty-eight percent (38%) was attributed to vocal cues and fifty-five percent (55%) to facial cues.

It is important to note that there is no universal nonverbal language. Different gestures may mean different things in different cultures.

There are several categories of nonverbal languages.

- *Human body.* The size, shape, sex, age, physique, and special characteristics all convey messages to the receiver. How these are interpreted varies with the receiver.
- *Body movement and use of space.* The training leader greeting people at the door and standing in the front of the room at the beginning of the discussion period sends a message of control without words. Some movements can distract participants. Examples of distracting movements include playing with jewelry, paper or a pen, continually adjusting glasses, touching hair, or leaning against a wall for support.

If using a flip chart, do not turn your back to participants. When referring to a visual, do so at a 45-degree angle.

As the space between the message sender and the receiver becomes less, the communication tends to become more personal and intense. Backing away and creating more space can have the opposite effect. For example, stand between participants to block cross talk with your body, or back away to encourage it.

- *Voice qualities and characteristics.* The use of tone, inflection, pace and volume all have an impact on the words that that we are using. Providing variety can help convey the appropriate messages at the appropriate time.
- *Eye contact.* From the training leader perspective, use of the eyes may help in controlling who is speaking and who

may speak next as you move around the room. The way you use your eyes may also impact the way you are perceived by the discussion participants. A study found that speakers who were judged sincere looked at the audience sixty-three percent (63%) of the time, while speakers who were judged insincere looked at the audience twenty-one (21%) of the time.

- *Gestures.* While using gestures to emphasize various points can be effective, making too many can easily divert participant's attention away from a session's content.
- *Silence.* Silence can provide effective communication. As a training leader, standing in front of the discussion group at the beginning of the session and saying nothing may be an effective way of conveying the message that it is time to start. You may also want to use silence after asking a question in order to allow discussion participants to mentally prepare a response. It may also be that in some cultures, if seminar participants know the subject being discussed, it is proper to remain silent.
- *Touch.* In the context of the training leader, a handshake and greeting at the door provides communication without a single word being spoken.
- *Facial Expression.* Using and interpreting facial expressions can aid the training leader. Frequently, facial expression will identify someone who does not agree with a statement or who does not understand what is being said. Training leaders can also use facial expressions to express interest or concern.
- *Time/Pace.* A fast speaker will frustrate participants. Participants tend to view such speakers as anxious. Be sure to speak slowly enough for participants to follow (many of whom may be taking notes or who may not be native speakers of the language).

## In the Group Discussion Room

### Effective Questioning Techniques

The *International Assembly Leaders' Guide* is based upon facilitated discussion and uses questions that guide participants to cover key topics during the session. Asking participants questions can help to:

- Encourage analysis
- Broaden participation
- Encourage sharing
- Call attention to points that have not been considered
- Use conflict constructively
- Test the strength of a decision
- Close the discussion
- Call attention to the source of information

The *International Assembly Leaders' Guide* typically includes open-ended, overhead questions (see definitions below). However, you will want to modify the questions depending on the focus and dynamics of the group. Facilitators can ask questions in different types of ways:

- Open-ended questions
- Closed-ended questions
- Overhead questions
- Relay questions
- Directed questions
- Reverse questions
- Redirected questions
- Directive open-ended questions

*Open-ended Questions.* Open-ended questions cannot be answered by a "yes" or "no" response. Since they stimulate thinking and encourage greater discussion, facilitators use open-ended questions to increase a team's participation.

*Closed-ended Questions.* Closed-ended questions solicit a one-word response. Typically, you would avoid asking closed-ended questions, unless you are working to clarify the group's

perspectives or narrow down ideas to a workable number.

*Overhead Questions.* Addressed to the entire group to encourage discussion, overhead questions channel group thinking, or are used to bring out different opinions. If a lively discussion has suddenly stopped, you might revive it by asking, "What are some of the other items we could consider under this heading?" "What other remedies for this situation have you found?"

*Relay Questions.* These questions are returned to the group as in the following example: "That's a good question. How have some of the rest of you handled that problem?"

*Directed Questions.* Asked to a specific individual, directed questions initiate discussion, redirect the conversation, or draw out the participant. Be careful not to overuse this technique or the group will expect your questions and the meeting will become a question/answer session. Present the question before directing it to an individual to ensure that others in the group also consider possible responses.

*Reverse Questions.* These questions are used to suggest that the person posing the question give his or her own answer. This method calls for tact. If it is apparent that the participant has his or her own opinion, it is helpful to elicit additional comments. Even if the questioner obviously has no answer, you might want to reverse the question to encourage the participant. On the other hand, be alert to group members who fall into the habit of asking many questions on topics about which they have strong viewpoints.

*Redirected Questions.* This technique encourages further discussion and at the same time relates the question back to previous discussion. A question may also be redirected to a member known to have special knowledge. Example: A participant asks you a question and you redirect the question to another this way. "Thank you for the question. Perhaps <NAME> could respond as he/she may have some knowledge of that topic."

*Directive Open-ended Questions.* These questions ask an individual to talk in the direction you want. The questions request expansion or further explanation on a particular subject. This technique is used when specific, focused answers are needed on an issue. Example: Listen to what the participant has to say, and then base the next

