

the LEADERSHIP | studio
AND TRAINING

+

THE WHITESPACE GROUP

Facilitation School

What to Expect & Why Should You Attend



End boring trainings (meetings) & elevate your facilitation.

What's this Facilitation School all about?

Our job is empowering educators with engaging training that transforms their skills and confidence. We work with higher ed, nonprofit and corporate professionals who seek impactful training solutions.

"When you send folks to a conference, it's like playing the lottery. You don't know if you'll attend a good session or not. That's why we partner with Erin and Mike – it guarantees a fantastic learning experience because we work with subject-matter experts."

- Jeremiah Shinn, Ph.D., Interim President, Boise State University

We understand how frustrating it can be to feel unprepared and outpaced in today's educational environment, so our PhD-based training programs are built on rigorous research that identifies essential skills for success.

If you want some help:

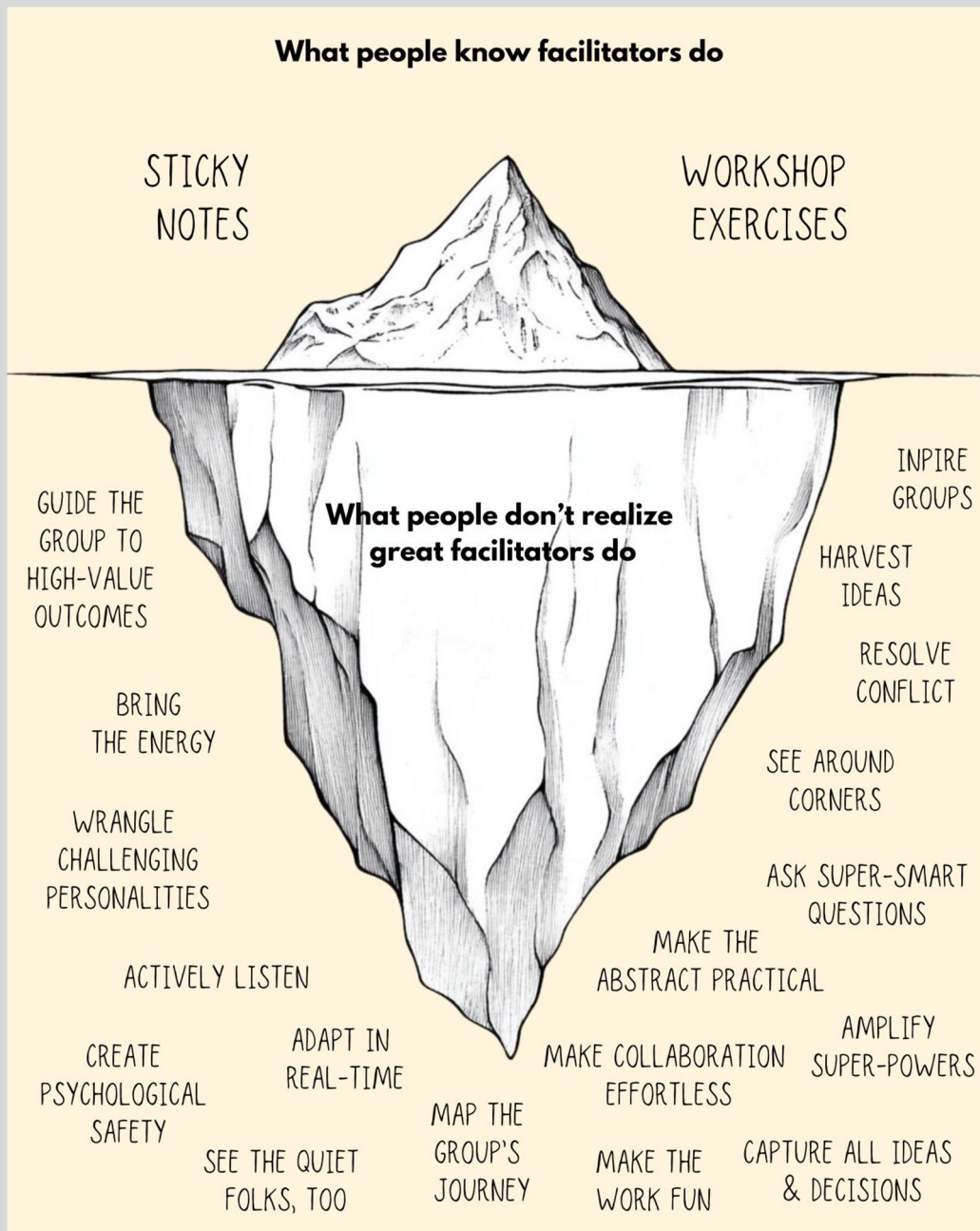
- Schedule a call to discuss your needs.
- Customize the training program with Mike and Erin.
- Book our training dates and start transforming your skills.

Get started today so you can experience confidence while facilitating, learn how to create engaging training sessions, and finally get the best in professional growth. (Or you and your team can continue to feel unprepared, miss out on opportunities to transform your audience, and struggle with unengaging materials.)

We can move you from an unprepared facilitator to a confident facilitator.



Why is facilitation so important?



Credit: Tim Leake - www.letsightbulb.com



What's the facilitation problem?

Most of us start out copying or emulating other facilitators we know.

We pick and choose what we like and dislike becoming a combination of several folks. It can feel disjointed and not authentic to you.

We may or may not have good facilitator or co-facilitator role models.

We typically only get better with “reps” and over time. This process is slow and often haphazard. **Why don't we get the best facilitation advice, direction and recommendations right out of the gate?**

We are here to tell you: **We have some cheat codes.**

But how do you get started or know if you are developing the right skills?

SessionLab's 2024 State of Facilitation report states:

- Data shows that **facilitation is learned on the job, picked up informally**, and strikingly often is not a certified or accredited skill for those who work with it.
- 24.6% of facilitators learnt by shadowing a more experienced colleague, which is interesting to note as **this is how a craft is traditionally picked up**.
- It is sobering to see such **high percentages of people who do not have any accreditation or training certificates related to facilitation** in their background. “None” is the most common answer by far.

Wouldn't it be better to teach facilitation methods early in your career, so that this soft skill becomes a strong skill and enables you and your staff to lead discussions, make decisions and, in the future, help teams work better together?



We're here to help.



Erin Fischer:

- Wrote over 150 programs for 104 clients that range from two hours to seven days.
- Created & delivered Program Design School for professionals for over ten years.
- Delivered as a keynote speaker to over 40,000 people in the past nine years.
- Project manager of comprehensive training programs for 14,000 members of a national organization with 33 unique & individual programs, using 21 different delivery methods.



Mike McRee:

- Dissertation research focus on what do good lead facilitators do in outside of the classroom programs.
- Former faculty for the Federal Executive Institute & adjunct professor.
- Provided & managed over 3,000 educational workshops & programs to more than 100,000 students & professionals representing more than 250 colleges, organizations & corporations for five companies.



As your guides, here's what we know.

- We have seen a few bad facilitators over the years, and we think **facilitation is a tough skill to master**. (We know because we've made all the mistakes from the camp stage to the keynote stage over the past few decades.)
- We also know that **a fabulous facilitator can make or break the experience for your participants**. The problem is so few supervisors have time to create a training and then get everyone to practice this research, and delicate skill. So, we are doing the work for you.
- **Facilitators need reps and practice**. You can't wing great facilitation (although we've all tried!).
- **Facilitators need a plan** for how to read the guide. Did you know there are three things you need to scan for as you review your facilitator notes?
- We scoured through Mike's Ph.D. research, and **we share the top 12 things participants need from facilitators** and the results are fascinating! We will share this brilliant research with you, so you don't have to guess what to do as a facilitator.
- **Most facilitators still read the PPT** (which is why we have to sit in the back corner at conferences so we can sneak out.)
- We know **great facilitation comes from letting your audience participate** instead of reading to them. You don't go to camp to watch a video about canoeing and horseback riding, you want to try these things. **We will teach you how to engage your audience** using the 70/30 method so they can practice their new knowledge and skills.
- **The best facilitators know how to keep the focus on the main take-away**, and they know how to facilitate some of the best conversations. More importantly, they know how to give instructions. (It sounds so simple, but you've been given bad instructions from an unpracticed facilitator before!)
- One other thing: **We will walk you through how to make your big concepts stay sticky and highly memorable** for your participants. Did you know there are five things you can do to make your work stick with your audience?



Facilitation School

What is it?

- Live, two-day, hands-on professional development program.
- Up to 40 participants.
- 9am to 4pm, each day (10am start if virtual).
- Designed for early-to-mid-level professionals (although we've had much more experienced folks participate and love it).
- We share the best tips, tricks and techniques for facilitators.
- Grounded in years of research and personal experience.
- Built to help you have more authenticity and presence in front of the room or in small groups of 10 to 250.

Why should you attend?

- We know the right facilitator can make all the difference. You know this to be true. Just remember the last bad facilitator you had.
- So, we have created content to help you deliver the best for your audience.



As we shared, you never went to camp to watch videos about canoeing, horseback riding, and the ropes course. Why would your participants come to your course to watch you read the Power Points when they could be trying something themselves. **Let us help you get better – fast.**



Sample Schedule

SESSION 1

- Why is This so Important to do Well?
- The Facilitation Problem
- Ground Rules
- Define the Terms of Our Work
- Let's Review the Research
- The Pre-Work Plan

SESSION 2

- Flexing Your Style: DiSC
- How to Make Concepts Sticky
- How to Facilitate the Conversation/Brainstorm/Strategic Plan/Big Meeting
- Learning Stages

SESSION 3

- Where is Your Power?
 - The Power of Storytelling
 - Pace and Pitch
 - Making Things Interactive
 - The Power of Breaking It Up
- The Ladder of Inference
- Your Turn: How to Apply the Heat
- Where do Facilitators go Wrong?

SESSION 4

- Learning Methods
- Giving Instructions

SESSION 5

- Getting Prepped for Delivery Day
- Dealing With Common Problems
- Reflection
- Closing



Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- List the reasons why participant-centered facilitation is important to audiences and organizations.
- Create ground rules and norms for the session.
- Define the terms linked to facilitation.
- Review the research linked to high-performing facilitators.
- List the ways to improve your own facilitative skills.
- Describe the way to flex your style as a facilitator to honor your audience.
- Review the stages of learners.
- Create a pre-work plan for each facilitative experience.
- Practice storytelling.
- Practice making the facilitative experience interactive.
- Review a list of learning methods.
- Add learning methods and stories to the facilitative experience.
- Identify when to give breaks to the participants. (You are not giving them enough!)
- Practice icebreakers and energizers. (Even boring adults want to have fun.)
- Identify ways facilitators go “wrong” when facilitating.
- Create a list of antidotes for when things go wrong in the process of prepping and facilitating.
- Review your facilitator guide to add stories, learning methods, breaks and energizers.
- Review your facilitator guide to determine where you can challenge and support your participants.
- Review your facilitator guide to determine if it is participant centered.
- Practice giving instructions to participants.
- List ways to make your concepts “sticky” and memorable.
- Practice a facilitated conversation.
- Complete a delivery-day chart to prep for your next event.
- List ways to deal with common participant-centered problems.
- Complete a facilitator reflection tool.
- Review the resource guide.



What do past participants say?

- “The plethora of knowledge these two individuals have on facilitating is worth every dollar. They are able to connect with all audiences and get across the importance of facilitation.”
- “You’ll get to see strong facilitators put their tips and tricks into practice. Never do they attempt to change your style, or encourage you to emulate theirs, but instead equip you through factual information and practical application.”
- “As someone who wants to continue to build my facilitation skills, Erin and Mike brought a perspective that I had not heard or thought of. They were funny, relatable, personable, intelligent, and overall very entertaining!”
- “Mike and Erin have such a wealth of knowledge in this scope and it was so amazing to see them practice what they preach. Thank you both for this experience!!”
- “It will change your perspective on how you to do the work.”
- “Facilitation School is by far the best facilitation training I’ve received. It’s engaging and gets to the point without all the annoying fluff. 10/10 would recommend.”
- “Even as an experienced facilitator (20 years), I still learned some fresh techniques and ideas to improve what I’ve been doing, I wish I had this decades ago!”
- “This teaches you that leadership isn’t about being the loudest voice or the one with all the answers. it’s about creating space for others to think, share, and grow. You learn how to manage energy in a room, handle moments of tension with confidence, and keep people engaged in a way that feels natural and inclusive.”
- “Everything that they told us to do they did themselves during the training. Sometimes without us even realizing it, but then they would acknowledge it and we now know exactly what it looks like to be a good facilitator. Both Erin and Mike seemed to truly enjoy getting to share the research and the knowledge that they have and I love that they are so passionate about passing it on to make others better.”



Take the next step

It's time to attend Facilitation School if you:

- Struggle with confidence in front of a group.
- Have a hard time getting folks to participate.
- Overthink your guide and your PowerPoint or always talk too much.
- Can't manage your time.
- Don't know how to get to your main point or go on too many tangents.
- Worry about your evaluation scores, but don't change your style to meet your audience.
- Don't know how to make your work memorable or sticky.

Who should attend?

- Anyone who wants to get better at the art of facilitation.
- Leadership development educators who create programs and want to learn how to facilitate well.
- Front line staff who deliver programs to various communities and audiences.
- Directors or managers who oversee a team of facilitators.





Have questions?
Reach out to us directly.

WS



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