

Simon looked down at his timer and brought that step of the consultation to a close. It was then my turn to respond.

NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

With gratitude, I told my colleagues how their comments had provided a fresh perspective. Through their eyes, I saw that my novice CFG needed more time together and that my group was always physically tired when we met, so that affected their engagement. The consultancy helped me realize that my understanding of facilitation had been too narrow. I needed to be much more than a convener and timekeeper. I was eager to experiment with the prompts for the written reflections so I could get more useful feedback that went beyond meeting logistics. Finally, when I looked at the reflections again, I saw that my CFG had articulated a strong foundation of "positive interaction," "freedom to agree and disagree," and "sharing of experience." I was inspired to revisit the purpose of our CFG and trust that the group would find its own direction. I also promised to take Marcy's advice and write down my philosophy of facilitation. We laughed together when I wondered out loud why we hadn't done that back in June.

ANDREA'S PHILOSOPHY OF FACILITATION

After our mini-reunion ended, I continued to mull things over. Later that evening, I scratched out a few bullet points of why I believe that critical friendship and facilitation are so important:

- I believe that teaching is intellectual, creative, and relational work.
- I believe that all teachers, no matter how experienced, have something to learn.
- I believe that teachers, as the adults who actually work with students every day, are best positioned to ask the kinds of questions that really matter to improving teaching and learning.
- I believe that good professional development is relational. Teachers learn by talking to one another.
- I believe that a facilitator can optimize how teachers learn from one another.
- I believe that using protocols can help me be a more skilled facilitator.
- I believe that learning how to use protocols is not enough to be a skilled facilitator.

- I believe that there is no one best way to teach or facilitate, but it is a facilitator's job to create a safe and respectful setting where difficult conversations can take place.

By questioning my practice and getting input from others, I understood that it was laughable to ever think that a 5-day seminar would be enough training to facilitate independently. I need more time to practice. At least now I feel more comfortable and confident about becoming a better facilitator. I'll continue to create a nurturing environment where we can bring our own work and our students' work to the table, but I am letting go of my preconceived notions and timetable about what my group members must believe.

Chapter 2 Discussion Questions

What?

1. Describe Andrea's facilitation context: Who is in her group? When do they meet? What do they do during meetings?
2. Describe Andrea's facilitation training.

What?

What? Andrea to doubt herself?

What? What resources do you use to become a better facilitator?

What? What resources do you use to become a better facilitator? What resources do you use to become a better facilitator? Why do you value facilitation or facilitative leadership? What do you bring to the table you facilitate? Why is your work important?

ne best way to teach or facilitate, but it is a safe and respectful setting where difficult

and getting input from others, I understood
ink that a 5-day seminar would be enough
ly. I need more time to practice. At least now
fident about becoming a better facilitator.
vironment where we can bring our own work
ble, but I am letting go of my preconceptions
at my group members must believe.