

ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SERIES
FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Assignment #1:
THE PANEL MODERATOR

Objectives

- Select a topic for a panel discussion.
- Identify differing view-points to be addressed by panelists.
- Organize and moderate a panel discussion.
- Recommended Time: 28 to 30 minutes.
- Optional Time: 22 to 28 minutes.

Note to the Evaluator

The purpose of this project was for the moderator to select a topic for a panel discussion, select panelists and moderate the discussion. Each panelist covers a different aspect or viewpoint of the subject so no material overlaps. After all panelists have spoken the moderator facilitates a question-and-answer session. In addition to your verbal evaluation, please answer to the questions below.

Evaluation Guide

1. Was the topic selected appropriate for a panel discussion?

2. In opening the panel discussion, how well did the moderator explain the topic and its purpose?

3. How well did the moderator introduce each panelist and their presentation topic?

4. How effectively did the moderator manage the question-and-answer session?

5. How could the moderator have been more effective?

6. What did the moderator do well?

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Assignment #2:
THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Objectives

- Select a problem for a brainstorming session for which you serve as facilitator.
- Conduct a brainstorming session.
- Have participants reduce the list of ideas to the three best.
- Recommended Time: 31 to 33 minutes.
- Optional Time: 20 to 22 minutes..

Note to the Evaluator

For this project, the speaker serves as a facilitator for a brainstorming session. The session's purpose is to find one or more solutions to a problem. The facilitator serves in a neutral capacity, encouraging participation and keeping the group focused. Once a list is generated, the facilitator helps the group identify the three or most practical ideals. In addition to your verbal evaluation, please write answers to the questions below.

Evaluation Guide

1. Was the topic narrow enough and appropriately worded that the group could accomplish its objectives within the allotted time?

2. How well did the facilitator encourage participants to contribute ideas?

3. What could the facilitator have done differently to help the group generate ideas?

4. How effectively did the facilitator guide the group in reducing the list of ideas to the three best or most practical ones?

5. In what way(s) could the facilitator have been more helpful to the group in making their decisions?

6. How well did the facilitator remain neutral during the discussion?

7. What did the facilitator do well?

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Assignment #3:
THE PROBLEM-SOLVING DISCUSSION

Objectives

- Discuss the three ideas generated in Project 2.
- Determine which one best resolves the problem.
- Recommended Time: 26 to 31 minutes.
- Optional Time: 19 to 23 minutes.

Note to the Evaluator

This assignment requires the speaker to serve as a facilitator, leading the group in discussing possible solution to a problem and selecting the best one by using one of the three voting methods. The facilitator ensures each participant has the opportunity to contribute. The facilitator is neutral, functioning only to draw out and focus the group's thoughts. The facilitator should bring the group to a decision. In addition to your verbal evaluation, please write answers to the questions below.

Evaluation Guide

1. Was the topic narrow enough and worded appropriately that the group could reach a decision within the allotted time?

2. How well did the facilitator use different types of questions to encourage participants to contribute ideas, opinions and suggestions?

3. Was the facilitator able to remain neutral during the discussion?

4. In what way(s) could the facilitator have been more helpful to the group as it tried to reach a decision?

5. How did the facilitator control the flow of discussion so everyone had the opportunity to be heard?

6. What did the facilitator do well?

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Assignment #4: HANDLING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Objectives

- Select a problem and ask club members to discuss and resolve it by either a majority vote or by compromise.
- Serve as facilitator for a discussion.
- Effectively handle any member's behavioral problems that may interfere with the discussion.
- Recommended Time: 22 to 32 minutes.
- Optional Time: 12 to 21 minutes.

Note to the Evaluator

The project involves a role-play, in which some members of the discussion group assume the roles of people who disrupt the discussion for which the speaker is serving as facilitator. The speaker is to select a problem that can be solved in the allotted time and ask club members to discuss and resolve it. Then, use one of the two voting methods the speaker did not use in Project 3 to make a final decision. Should any group members disrupt the discussion or seem unwilling to participate, the speaker is to use some of the suggested methods to keep the discussion focused. In addition to your oral evaluation, please write answers to the questions below.

Evaluation Guide

1. Was the topic narrow enough and worded appropriately that the group could reach a decision within the allotted time?
2. How well did the facilitator encourage participants to contribute ideas, opinions and suggestions?
3. How well did the facilitator remain neutral during the discussion?
4. How effectively did the facilitator do differently that may be more effective in handling the behavioral problems?
5. What could the facilitator do differently that may be more effective in handling the behavioral problems?
6. What did the facilitator do well?
7. In what way(s) could the facilitator be more helpful to the group as it tried to reach a decision?.

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Assignment #5:
REACHING A CONSENSUS

Objectives

- To select a problem for group to discuss and resolve.
- As facilitator, help the group reach a consensus.
- Recommended Time: 31 to 37 minutes.
- Optional Time: 20 to 26 minutes.

Note to the Evaluator

This assignment requires the speaker to serve as a facilitator, selecting a problem for the club to discuss and resolve by consensus. The facilitator ensures each participant has the opportunity to contribute and that the final decision is agreed upon by the group. The facilitator is neutral, functioning only to draw out and focus the group's thoughts. The facilitator should bring the group to consensus within the allotted time. In addition to your oral evaluation, please write answers to the questions below.

Evaluation Guide

1. Was the topic narrow enough and worded appropriately that the group could reach consensus within the allotted time.

2. How well did the facilitator encourage participants to contribute ideas, opinions and suggestions?

3. Did the facilitator help the group identify areas of agreement and disagreement?

4. How effectively did the facilitator help the group explore alternative?

5. How well did the facilitator remain neutral during the discussion?

6. In what way(s) could the facilitator have been more helpful to the group as it tried to reach consensus?

7. What did the facilitator do well?