Facilitation Guide
Learning Communities (LCs)

Welcome to LC facilitation! The CTL has put together this quick guide with lessons we have learned as facilitators. Please use this guide as a resource of helpful suggestions, rather than as the “definitive policies and procedures” of facilitation.

First Meeting: Logistics and Introductions

1. The CTL provides handouts for you to distribute at the first meeting:
   - Required handouts: 1. LC description; 2. List of participants and contact information
   - Optional handout: List of content generated from WebQ registration (“2-3 things you hope to learn from participating”). While CTL provides each facilitator with this information, you may share it or keep it as a reference and resource.

2. It’s a good idea to do an introduction or icebreaker activity to help participants get to know each other. Some possible icebreaker activities include:
   - Write a key term from the LC title on the board and have participants write, then share, a sentence about the first idea it brings to mind for them.
   - In pairs: participants conduct interviews (these might focus on their experience with the LC content). They introduce one another.
   - Small groups: find one thing you all have in common, one thing none of you have in common.¹

3. Discuss attendance and participation expectations.
   - Consider discussing collective agreements on attendance and participation. Make sure to stress the importance of consistent attendance, to support the goal of building community in a mutually supportive environment.

4. As a group, come up with a weekly schedule of topics (flexible, subject to change)
   - Ask for 1-2 volunteer facilitators for each meeting:
     - To bring in a teaching artifact and discuss, OR
     - To facilitate a discussion, OR
     - To try out an activity and receive feedback from the group, OR
     - Other activity that will help participants collectively meet their learning objective

¹ List adapted from: “Classroom Challenges Breaking the Ice” published by The Center for Research on Teaching and Learning, University of Michigan (http://www.crlt.umich.edu/node/816)
5. Establish modes of **communication and documentation**

- For example, suggest that a Catalyst workspace, GoogleSite, or other tool is helpful for sharing resources and managing materials. If the group agrees that a workspace should be started, ask for a volunteer to start one, and make sure that every member has the capability to add and edit content. As a group, discuss the purpose and uses of this workspace, and the responsibility for members to regularly check it for new uploaded materials, discussion threads (if including), and other communications.

- Ask participants whether they would prefer: a) to take personal/individual notes for each meeting or b) have a designated notetaker (on a rotating basis) for each meeting. It would be the notetaker’s responsibility to type up notes and post on group workspace.

  - **Suggestion:** As the facilitator, serve as the notetaker for the first meeting and post notes, to model the practice for group members

**Ongoing: Communication and Participation**

1. Keep weekly attendance.

   - Contact people who do not show up for a session and do not notify you about their absence. Check in with them and find out if they plan on attending the rest of the sessions. Encourage them to come back, even if they have missed a session. Contact Christine Sugatan ([sugie@uw.edu](mailto:sugie@uw.edu)) if you have any questions or concerns about participant absences.

2. Encourage group members to share their resources and articles (post on workspace, bring in as artifact, facilitate discussion about resources)

3. According to CTL’s assessment data, LC participants appreciate some structure and direction from the designated facilitator. So while each session might have a couple of volunteers facilitators or presenters, the designated facilitator or co-facilitators can still take an active role in: asking questions, clarifying, making connections, asking “quieter” members if they have any questions or comments, etc.

4. Guest speakers and/or field trips are great ways to get participants actively involved in the LC content.

5. After each week’s meeting, consider sending out a quick summary (different from meeting notes) of the session to the group via email.

**Finally: Enjoy!**