

# Nancy's Facilitation Standards

## 1. Listen 99% of the time.

Even when “they” are wrong. Even when you are bursting with helpful information.

Even when you disagree strongly. Even when there is deadly silence.

**Don't talk. The less you talk, the more they will talk.** And when you listen, you are ready for an intelligent intervention, such as...

## 2. Ask questions that will truly get the group to thinking.

This means NO simple-minded questions. No questions to which you already know the answers. What is a good question?

Are you saying...?

Does everyone agree that...?

Am I hearing...?

Why? Why not?

What do you mean by that? Say more.

## 3. Explain less beforehand, debrief more afterwards.

Give minimal directions – no one gets them anyway. But don't get tempted to skip debriefing – why did we do this activity? What was its value? Would you use it in your classroom?

## 4. Never skip the ground rules.

If you go over ground rules beforehand, you are asserting them.

If you go over them once someone does something you don't like (e.g., talks too much), it's a criticism!

Basic ground rules:

1. Respect one another: no interruptions ... share air-time ... no side conversations
2. Push and build on one another's thinking
3. No war stories/no blame/no excuses
4. Speak for yourself, not “them”

## 5. Do not lose courage.

It takes courage to:

Take responsibility for decisions you make.

Suggest an activity to which you can anticipate some grumbling.

Ask a question and then wait through the silence for the answer.

Assert in the ground rules that there should be a minimum of war stories, that we will not whine, and then hold people to it.

Realize that the group needs and wants you to be a strong facilitator.

## 6. Keep the purpose in mind. You are doing this ...

- because it is important
- to help the group to learn from each other
- to help the group feel proud of its own learning, not admire your facilitating (ironically, when you do this, they will appreciate your facilitating!)