**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FACILITATORS IN CASE-BASED LEARNING**

Facilitating a case discussion is very different from many other teaching methodologies. When facilitating a case discussion you are almost always “asking.” The ideal facilitator shows students how smart they are as opposed to how smart he/she is. The following guiding principles are meant to help you become an effective facilitator.

* **Know the material.** Read through the entire case prior to conducting the discussion. Pay attention to the highlighted sections titled “facilitator.” These sections contain information on how to help the students interact with the material (such as filling out diagrams and charts on the board).
* **Know the learning objectives.** Be familiar with the student learning objectives for the case. Your job as a facilitator is to help students accomplish the learning objectives.
* **Step aside.** Encourage students to direct their answers and comments to their peers and not to you.
* **Don’t be the “person with the answer.”** When asked a question, redirect the question to the group. This gets everyone involved and lets learners know that their peers are also a source of information. Every time you find yourself starting to answer a question or “telling” the students something – STOP – and try asking a question instead.
* **Ask for more: Why? How so? Because…?** Kindly yet firmly drive students to articulate and process their ideas rather than merely stating them. *Articulating* and *processing* are instrumental skills in critical thinking and reasoning. Don’t allow students to get away with uneducated guessing! If a student gives a partially correct answer or an answer that is superficial, you might say, “Could someone else add to John’s answer?” or “What do some others think?” to encourage peer to peer interaction.
* **Wait. Listen. Be patient.** Push yourself to wait for 3-5 seconds after you ask a question which gives learners time to construct an answer. Too frequently, teachers wait less than 1-second after a question before they say something. Waiting after a student gives an answer is also a good strategy because it gives time for others to add to the comments of their colleagues without you asking them to do so.
* **Challenge but do not threaten.** Effective facilitators ask thoughtful questions and involve all participants but are careful not to belittle or judge individuals.
* **Self-Reflect.** At the end of a session, assess your performance based on the following questions—ideally, you should answer “yes” to every question. For every “no”, seek advice from a more experienced group facilitator and devise a plan to improve:
  + Were you open to student ideas, viewpoints, and opinions?
  + Did you support and motivate individuals within the group?
  + Did you encourage rapport among group members and help generate a positive atmosphere that facilitated learning?
  + Did you facilitate the group process without being too directive?
  + Did you give the group the appropriate freedom to set their own direction within appropriate limits?
  + Were you more actively listening than speaking?