

Facilitated Dialogue Basics
A Self-Study Guide for Nutrition Educators

Let's Dance[©]



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Table of Contents



Overture



Dance Basics



Preparing to Dance



Learning the Steps



Encouraging Your Partner to Dance



How Well Did We Dance? Let's Keep In Touch



Ending Our Dance

Note To Users:

Madeleine Sigman-Grant is a Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Extension Specialist. Most examples used to illustrate the principles and skills are drawn from her experience and those of her colleagues who have actively used this technique. However, the techniques can be applied universally to learners from the adolescent years through the senior years as they are derived from Adult Education Theory.

If you have any questions, email the author at sigman-grantm@unce.unr.edu.

Acknowledgements

There have been many individuals who have contributed to the ideas and content of this guide. In particular, Dr. Sigman-Grant gratefully acknowledges Joye Norris and Michael Elfant for their generous contributions to the development of the ideas discussed in this guide and to Keri Nikolajewski for her critical editing and to Vicki Paul for her patience with formatting.

OVERTURE

Obviously you have an interest in learning more about facilitated dialogues. The intent of this guide is to improve your use of this technique; however, this is but one of many techniques that are part of an overall learning-centered approach to education. In order to determine the impact of your work, evaluations are critical. That is true for this guide as well. We would like to capture how helpful this guide was for you.

Before beginning your dance, please take a moment and complete the following questionnaire. The questions will prepare you for the material to come, help you understand the strengths and challenges identified by others like yourself in implementing facilitated dialogues, and assist us in fulfilling the mission of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, part of which is to evaluate the impact of our work.

We would like for you to make a copy of your responses to this questionnaire and the one following the completion of the guide. Mail these unidentified pages to:

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Your responses will be combined with others and an aggregate evaluation will be compiled for reporting and presentation purposes. Your returned evaluations will imply your consent for your responses to be included. Thank you for assisting us in this critically important endeavor.

In return for your evaluation, you may choose one of the items listed below. Simply indicate your selection on the back of your business card (or a blank piece of paper); place this into a sealed envelope and insert this envelope with your questionnaires into a larger envelope. When we receive your envelope, we will separate your request from your responses. Your request will be immediately filled and your information will not be linked to your responses.

Choose from the three items below.

- Pocket calculator
- Pocket meat thermometer
- Computer screen cleaner

Before Reading the Guide

Consider the following thoughts. Check the statement that describes how you learn best.

- I learn best when I read carefully and take notes
- I learn best when I am part of a group and can discuss the information
- I learn best when I am part of a group and listen to a speaker
- I learn best when I use a combination of the above

Using the following scale, please **circle** your responses to the statements below.

I plan to try facilitated dialogues with my learners.	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
My level of confidence to be able to change to a new way of teaching is...	Very low	Somewhat low	I don't know my level	Somewhat high	Very high

Check the box that best describes your level of knowledge and use for each technique listed.

Techniques	Level of Knowledge		Level of Use		
	I have NOT heard about	I have heard about	I have NEVER used	I have tried	I use frequently
Open-ended questions					
The 0 –10 scale					
The pros and cons grid					
Creating a situation					
Reading a story					
Using menus					

Write down two things that you think you already do well as a teacher.

Write down two reasons why you would like to improve your teaching skills.

Dance Basics



Why is Facilitated Dialogue like a dance?

- ◆ There is a structure to follow. But within that structure there is lots of wiggle room for improvising.
- ◆ While you can dance alone, it is so much more fun with a partner or two.
- ◆ While there is a leader, there also is give and take between partners.
- ◆ Communication between the leader and the partner is vital. Without it, the dance falls apart.
- ◆ The pace changes as the music (rhythm) changes. This adds to its beauty.
- ◆ Once you learn the basic steps, you can apply them to any dance.
- ◆ It may take two to tango, but group dancing is lots of fun too.

If you think of other similarities, please send an email to sigman-grantm@unce.unr.edu.

What is Facilitated Dialogue?

A facilitated dialogue is a method of group teaching that involves the active participation of the leader and members of the group. It is a way to get all people involved in and centered on the learning. The experiences of each member of the group are shared and compared. The general outcome of facilitated dialogue is to create a safe environment for learners to consider changing behaviors.

The true concept of Facilitated Dialogue is to minimize facilitator talking and have the group members “conduct” the discussion. Furthermore, in the *ideal* situation, group members determine what the discussion will be focused on.

In reality, given the short time frame for conducting group nutrition education, the goals of the programs within which nutritionists work (and the funding sources), and the initial reluctance of group members to share, it is difficult for many nutrition educators to reach these ideals. In addition, many nutritionists are required to transfer specific information (e.g. serving sizes), program content (e.g. weight gain in pregnancy) or direct specific behaviors (e.g. wean at 12 months of age). This guide is intended to help nutrition educators bridge the gap between their traditional educational approaches and the innovative technique of Facilitated Dialogue while trying to fulfill the constraints of their agencies.

What Facilitated Dialogue is NOT

As written, a reader might construe this guide and facilitated dialogue as being facilitator focused. This is not the case. Facilitated dialogues are about the learners not the facilitator. During the group meeting, it is the group members who do most of the talking -- not the facilitator. Facilitated dialogues are not lectures with activities added. Educators who ask open-ended questions, wait for a response, and then proceed with their previously written script are not providing facilitated dialogues.

Nor are facilitated dialogues simply discussions where group members meet and talk about any topic that comes to mind when they enter the door, while the leader encourages member participation and corrects misinformation. Rather, Facilitated Dialogue uses the principles of Adult Learning, which focus on engaging the learners, recognizing their experiences, and helping them help each other. This guide is written directly to you as a facilitator to help you understand what you should and should not be doing during the dialogue.



Self-Learning Activity¹

Consider the following example that compares the techniques. Remember that the approach written here is a guided dialogue, not a just “chat about anything” discussion. Read through the chart, then jot down your observations about what is different between the two approaches.



¹ To help you master the components of Facilitated Dialogues, there are self-study activities scattered throughout this guide. These will be identified with this 3-Step picture. Take the time to complete these activities. It will be time well spent.



React to incorrect response

Well, that is not quite right.

Thank you for saying that since lots of others think that too. However, the latest information is....Thanks again for bringing that up.

Conduct class

Set up the Pyramid chart. Read through the entire chart and tell why foods are grouped as they are. Now demonstrate how to make a meal using all the food groups.

Which foods are the hardest for you to introduce to your family? Would someone like to share what typically happens? What about the rest of you – what ways have worked for you?

Provide handouts

Give group members their own copy.

I have copies of the Food Guide Pyramid. Feel free to take one. They might help you explain to your family what we discussed today.

Ask if any questions

Do you have any questions?

Well, time is about up. What questions do you have about.....?

Announce topic of next session

Next time we will talk about serving sizes.

Since we will be getting together again, what would you like to discuss? (*Write down the responses.*) Which one of these topics do you want to discuss at the next meeting? (*Count and determine the upcoming topic.*)

Close class

Good-bye.

Thank you for coming.

Why use Facilitated Dialogue as a teaching tool?

Consider the information in this chart. Now think about how you teach. Keep these facts in mind as you work your way through this guide. Reflect on how much more you will learn and retain by completing (doing) the Practice Activities scattered throughout the pages. While reading is beneficial, practicing is critical. Be an active learner yourself so you can help others!

Learners' Ability to Retain Information

- 10% of what is read
- 20% of what is heard
- 30% of what is seen
- 50% of what is seen and heard
- 70% of what is said as they talk
- 90% of what is said as they do something

Facilitated dialogues engage the learner in the learning and enhance their opportunities for learning by increasing their interest. In addition, when learners are involved in the education, they are more apt to return for more. Learners become involved by choosing what they want to learn about, by sharing their own experiences and ideas, by helping other learners, and by actively participating.

When some facilitators first hear that learners determine what happens during the session, they erroneously believe that learners determine what will be discussed on any given day. That is not what happens when facilitated dialogues are used. Facilitated dialogues can be directed and contained, but the techniques allow facilitators to interact with learners and make adjustments during the session to enhance learners' experiences. Thus, adapting facilitated dialogue as a teaching tool will increase facilitators' effectiveness so that program goals can be met.

Starting the Dance

Before beginning, it helps if everyone is on the same page. Here are some definitions that help begin the dance.

Definitions

<i>Facilitation</i>	the act of making easy or easier
<i>Facilitator</i>	a person who makes it easier for people to understand (see educator – throughout this guide, <i>educator</i> and <i>facilitator</i> will be used interchangeably)
<i>Discussion</i>	talk or a talk between two or more people about a subject
<i>Dialogue</i>	goes beyond a discussion so that we can really listen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine our ideas • put ourselves in another's place • be willing to change • create something new from what everyone offers
<i>Educate</i>	to lead people out of one place towards another
<i>Educator</i>	a person who has subject knowledge and guides the dialogue - (see facilitator – throughout this guide, <i>educator</i> and <i>facilitator</i> will be used interchangeably)
<i>Learner</i>	a person who has personal knowledge and contributes to the dialogue (other words used for learner are: client, participant, student)
<i>Partners</i>	the educator and the learners
<i>Warm-ups</i>	activities that serve to get learners focused (i.e. anchored) to the task of the day

Ground Rules

Before beginning the dance, the roles of each partner need to be clear.

Rules for Partners

- ❖ Be an attentive partner
- ❖ No laughing or other comments
- ❖ Do not force other partners to speak if they choose not to do so
- ❖ R-e-s-p-e-c-t each other and the facilitator

Additional Rules for the Facilitator

- ❖ Be an attentive listener
- ❖ There is no blaming and no accusing
- ❖ Do not do all the talking
- ❖ Respect, Respect, Respect -- each learner, their time, their opinions, and their experiences

The charts on the following pages define the roles of each partner with more detail.

What are the Roles of the Partners in the Dance?

Facilitator

What's the Facilitators Job?	What's Not the Facilitators Job?
Provide opportunities for learning	Coerce learner to attend ineffective, boring, or unmeaning education offerings
Really listening to learner	Interrupt the learner
Give responsibility for change to learner	Assume responsibility for learner's behavior
Guide conversation to stimulate learner's awareness and interest	Monopolize the conversation
Create a motivating environment	Create a hostile or uninteresting environment
Respect learner's values, attitudes, and beliefs	Ignore the learner's expertise about her life
Find something you like about each learner	Judge the learner
Model reflective listening and interpersonal interactions	Present yourself as the expert
Accept learner for where she is without blame	Blame learner for situation

Learner

What's the Learner's Job?	What's Not the Learner's Job?
Participate in nutrition education by actively listening and sharing when you want to	Ignore educator; be rude, belligerent, or disrespectful
Share questions, concerns, and successes with educator AND EACH OTHER	Act disinterested
Accept responsibility for changing behaviors	Expect educator to be responsible for your behavior
Participate in the dialogue; share with the educator and others	Disrupt conversation by actions or words
Respond to experience in a respectful manner	Be disrespectful and uncooperative
Find something you like about the educator and each other	Judge the educator

Common Expectations in the Dance

The following chart lists both common expectations of nutrition educators and of learners. Often there is discrepancy between what facilitators expect and what learners can actually do and vice versa.

Facilitators' Expectations	What Learners Actually <i>Can</i> Do
Learners and facilitator agree as to what is important	Express what they believe is important, even if not in agreement with facilitator
The conversation will stimulate learner's awareness and interest	Identify existing barriers and supports
By creating a motivating environment, educator will enhance cognitive (knowing), affective (feeling), and behavioral (doing) changes	Learner considers alternative ideas and strategies
Learner's values, attitudes, and beliefs can be immediately changed	Share their current values, attitudes, and beliefs with the educator so that ideas can be exchanged
By listening to learner, facilitator will be able to offer options for change that learners will follow	Consider suggestions made by others and facilitator

Learner's Expectations	What Facilitators Actually <i>Can</i> Do
Being in a supportive environment	Ensure confidentiality, voluntary participation, and a pleasant facility
To be heard	Listen reflectively
Being treated with respect	Act respectfully by accepting the learner's values and situations
Give them the answer to their situation	Increase learner's awareness of their situation and support them finding their own solutions
Give them the answers to their situation	Guide conversation toward learner's own experiences and feelings
Educator will solve their problems	Provide support, offer options so learner can try new strategies, allow other group members to share their experiences, and offer suggestions

Underlying Expectations for Facilitated Dialogues

Most facilitators have lots of ideas about what to expect from learners. Below are some ideas that are important to facilitated dialogues.



Self-Learning Activity

Take a few minutes and look over these expectations.

Place a checkmark (✓) by those which you have experienced as always true; a (+) for those which are true for most of your experiences; and a (-) for those which you have not experienced often. Hopefully you have had more positive experiences than negative ones. Even more important, as you use facilitated dialogues, negative experiences will decrease and be replaced by positive ones.

Facilitators must believe that:

- People want to do a good job for whatever they are responsible.
- People's values and behaviors often conflict. What people do may not help them get what they want to achieve or meet their values.
- People, with guidance, can see this conflict, can find ways to bring their practices closer to their dreams, and even change to make their dreams a reality.
- Every learner is the "expert" of her/his own life. In facilitated dialogues, learners are allowed to share their expertise (if they choose to do so) about what is happening to them, what they don't have or can't do or don't know.
- Facilitators are "experts" in knowledge as well as in what others have experienced that might be helpful to new learners.
- Together, learners and facilitators are equal partners in the learning experience.
- Success occurs when facilitators build on the *strengths* of learners -- not on their *deficits*.
- Learners come into the dialogue with the capacity to do the work involved with learning.
- New content is best presented through active involvement, which is done with a learning task.
- Learners learn when they are actively involved in the content: with their minds (intellectually), their feelings (emotionally), and their bodies (physically).
- Learning tasks help make learners responsible for learning.
- Each learner can identify one or more personal strengths upon which to build.
- In a group, learners are able to hear many different ideas.
- In a group, learners get feedback on their own ideas.
- In a group, concerns can be discussed safely.
- Group members can provide suggestions to help others.
- Goals can be set together by the group.

Characteristics of Dialogue Groups

The best *size* for groups is no less than 4 and no more than 10 with about 7 persons being the best.

- ❖ If the group size is smaller, there is too much pressure on learners to talk. It also allows for promoting domination by a single person.
- ❖ If the group size is larger, not all learners can be engaged in the dialogue and some members can become permanently ignored.

Since facilitator and learners are equal partners, everyone sits around a table or in a circle of chairs. There is no one focal point (e.g. where the “teacher” sits). Equipment such as overheads, computers, flip charts, etc. may be useful to augment dialogues. However, these are only tools and should not be the only focus. Set these up so all can see, use them when appropriate but move back into the group when they are no longer needed. A circle of chairs is useful when parents bring their children. Place the children in the circle with some toys or books. Parents can maintain eye contact and control – in fact, members can help each other out and the children are contained and prevented from getting into mischief.

Another important element of groups is *continuity*. It is best, although not mandatory, if each group begins and ends as a unit. When new learners are allowed into established groups, it takes time to become a unit again. If this cannot be helped, make certain each lesson begins with a warm-up activity that welcomes new members (see page 46). Facilitators should engage existing group members to bring the new learner along rather than taking on that role themselves.

If you are presented with conducting nutrition education to large groups, it is difficult to truly create a facilitated dialogue. In an attempt to utilize some of the facilitated dialogue techniques when working with a large audience, it is important that the room be arranged so that learners can break into smaller groups. If this is impossible, then the facilitator will be challenged to design the session to promote “dialogue.” Having participants turn to a neighbor, or work with three or four people nearby are helpful approaches to overcoming facility barriers.

Structure of Facilitated Dialogues

Like most nutrition education sessions, there needs to be an organized approach to facilitated dialogues. Unlike other types of education, however, the focus of the dialogue is not what the *facilitator* does but rather what the **learner** does. Group members want to be a part of the dialogue. To accommodate this human need, facilitators must structure the sessions so that learners are **the** central part of the session. Rather than being taught, learners become facilitators and facilitators become learners — they share the dance.

Unlike traditional teaching where only one voice is heard – that of the facilitator – in facilitated dialogues, many voices are heard. This builds energy, excitement and motivation among the learners. As more people participate, the noise level of the room becomes higher. While not all persons have to speak, all persons become involved.

Basic Components of Facilitated Dialogues

- Prior to the Session ⇒ Facilitator Preparation
- Opening the Session ⇒ Introduction, Warm-up, Review
- During the Session ⇒ Dialoguing and Active Learning
- Ending the Session ⇒ Evaluation and Follow-up Plans

Guidelines for Facilitated Dialogues ²

• Build the group from within	Facilitators are not the only experts in the group and should not control what is said. Learners become teachers.
• Establish ground rules ³	Helps to make learners feel safe.
• Begin each session with a warm-up/review activity	See page 46 for more details.
• Ask open-ended questions	See page 29 for more details.
• Encourage full participation	But allow learners to choose whether or not they will speak.
• Focus the conversation	Facilitators keep the dialogue on track.
• Correct misconceptions	But do so with care and respect.
• Create an atmosphere of acceptance	Respect and encourage all opinions and different viewpoints.
• Summarize the discussion	Before the dialogue ends, facilitators remind learners what was said.
• Be patient	This will probably be a new experience for all partners – including the facilitators.
• Have fun	NO EXPLANATION NEEDED

² From AbuSabha, R., Peacock, J., et al. (1999). "How to make nutrition education more meaningful through facilitated group discussions." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 99: 72-76.

³ This might be difficult to incorporate if time is short

Preparing to Dance



Facilitated dialogues require **extensive preparation**. You cannot simply show up and expect to conduct a dialogue no matter how well you know your content. You must prepare.

This is nothing new. You probably go into the learning session with a lesson plan. Maybe you are given fully developed lesson plans or perhaps you develop your own. To change a typical lesson (where the educator does all the talking) into a facilitated dialogue requires a complete re-write of the lesson. Vella and Norris have suggested using seven steps when planning a lesson⁴. The steps, what they include, and an example for each follow.

Even if you are not responsible for writing the lesson plans, consider reading the following section to become familiar with how the Seven Step Design Plan helps create a learning-centered environment.⁵

⁴ Vella, J., Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach. Revised Edition ed. 2002, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 263; Vella, J., Taking Learning to Task. 2001, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Norris, J., From Telling to Teaching. 2003, North Myrtle Beach, SC: Learning by Dialogue. 120.

⁵ A learning-centered environment is one that respects, includes and focuses on the learner's needs NOT the facilitator's expectations.

Seven Step Design Plan⁶

The Steps	What the step describes	An example showing the step
WHO	The facilitator’s name and role in their organization; the basic characteristics of the learners	Madeleine Sigman-Grant, UNCE MCH Specialist Mothers of newborn infants
WHY	The reason for the overall program (include what the learners “need” and “want”) The reason for each <i>specific</i> session (what the facilitator wants to convey)	Mothers want to be good parents. Mothers “need” support and guidance to insure the growth and development of their infants. Mothers want their infants to sleep through the night. They need to know when to introduce solid foods. Facilitator wants to convey that early introduction of solid foods may induce future health problems.
WHEN	The length and frequency of the program and of each session	Weekly 45-60 minute sessions for 10 weeks
WHERE	The location and specific equipment and materials needed for each session	Community center room with 10 chairs, two tables, a TV and VCR, a projector, flip chart
WHAT	The skills, knowledge, and attitudes/content of the <i>specific</i> session	Determining the relationship between early introduction of solid foods and infant health
WHAT FOR	Objectives <i>from the learners’ perspective</i> ⇒ Is the learner to acquire new knowledge? If so, why? ⇒ Is the learner to change a behavior? ⇒ Is the learner to practice a new skill? ⇒ Is the learner to think about something in a different way?	The learner is to think about the introduction of solid foods. By the end of session, learners will consider delaying introduction of solid foods until baby is 4—6 months old.
HOW	The specific content of this lesson	Mothers listen to, and comment on, a story about a mother who wishes to put cereal in the bottle of her 2-month old infant.

⁶ Vella, J., Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach. Revised Edition ed. 2002, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Exploring the Seven Steps

Steps One to Four

WHO, WHY, WHEN, WHERE

Most facilitators know this information before starting, but writing these down helps prepare for the unexpected. Whether you write the lesson plans or have them written for you, be certain that you carefully prepare for the Who, What, When and Where.

Listing these steps in detail greatly helps you get a handle on the group size, the general description of the learners, the restrictions of the location where the sessions will be held, and the planning and preparation time needed before the training. Writing these down helps YOU focus.

The best way to understand why this is so important is to **PRACTICE**. So, before going on, take out your best lesson plan. Insert the name of this lesson in the space below. Using the chart below, complete Steps One to Four by including as much detail as possible.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY

My First Four Steps for _____
(Fill in name of lesson)

The Steps	Description
WHO	Facilitator _____ Learners _____ _____
WHY	_____ _____
WHEN	_____ _____
WHERE	_____ _____

Step Five

WHAT

Adult learners want to learn about issues that relate specifically to their lives. You need to find out what these issues are. The way to find out what adults want to know is ask them. We call this a **Needs Assessment**.

Needs assessments are used to guide the content and (more importantly) to select the teaching methods (strategies) to be used. Needs assessments can be done formally or informally. To find out about learner's needs, facilitators can distribute and collect simple questionnaires or talk directly to a group of mothers. Other ways to learn what learners want is to maintain a list of frequently asked questions and to talk to other facilitators working with similar learners.

Needs assessments can determine:

- ❖ **Interest** (e.g. how much detail mothers wish to learn about infant feeding)
- ❖ **Intention to use information** (e.g. how likely are mothers to delay introduction of solid foods)
- ❖ **Topics of interest** (e.g. what do mothers want to know about helping their infant sleep through the night)
- ❖ **Knowledge** (e.g. what mothers already know about why infants cry)



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY

What do You Know About Your Learners' Needs?

Take a few minutes and think about those questions your learners most frequently ask. Write these down. As you ponder your future learning sessions, consider whether you are addressing your learners' needs, your needs, or your program's needs. Think about how you can satisfy all these needs by using the Seven Step Design Plan.

The four questions I am asked most frequently are.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Allowing topic selection

In the past, few facilitators allowed learners to select the topic to be discussed. More and more nutrition educators see the benefit in allowing learner's choice. However, some programs are structured with specific issues to cover (and program goals to meet) whereas others are more flexible, allowing dialoguing about any issue. In the former case, choice can be incorporated into the program and/or the specific session. In the later case, and with accomplished

facilitators, it is possible to allow the group members to come into a session and determine a topic on the spot.

This section can help you if you are new to facilitated dialogues or if you have to fulfill specific objectives.

After conducting a needs assessment, you compile your list of topics. Frequently, the topics your learners want to talk about are ones you also want to cover – only sometimes you state it in different terms! For example, you might want to cover the consequences of being overweight but the learners might want to know about the latest diet fad.

Next, you select topics from the list and prepare a lesson plan for **each** one (using the Seven-Step Design Plan). You may want to limit the number of topics, depending on the length of your program. At the beginning of the first session (or at the beginning of each session – again depending on the needs of your learners and the structure of your program), present the list of topics to your group and let them choose the ones in which they are interested.

For example, if a program is to run for 4 sessions, you could present a list of seven topics and have the group choose four. Alternatively, if the program is on going, with no defined timeline, then you can come with a list of four topics and let the learners choose the one for the day's session. (Learners also can check off future topics at this time.) In either case, by offering defined choices to the group, you maintain a sense of control while permitting the learners to feel empowered as well.

It is essential for you to bring learners into the dialogue immediately. The best way to get the learners involved is to relate the topic being discussed directly to the learner's world. Use of stories or relating experiences of other learners are useful ways to do this. These activities are described later on in the Encouraging Your Partner to Dance section.

Step Six

WHAT FOR

Developing Learning-Centered Objectives

Remember, facilitated dialogues are learner (learning) centered. Unlike traditional teaching where lesson plans tell the educator what to do, planning for facilitated dialogues focuses on what the **learner needs to be doing**. Also different from traditional teaching, where the learner simply sits absorbing what the teacher says, in facilitated dialogues the learners are also the speakers. It helps to think about words that describe ways that get learners actively involved.

What Words To Use to Get Learners Involved?

Below is a list of active/action words (taken from *Quick Flip Questions for Critical Thinking*⁷) that describe what the learner might achieve when they get involved. Using the lesson plan you have already pulled out, take a marker and highlight the words you frequently use to get learners involved. What level(s) of thinking are you working at?

Key Words	Levels of Thinking
choose select find define label list show match name tell recall	Knowledge – learners show educator what they already know about the topic. EXAMPLE: Learners list all the reasons babies wake up at night.
compare explain contrast tell in another way	Comprehension – learners show educator how much is understood about what is being discussed. EXAMPLE: Learners explain what they do when their infant wakes up at night.
apply use build develop model organize plan identify	Application – learners solve a problem by applying what they just discussed EXAMPLE: Learners give their opinions on when and how to introduce solid foods to babies
examine simplify discover take part distinguish assume	Analysis – Learners break information into parts by identifying motives or causes; make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations. EXAMPLE: Learners first dialogue about why some infants sleep through the night at 2 months and others don't. Then they talk about why their baby might wake up at night.
choose predict create make up change imagine	Synthesis – Learners take all the information, think about it in a different way, and propose alternative solutions. EXAMPLE: Learners listen to a story and then dialogue about the pros and cons of giving a baby cereal in the bottle.
criticize judge rate value recommend	Evaluation – Learners present and defend their opinions by making judgments about information. EXAMPLE: Learners judge the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations – how they apply to their family; why they might differ from what their own doctor says; what might make their infant more susceptible to problems of early feeding. They defend their ideas.

⁷ Adapted from *Quick Flip Questions for Critical Thinking*. Edupress, Inc.1997. ISBN 1-56472-047-0

Step Seven

HOW

According to Vella and Norris⁸, there are four types of learning tasks to use in learning-centered education. These are **anchoring**, **adding**, **applying** and **integrating**.

Anchoring connects the learner with what they already know and with their unique life. Having the learner describe, define, name, and show what they know at the beginning of the session is very useful. Warm-ups help to anchor the learners immediately into the dialogue.

Adding invites learners to examine new concepts, skills, or attitudes through active involvement. This is what the session is all about. Learners can listen to a story, read and circle items from a list, or sort things into categories.

Applying gets learners to do something directly with the new content just explored. Content can be new knowledge, new ideas, new beliefs, or new ways of thinking. Having learners explain and demonstrate will help the facilitator evaluate the teaching.

Integrating the lesson content into their lives is what the learners take with them. Sometimes this component is called **Away** – hence the four “A’s”. Have the learners explain how they will use the content when they leave the session. And remember, the learner has the option to choose not to use the information or to change their intentions or behaviors.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY

My Last Three Steps for _____

(Fill in name of lesson)

The Steps	Description
WHAT	
WHAT FOR	Facilitator _____ Learners _____ _____
HOW	_____ _____

⁸ Vella, J., Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach. Revised Edition ed. 2002, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 263; Vella, J., Taking Learning to Task. 2001, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Norris, J., From Telling to Teaching. 2003, North Myrtle Beach, SC: Learning by Dialogue. 120.

The remainder of **Facilitated Dialogue Basics** is devoted to the **HOW** - the variety of tools, approaches, and learning-centered activities facilitators can choose from and use with their learners. Facilitated dialogue is an active process that allows the facilitator to try different approaches.

Not every tool will work with every facilitator or with every learner. This approach may be a new experience for you. That means it takes time, practice, and patience to feel comfortable using it. In fact, most facilitators who first try this technique find themselves slipping back into their old teaching styles. This is just like clients who keep slipping back into choosing less healthful foods. Be patient with yourself.

Rules and Objectives of a Women's Club

"Our parents gave us life, but friends enhance its value; they sustain us in times of danger, rescue us from calamity." Dated 959 A.D.

This quotation was posted in an exhibition showing at the British Library, Sept 2004, entitled: "The Silk Road." Even in first century Dunhuang China, the importance of groups was noted.

My Seven Step Design Plan⁹ for _____

The Steps	Detailed Descriptions
WHO	
WHY	
WHEN	
WHERE	
WHAT	
WHAT FOR	
HOW	

⁹ Vella, J., Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach. Revised Edition ed. 2002, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Learning the Steps



This section contains examples of strategies and tools from a variety of sources that have been successfully adopted by facilitators. There are many books written on the topic as well. You will need to experiment to see which ones work best for your audiences (remember, learners come first) and your personal teaching style.

Success is dependent upon:

- the topics being discussed
- the willingness of you to “let go” of the role of expert
- the willingness of your learners to become actively engaged¹⁰
- the immediate importance of the subject being discussed to your learners' lives

These approaches allow you to get a “picture” of your learners. Once this picture is identified, you can place the learners into the picture by weaving their responses into the discussion. Making the situation meaningful to learners provides a ‘hook’ to bring them coming back for more. This requires skill at being an active listener and a critical thinker, rather than being a lecturer and a flip-chart page turner!

Tools of the Dance

**No one tool or strategy is “THE” one to use.
A combination of techniques increases learning.**

Sample Situations

To help you see how the following tools can be used, think of these three situations:

A. You have been hired by a group of pediatricians to teach new mothers about infant feeding, including delayed introduction of solid foods.

WHAT FOR: _____

B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers of toddlers.

WHAT FOR: _____

C. Learners have asked you how they can get children to eat more veggies.

WHAT FOR: _____

¹⁰ Those members who do not wish to participate will most likely drop out of the group. Maybe this is not good time for them to make changes of perhaps they find this approach uncomfortable. You can assist these learners by asking what they want to do in meeting their needs. Graciously letting go is better than forcing partners to dance.

These situations will be used as examples to show the new tools. However, simply knowing the situation is not sufficient. You must also identify **Step 6 – The What For**.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY

Before reading further, go to each sample situation above and write in one **What For** for each situation. Use this as your guide for constructing your responses to the suggested exercise following each technique. A sample of each situation's **What For** is shown in Appendix A.

Remember to stop along the way and practice each technique. You can compare your answers with samples in the appendices.

Open-Ended Questions

All dialogues require participation by the learners. The easiest way to bring the learners into the dialogue is to use **open-ended** questions. These are questions to which the learner cannot respond 'yes' or 'no' but must reply in at least one sentence. In addition to asking the question, you must also be an **active listener**. An active listener is one who is focused on what the person is saying. An active listener isn't thinking about the immediate response while the person is still speaking. Rather, the active listener is watching the body language of the speaker, carefully trying to identify the meaning behind what is being said, and is attentive and respectful of the speaker.

Asking open-ended questions is an acquired skill. To become comfortable using these during dialoguing, begin to use them in your daily life. It will make a dramatic difference in opening lines of communication. Find a colleague who is also learning this technique. As you practice, switch roles being the facilitator and the learner. Practice will increase your self-confidence and improve your skills. This technique is not natural for most educators. Expect to slip back into old comfortable habits (e.g. telling learners what to do). Changing teaching styles is challenging but you can do it. As Joye Norris says, "Every attempt is a success."



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY

You can practice writing open-ended questions on the next two pages. For each situation, think of an open-ended question that could substitute for the traditional closed-ended question. Compare with examples in Appendix A.

Open-Ended Questions using the Sample Situations

Questions to find out if learner <i>recognizes</i> there is a problem		
Situation	Traditional Closed-Ended Questions	My Open-Ended Questions
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	Do you know why some mothers put cereal in their baby's nighttime bottles?	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	Is there any problem with your child drinking a soda when she asks for one?	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	Do you know why you should eat the vegetables you serve your child?	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>
Questions to find out if learner <i>has any concerns</i> about the issue		
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	Do you think there is any problem in feeding an infant solid food before 6 months of age?	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	Do you worry about your child drinking sweet drinks?	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	Do you worry about your child not eating vegetables?	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>

Questions to find out learner's <i>level of intention</i> of changing behaviors		
Situation	Traditional Closed-Ended Questions	My Open-Ended Questions
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	Are you going to start feeding your baby cereal before 6 months of age?	_____ _____ _____
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	Have you considered serving chocolate milk instead of sweetened fruit drinks?	_____ _____ _____
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	Are you interested in getting your child to eat more vegetables?	_____ _____ _____
Questions to find out learner's <i>level of confidence</i> about making changes		
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	Do you think you can talk to your mother-in-law about what you learned today?	_____ _____ _____
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	Do you feel encouraged to try to give your child water instead of soda?	_____ _____ _____
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	Does this sound like something you can do?	_____ _____ _____

Pros and Cons Grid

You will need a white board or flip chart and markers to use this technique.

	Pros	Cons
If I don't change.....		
If I do change.....		

Any change brings positive and negative consequences. It is helpful to see both sides and determine if the pros outweigh the cons. Many learners have lots of negative things to say about why some idea won't work. Facilitators call this resistance or non-compliance. Usually, it means the facilitator is not recognizing the learner's reality or that the partners are dancing to a different tune.

This grid helps learners and facilitators look at the learners' lives. By writing down both the positives and negatives of a suggested change, learners can see both (1) what will make the change work and (2) what will interfere with making the change. Facilitators get valuable information about what will support or block the learners' attempts to make changes.

While many facilitators list the pros and cons **to** change, it is also helpful to learners to consider what are the positives and negatives of **NOT** changing. There is always a cost to not changing – sometimes it is an immediate penalty (e.g. paying for unnecessary unhealthy food); sometimes it is a delayed health consequence (e.g. development of costly dental caries). The beauty of this grid is that it gets the learners to consider both sides and provides information to the facilitator about the obstacles learners face.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Look at the example of the **Pros and Cons Grid** on the next page. Based on your experiences and opinions, complete the grid with possible responses. Some lead-in statements are provided; however, you can change to something else. Compare your responses to those in Appendix A.

Read a Story

By reading a story, facilitators create a safe situation to get responses. Telling a story does not place learners in the position of revealing their lives to others if they choose not to. Stories can spark interest, fuel discussion, get ideas, and bring out emotions. You can either use a story that is already available or you can create your own which reflect the experiences of others with whom you have worked. In either case, learners must be able to see how the story is relevant to them and their lives.

Once you have selected or written a story, decide what you wish the learner to do after the story is read. In other words, write down a list of open-ended questions to get the dialogue started. Make the questions specific to the learners' needs so that you keep the discussion directed and the dialogue does not drift.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Practice the **Read a Story** technique, using the examples below. Compare with those in Appendix A.

Situation	Suggested storyline (details up to YOU)	Suggested open-ended questions
<p>A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.</p>	<p>Describe a mother of a 2-month old baby who still wakes up two times a night.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.</p>	<p>Mrs. Ramirez serves sweetened iced tea with lunch and dinner for herself and her son.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.</p>	<p>Read the children's story.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

0 - 10 Scale

This activity can be used for

- determining learner interest
- seeing if learners recognize the problem
- exploring the level of learners' confidence, experience, and motivation
- determining intentions to change

Most often it has been used in one-to-one situations. However, it can be an excellent tool to use for groups as learners react to an idea or suggestion that doesn't reveal personal information. Thus, it maintains a degree of confidentiality. However, some cultures are not used to thinking about issues in terms of a scale – things are either one way or another with not much range in between. Judge if your audience understands the concept of degree. If not, only offer three points – the ends and one middle point (e.g. always, sometimes, never).

Here are the steps to follow when using this tool in groups.

- First present a situation or suggest a behavior to the group.
- Ask group members to think about how they would rate their response on a scale of **ONE** (the least) to **TEN** (the most) regarding their interest in learning about the situation; about their previous experiences with the situation; about their level of confidence; **OR** about their level of motivation. Usually there is only enough time to explore one of these.
- Allow some time for learners to think about the idea in terms of their situation.
- Now say: “Suppose someone answered a ‘6’.”
- Then follow this pattern of questions and responses:

Facilitator	“On the scale of 0—10, someone could have responded with a lower number. Why do you think she might not give a lower number?”
--------------------	--

Learners	Responses provide answers that describe support to change as well as the level of learners' knowledge about benefits of the ideas presented.
-----------------	--

Facilitator	“On the scale of 0—10, someone could have responded with a higher number. Why do you think she might not give a higher number?”
--------------------	---

Learners	Responses provide answers that describe barriers to change. Might also provide misinformation that facilitator needs to respectfully correct (see page 49).
-----------------	---



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Using our three situations, complete the **0 - 10 Scale** examples on the next page and compare them to those in Appendix A.

0 - 10 Scale

Sample Situations	A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.
Suggested change	<i>Mother will wait until 6 months to offer her baby cereal.</i>	<i>Offer milk or water when a child wants a sweetened drink.</i>	<i>Be a role model and eat the veggie yourself.</i>
Facilitator says: On the scale of 0—10, suppose someone answered a '6'." "This person could have responded with a lower number, why do you think she might not have?"			
Possible Learners' responses	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Facilitator says: On the scale of 0—10, suppose someone answered a '6'." "This person could have responded with a higher number, why do you think she might not have?"			
Possible Learners' responses	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Use of Menus and Lists of Choices

Sometime during the dialogue, you can give learners a list of possible suggestions. The list can be written on a flip chart for the whole group to look at together or on individual pages. The learners look over the list and select one or more of the choices to consider. By offering the group members choices, they are encouraged to work as a team. The group situation provides a safe place to discuss concerns. Once the choice(s) has been made, use of open-ended questions can enhance the learning process.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Using our sample situations, list several **menus** that could be used. Compare to those found in Appendix A.

Situation	Menus and Choices
<p>A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.</p>	<p>Here is a list of reasons why some mothers will start feeding babies cereal at 2 to 3 months old. Which ones do you think make sense?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.</p>	<p>Here are some ideas about healthy drinks to offer children. Which one would you choose? How much would you give?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Here is a list of reasons why children shouldn't be served lots of sweetened beverages. Which one are you concerned about?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.</p>	<p>Here is a list of ways that other mothers have been successful in introducing new veggies to their children. Which one sounds the easiest for you to do?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Trade-Off Analysis

Another technique is to ask questions that allow for dialogue about what are the trade-offs to change. This is similar to the pros and cons grid, but can be done *without* charts. Again, open-ended questions are used to dialogue about what would happen once the change is made.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Complete the chart below to practice the **Trade-Off Analysis** and compare your answers with those in Appendix A.

Situation	Trade-offs
<p>A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.</p>	<p>What might happen if _____ _____ _____</p> <p>What other reasons _____ _____ _____</p> <p>How would you explain _____ _____</p>
<p>B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.</p>	<p>What might happen if _____ _____ _____</p> <p>You could choose to _____ _____ _____</p>
<p>C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.</p>	<p>What will you do if _____ _____ _____</p> <p>How will you handle the situation if _____ _____ _____</p>

Blank pages are provided for you to use in your own situation. As you explore using each technique, try it out with a colleague, friend or family member. Use a personal situation as well as a professional one. Write down exactly what you want to accomplish (the What For) when you describe your situation. Enjoy the Dance.

Questions to find out if learner <i>recognizes</i> there is a problem		
Your Situations	WHAT FOR	Open-Ended Questions
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Questions to find out if learner <i>has any concerns</i> about the issue		
Your Situations	WHAT FOR	Open-Ended Questions
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Questions to find out learner's <i>level of intention</i> of changing behaviors		
Your Situations	WHAT FOR	Open-Ended Questions
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Questions to find out learner's <i>level of confidence</i> about making changes		
Your Situations	WHAT FOR	Open-Ended Questions
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Pros and Cons Grid

	YOUR SITUATION	YOUR SITUATION	YOUR SITUATION			
	Proposed change: _____ _____	Proposed change: _____ _____	Proposed change: _____ _____			
	WHAT FOR _____ _____	WHAT FOR _____ _____	WHAT FOR _____ _____			
	PROS	CONS	PROS	CONS	PROS	CONS
<i>If I change</i>	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
<i>If I don't change</i>	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Read a Story

Situation	Suggested storyline	Suggested open-ended questions
<p>WHAT FOR</p>		
<p>WHAT FOR</p>		

Menus and Choices

Your Situation and WHAT FOR	Menus and Choices
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>WHAT FOR _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Here are some ideas about</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>WHAT FOR _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Here is a list of ideas to try when</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>WHAT FOR _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Here is a list of things to do instead of</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

0 - 10 Scale

<p>Your Situations</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>WHAT FOR</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Suggested change</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>You say: Suppose someone answered a '6'. "This person could have responded with a lower number, why do you think she might not have?"</p>			
<p>Possible Learners' responses</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>You say: Suppose someone answered a '6'. "This person could have responded with a higher number, why do you think she might not have?"</p>			
<p>Possible Learners' responses</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Trade-Off Analysis

Your Situation and WHAT FOR	Trade-offs
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><u>WHAT FOR</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What might happen if you</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>You could choose to offer</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><u>WHAT FOR</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What will you do if</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>How will you handle the situation if</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><u>WHAT FOR</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>How will you handle the situation if</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>If you could change one thing about</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Encouraging Your Partner to Dance



The following pages contain tools to get learners engaged immediately into the dialogue. This is a critical step to stimulate and motivate learners, especially those who are unsure about their role. Remember, most learners are used to the old method of teaching – the expert does all the talking and controls what information is given. Also included are some suggestions about keeping learners engaged and respectfully correcting misinformation.

Putting the learner at ease is a critical step in facilitated dialogue.

Warm-Ups

Start each lesson with an activity that links the topic to the learner. This is called anchoring and helps to get everyone focused¹¹.

During the **first** meeting, allow time for members to introduce themselves. Try one of the following examples or develop your own.

Examples

- Since we will be talking about food, let's go around the room and give our names and the name of our most favorite food.
- Please tell us your name and the names and ages of your children?

For **later** sessions, warm-ups can be reviews of previous lessons or learner's experiences during the previous work.

Examples

- Let's review some of the things we discussed last time we met. Who would like to share what they remember?
- Last time we met, some of you were going to (insert specific goal). How did that work for you? What did you and your child do? How did they like it? *Encourage members to share their week's experiences.*

Other ideas for warm-ups

- Demonstrate structured physical activities that adults can play with their child.
- Conduct a taste testing activity.

¹¹ Remember, in the truest sense, facilitated dialogues are not structured but for most nutrition education purposes, the discussion needs to focus on at least one topic.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY

Select one example from the list above to use for a week. The very first time you use this warm-up, record your experience. How did you feel? How did the learners react?

After using the warm-up for five times, write down your feelings again. Compare your reactions.

Repeat the process until you have a repertoire of warm-ups you can use for any situation.

BE ADVENTUROUS. Ask the group for suggestions and design warm-ups that reflect their ideas. Develop some that reflect your personality and interests.

Getting Started ¹²

Before beginning to dialogue about the topic at hand, some general questions about a specific issue are used to bring the learner's life into the picture. This helps everyone get to know each other and helps the facilitator get to know the group.

- Ask about behavior to be changed
- Ask about a typical day
- Ask about good things; then less good things
- Ask about their most favorite thing to do and their least favorite
- Ask about lifestyle and stresses
- Ask about present and past behavior
- Provide information and then ask 'What do you think?'
- "Tell us what you know about..."
- "Describe what you do on a typical day."
- "I wonder, how much do these challenges affect you?"
- "Tell us about your baby's favorite thing to do with you. What does your baby not like to do at all?"
- "Tell us more about your choices"
- "What's the difference between your food choices now and before you saw the doctor?"
- "Would it be useful to spend a few minutes looking at how you can fit your food choices into a healthy eating plan?"

¹² Adapted from Miller, W. and Rollnick, S. *Motivational interviewing*. 2nd ed. 2002, New York: Guilford Press.

- Ask about health; then behavior
- Ask about the next step
- Ask directly about concerns
- "I wonder, when you select this food, where does it fit into your idea of a healthy eating pattern?"
- "What is the next step for you?"
- "What concerns do you have about making changes?"



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Select one of the statements from the list above and try it out the next time you conduct your nutrition education session, even if you have not decided on using Facilitated Dialogue. Write down the learners' responses and record your reactions. Continue to add new statements as you become comfortable with the technique.

Getting Started

Statement	Your Reaction	Learner Responses
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Keep the dialogue on track

It is easy for learners (and facilitators) to get off track. While this may not be a problem for some facilitated dialogues, for those educators who are responsible for meeting program goals, it is important to focus the discussion. One way to do this is to summarize what has been said about the topic being discussed. Frequent summarization of the learners' comments by the facilitator ensures dialogues continue to closure. Summarization can start by saying:

- Let's review what has been mentioned so far.
- In summary, we can say that most of you think.....
- I think I have heard you agree to the following.....
- Many of you have different opinions. Let's take a moment to review these.



SELF-LEARNING ACTIVITY Write down some other statements that can be used to begin a discussion summary.

Create an environment of acceptance and respect

Using a variety of learning tools and techniques helps those who learn visually, emotionally, and by touching and experience. The tools presented will help create this inclusive atmosphere. Videos and handouts can be used to augment specific points mentioned by learners, but should be used sparingly by the facilitator. Continual affirmation of learner participation will encourage members to continue, and help reduce anxiety among those who choose not to say anything. Being respectful of differing viewpoints is essential to the critical thinking process laid out in this guide. Go through the Self-Evaluation Checklist on Page 52 to see how well you conducted your session.

Correct Misinformation

Sometimes group members mention wrong information or unhealthy practices during the dialogue. It is important to immediately correct this while maintaining learners' dignity and keeping the group on track. Some experts recommend asking other group members to correct the mistake. But unless you are sure you will get the correct answer, this is risky. One technique used in the California WIC Program¹³ is entitled: *Affirm, Add, and Move on*. First, the facilitator **affirms** the person who offered the erroneous comment (" Thank you for bringing that up since lots of people think that.") Then the facilitator gives a concise response ("New research has now shown that..."). Finally, the facilitator "moves on" by reaffirming the learner and getting back to the discussion. If a group member mentions a behavior rather than a wrong fact, the facilitator could ask the others what their experience has been. But do so carefully and be prepared for affirmation of the unhealthy practice!

¹³ Personal communication with Michael Elfant. 2004.



How Well Did We Dance? Let's Keep in Touch

Most learning sessions are conducted with specific objectives in mind. In order to determine how well these objectives have been met, facilitators *and* learners need to evaluate what happened *during* the session. However, many learner objectives propose behavior changes that will occur in the future. In addition, when the session closes, many learners are left without continued support to help them make changes. It is no wonder that practices and behaviors don't change or only change for short periods of time. The following plan may be helpful in conducting follow-up evaluations *and* in meeting learners continued needs.

Plan for Follow-Up

- Provide learners with a way to contact you
- Suggest a time and place for a meeting several months after your last session
- Maintain commitment to your plans for follow-up
- If learners stated they did not want any follow-up information, learners might welcome a brief note expressing your willingness to provide continued dialogue and support and thanking them for their attendance and participation

The following pages contain selected evaluation tools to help facilitators assess their own performance as well as measuring learners' progress.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

This Checklist is useful in evaluating how well **you** conducted your session.

- Did you begin your session with an icebreaker?
- Did you establish ground rules for participation?
- Did you ask learners to identify their own needs?
- Did you give learners some choices during the session?
- Did you ask open-ended questions?
- Did you create opportunities for learners to learn on their own?
- Did you give positive reinforcement on their participation?
- Did you give regular constructive feedback?
- Did you use a variety of teaching tools?
- Did you summarize the dialogues frequently?
- Did you consider the learning style and personal characteristics of all learners?
- Did you encourage learners to discuss their feelings about the topic under discussion while respecting those who chose not to share?
- Did you ask learners to think about how well they participated as part of the group?
- Did you ask learners for their evaluation of you?
- Did you have FUN?

Measuring Program Impact on LEARNERS

During the Session Evaluation Techniques

The information collected during the session is important in process evaluation.

- Collect discussion sheets (e.g. flip charts) and type up after the session; share these with learners, if requested.
- Develop and use record sheets – attendance, participation in discussion, etc. This can be incorporated into the process evaluation.
- Gather input from learners about how well **you** did.¹⁴
- Gather input from learners about how well **they** did.

¹⁴ Samples are not provided for this type of evaluation as these are universally used and often are in a format required by the organization for which the facilitator works.

Evaluation

Post Session Evaluations

These are conducted to measure changes in intention, confidence, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. Many facilitators have used *pre and post* questionnaires for evaluating programs. Since these are readily available from other programs, examples of this type of evaluation are not presented here.

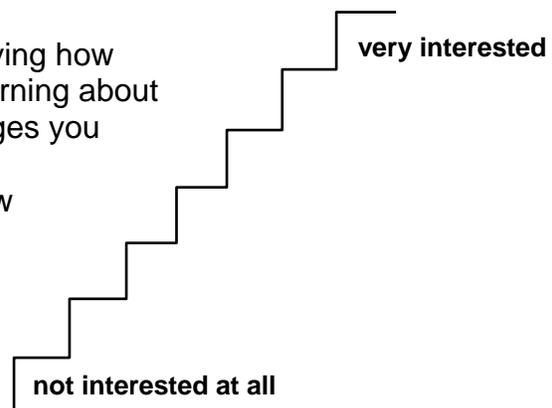
Post-Pre Evaluations (Three illustrations given)

The **post-pre** evaluation asks participants to reflect back and compare. It can be given to learners at the end of each session as well as at the end of the program. This technique is used to minimize reporting bias, to account for guessing in the pre-pretest, and to focus learners on how well they (as learners) did, not necessarily on how well you (as the facilitator) did.

EXAMPLE 1. The Stair Step Approach

Please place the number **1** on the step signifying how interested you were **before** the session in learning about decreasing the amount of sweetened beverages you give your child.

Place the number **2** on the step indicating how interested you are **now**.



EXAMPLE 2 Likert Scale (see comments on page 35 about scales)

Circle the answer that describes your level of confidence in getting your child to eat veggies **BEFORE** you attended this session.

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all
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Circle the answer that describes your level of confidence in getting your child to eat veggies **AFTER** you attended this session.

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all
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EXAMPLE 3 Comparison Chart

Circle when you thought babies should be started on cereal from a spoon **BEFORE** you attended this class.

One month of age

Two months of age

Three months of age

Four months of age

Five months of age

Six months of age

Circle when you thought babies should be started on cereal from a spoon **AFTER** you attended this class.

One month of age

Two months of age

Three months of age

Four months of age

Five months of age

Six months of age

For any of these three examples, an Excel table can be constructed where the differences between the pre and post scores are recorded. Composite results can then be made and statistical comparisons applied.

Ending Our Dance



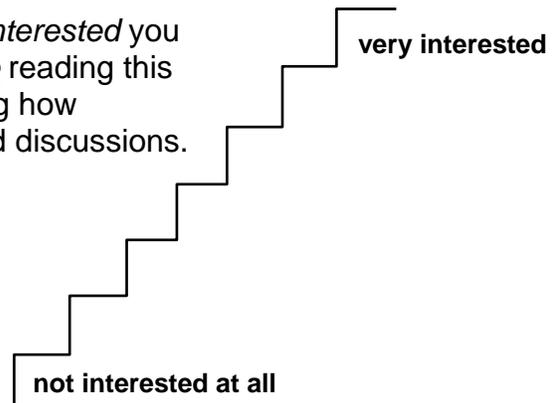
Post-Reading Guide Questionnaire

In the beginning of this guide, you completed a questionnaire. Please take a few moments and complete this questionnaire as well. Place both questionnaires in an envelope and mail to the address that follows. Insert your business card with your choice of either a pocket calculator, a pocket thermometer or a computer screen cleaner written on the back of your card. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential. We will keep your business card until your request is filled and then toss it along with your envelope in the trash. In this manner, your identity will remain confidential and only your unidentified papers will be used to aggregate information in our office.

Thank you so much for this dance. Hopefully, we will have other opportunities to dance again.

Post-Reading Guide Questionnaire

Please place a (1) on the step signifying how *interested* you were in conducting facilitated dialogues **before** reading this guide. Please place a (2) on the step indicating how *interested* you are **now** in conducting facilitated discussions.



Circle the answer that describes your level of *confidence* in changing from a traditional training approach to using the facilitated dialogues process **BEFORE** you attended this training.

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all
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Circle the answer that describes your level of *confidence* in changing from a traditional training approach to using the facilitated dialogues process **AFTER** you attended this training.

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Not very confident	Not confident at all
-----------------------	---------------------------	------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------

Using the following scale, please *circle* your responses to the statements below.

	1	2	3	4	5
I plan to try facilitated dialogues for my next nutrition education effort.	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
My level of confidence to be able to change current lesson plans to the Seven-Step Design Plan is...	Very low	Somewhat low	I don't know my level	Somewhat high	Very high

Which of the following techniques are you likely to use? Please *circle* your answer.

Open-ended questions	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
The 0 –10 scale	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
The pros and cons grid	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Creating a situation	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Reading a story	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Using menus	Not likely at all	Somewhat unlikely	No decision	Somewhat likely	Very likely

Please write down the topic of your next nutrition education effort. Then, write a brief description of how you will go about implementing Facilitated Dialogue into this training.

Finally, in order to improve this guide, please respond to the following questions.

Were you provided with enough information to allow you to implement a facilitated dialogue? If not, what additional information would you have liked to had?

How did the guide meet your expectations?

Were you provided with enough examples? What other examples would you have liked included?

Thank you for assisting us. Please feel free to contact Dr. Sigman-Grant for additional information and guidance. Her email is sigman-grantm@unce.unr.edu or she can be reached at 702-257-5534.

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Las Vegas, NV 89146

APPENDIX A

Sample Situations and Their Suggested *What For*

- A.** You have been hired by a group of pediatricians to teach new mothers about infant feeding, including delayed introduction of solid foods.

WHAT FOR: Learners will use new information about introduction of solid foods to help gain support from their family.

- B.** You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers of toddlers.

WHAT FOR: Learners will choose different options in response to their child's request for sweetened beverages.

- C.** Learners have asked you how they can get children to eat more veggies.

WHAT FOR: Learners will select two ways to prepare veggies for their children.

Open-Ended Questions using the Sample Situations

Questions to find out if learner <i>recognizes</i> there is a problem	
Situation	Open-Ended Questions
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	Why do some mothers wish to put cereal in their baby's nighttime bottle?
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	What are some of the problems if you give your child soda whenever she asks for one?
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	What might be the benefits to eating the vegetables you are serving your child?
Questions to find out if learner <i>has any concerns</i> about the issue	
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	Why might introducing solid foods before 4—6 months of age be a problem for your baby?
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	What concerns you about your child drinking sweet drinks?
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	What specifically do you worry about when your child doesn't eat vegetables?
Questions to find out learner's <i>level of intention</i> of changing behaviors	
Situation	Open-Ended Questions
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	What are some of the reasons why you might not want to start feeding your baby cereal before 4—6 months of age?
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	What would be the benefits of serving your child chocolate milk instead of sweetened fruit drinks?
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	Why do you want to know how to get your child to eat more vegetables?
Questions to find out learner's <i>level of confidence</i> about making changes	
A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	What could you say to your mother-in-law about what you learned today?
B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	Which ideas make you believe you could give your child water instead of soda?
C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.	There are several ideas to get your child to eat more vegetables. Which ideas would work for you, and why do you think it would be better than any other presented?

Pros and Cons Grid

	A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.			
	Proposed change: Mother will wait until 6 months to offer her baby cereal.	Proposed change: Offer milk or water when a child wants a sweetened drink.	Proposed change: Be a role model and eat the veggie yourself.			
	PROS	CONS	PROS	CONS	PROS	CONS
<i>If I change</i>	The risk of my baby getting allergies, overweight, or diabetes is reduced.	My mother-in-law will be very upset with me. My baby may not sleep through the night. My baby will be too little.	My child will have a pretty smile. My child might not gain more weight than he should.	My child will cry. This crying will upset my family. I will disappoint my child.	My child will see me eat these and try them for herself.	I can't stand veggies and will probably gag in front of my little girl.
<i>If I don't change</i>	My mother-in-law will be happy. Maybe my baby will sleep through the night.	My baby might get allergies or other illnesses. My baby might get too fat.	Everyone will be happy. No one will yell at me to keep the child quiet.	My child might get lots of cavities. My child may get bigger than he should. My child will learn that he can get his way if he just cries.	My child will not be healthy – she might get sick more often.	My child will never learn to like veggies.

Read a Story

Situation	Suggested storyline	Suggested open-ended questions
<p>A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.</p>	<p>Describe a mother of a 2-month old baby who still wakes up two times a night. Mother is sleep deprived. Mother-in-law suggests she put cereal in the 11 PM bottle so that the baby will sleep.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will this help? • What possible problems could this cause the baby? • How do you feel about putting the cereal in the bottle? How might this be considered force-feeding the baby? • How would you feel if someone forced you to eat something? • What happened when you tried this before?
<p>B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.</p>	<p>Mrs. Ramirez serves sweetened iced tea with lunch and dinner for herself and her son. Her son has many dental caries, is at risk of overweight, and does not drink enough milk. She also is overweight, had gestational diabetes with each of her 3 children, and does not get enough calcium. Her mother has osteoporosis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does anyone in your family have diabetes, osteoporosis, or overweight? Would you care to share what this means to them? • What else could Mrs. Ramirez serve as a drink for lunch or dinner? • What might happen if Mrs. Ramirez continues not to serve milk to herself and her son? • What other sources of calcium could Mrs. Ramirez use?
<p>C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.</p>	<p>Read the story <i>Gregory the Terrible Eater</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the point of this story? • Why was it so important for Gregory to eat his cans? • What else might Gregory's parents have done to help Gregory learn to eat cans?

0 - 10 Scale

Sample Situations	A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.	B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.	C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.
Suggested change	<i>Mother will wait until 6 months to offer her baby cereal.</i>	<i>Offer milk or water when a child wants a sweetened drink.</i>	<i>Be a role model and eat the veggie yourself.</i>
Facilitator says: On the scale of 0—10, suppose someone answered a '6'." "This person could have responded with a lower number, why do you think she might not have?"			
Possible Learners' responses	There are food allergies in her family and she wants to do everything she can so her baby won't get allergies.	It is healthier to drink milk than sodas.	A good mother shows her child what to do.
	Her doctor told her the same thing.	She wants her child to have a nice smile.	She believes you can't get a child to do what you won't do.
	She sees that her baby is not ready to eat from a spoon yet.	She does not want her child to be overweight like her.	She wants to be a good mother.
Facilitator says: On the scale of 0—10, suppose someone answered a '6'." "This person could have responded with a higher number, why do you think she might not have?"			
Possible Learners' responses	Her mother-in-law is giving her grief to start the baby on cereal now.	It might be hard to get a child to drink water after getting used to soda.	She is concerned that she might gag on a veggie she doesn't like.
	She heard that babies who get cereal in the bottle will sleep through the night – and she is really tired.	She is concerned her child might act up and that would bother her family.	She is worried that trying things the family doesn't like will be a waste of money.
	Her baby seems to be hungry – he cries all the time.	She isn't interested in making any changes. She wants to continue drinking soda.	In her family, children do what mothers say, period.
	She was fed cereal from a bottle and she is just fine. What was good for her is good for her baby!	Soda is cheaper than milk.	She wants her child to like her; since she knows her child doesn't like veggies, she is concerned about her child's not liking her anymore.

Menus and Choices

Situation	Menus and Choices
<p>A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.</p>	<p>Here is a list of reasons why some mothers will start feeding babies cereal at 2 to 3 months old. Which ones do you think make sense?</p> <p>Baby cries; she was fed cereal early; her mother-in-law wants her to start; she is tired and needs to sleep at night—cereal in the bottle will help her baby to sleep.</p>
<p>B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.</p>	<p>Here are some ideas about healthy drinks to offer children. Which one would you choose? How much would you give?</p> <p>Milk, water, 100% fruit juice daily.</p> <p>Here is a list of reasons why children shouldn't be served lots of sweetened beverages. Which one are you concerned about?</p> <p>Tooth decay; not hungry for other foods; overeating; diarrhea</p>
<p>C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.</p>	<p>Here is a list of ways that other mothers have been successful in introducing new veggies to their children. Which one sounds the easiest for you to do?</p> <p>Serving raw veggies with a dip; having children help make a salad; going to the farmer's market and talking about the different kinds of veggies; reading books about eating veggies; eat them yourself</p>

Trade-Offs

Situation	Trade-offs
<p>A. You have been hired to teach new mothers about delaying solid foods.</p>	<p>What might happen if you started feeding a baby cereal from the bottle at 2 months old?</p> <p>What other reasons do babies cry besides being hungry?</p> <p>How would you explain to your mother-in-law why you do not want to start feeding your baby cereal from a bottle at 3 months old?</p>
<p>B. You are presenting a lesson plan about sweetened beverages to a group of mothers.</p>	<p>What might happen if you switched from juice to water when your child wants something to drink?</p> <p>You could choose to offer smaller portions of sweet beverages to your child. How would this work for you?</p>
<p>C. Learners have asked you how to get children to eat more veggies.</p>	<p>What will you do if your child tries the veggie and doesn't like it?</p> <p>How will you handle the situation, if your partner refuses to eat the veggie and your child points to this person as the role model instead of you?</p>