

“What is Facilitation?” by James Neill

Slide — Facilitative behaviors

Now...here's another look at how the facilitator's skill is demonstrated.

This is adapted from “What is Facilitation?” by James Neill — at:

<http://www.wilderdom.com/facilitation/FacilitationWhatIs.html>

Note: When I last checked, this site was being rebuilt. Hopefully, it will be available when you check.

Neill puts his ideas in a simple 2 x 2 table. He calls them the four types of facilitative behaviors and he says that all are important and need to be kept in mind by the facilitator.

Slide — graphic table

Here are the four areas.

Intentional - Overt	Intentional - Covert
Unintentional - Overt	Unintentional - Covert

Let's look at them one-by-one.

Slide — Intentional — Overt

This is how Neill explains the **Intentional — Overt**.

Intentional - Overt

These are things a facilitator does intentionally that are noticed by participants.

This is how he explains the **Intentional — Covert**.

Intentional - Covert

These are things a facilitator does intentionally that are not noticed by participants.

Here's his explanation of **Unintentional - Overt**.

Unintentional - Overt

These are things a facilitator does without intending that are noticed by the participants.

And here is Neill's explanation for **Unintentional - Covert**.

Unintentional - Covert

These are things an instructor does without intending that go unnoticed by the participants. They affect individuals' experiences and have subtle socio-psychological impacts.

Neill gives examples of each of the facilitative behaviors.

For **Intentional - Overt**,

Examples

1. A facilitator leads participants through a process.

2. A facilitator uses Socratic questioning, such as when asking a question of a group during a debriefing.
 3. A facilitator counsels or gives verbal feedback to a participant.
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For **Intentional - Covert**,

Example

1. As a group is sitting down to have a discussion, the facilitator intentionally sits next to a participant whom the facilitator wants to begin the discussion. The facilitator then casually indicates to go around starting with that person.
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For **Unintentional - Overt**,

Examples

1. A facilitator is naturally warm-hearted (without realizing it) and this quickly makes participants feel accepted and excited about the program.
 2. A facilitator unintentionally uses gendered language, which upsets several participants.
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And for **Unintentional - Covert**,

Examples

1. As a group is sitting down to have a discussion, the facilitator unintentionally sits either too far apart from the group (i.e., focuses attention on himself or herself) or unintentionally too far into the group (i.e., becomes less visible to all participants). The participants don't consciously notice, but it affects the way they respond to the facilitator.
2. A facilitator uses gendered language and it goes unnoticed by the group, but it contributes to underlying gender issues and tensions within the group.