Online Workshop on Facilitating Online Workshops

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Agenda

- Basic Workshop Recipe
- What makes facilitating online challenging?
- What makes facilitating online awesome?
- Online facilitation skills:
  - Attention
  - Reflection
  - Traffic Control
- Back Pocket Questions
- Common Problems
- Reading the Room
- Resources!

Basic Workshop/Online Meeting Recipe

- Zoom Room with breakouts enabled
- [Shared Google doc agenda](#) (or other shared doc) with info about meeting.
- Sign in and intro question
- Code of Conduct Review
- Opening activity (often written)
- Short lecture/ Content with Q&A at end.
- Breakout rooms and share out
- Takeaways, future direction and request for feedback.

What makes facilitating online challenging?

It's awkward.

We don't have social norms yet.

The more people, the more likely it is to feel awkward.

These technologies are designed for one way communication, not two way.

Awkwardness happens when:

- We don't know what to do
- A social norm is broken
- Negative social judgements are made.

[Psychology of Awkward Moments](#)

To counter awkwardness:

Research says:

- Share common interests
- Help one another
- Be positive about another person
- Humor

Embrace the Awkward

What else makes facilitating online challenging?

There are a LOT of visual cues and blinky things taking our attention.

Shared online documents can be overwhelming

Folks have tech problems/ children/distractions/cell phones.
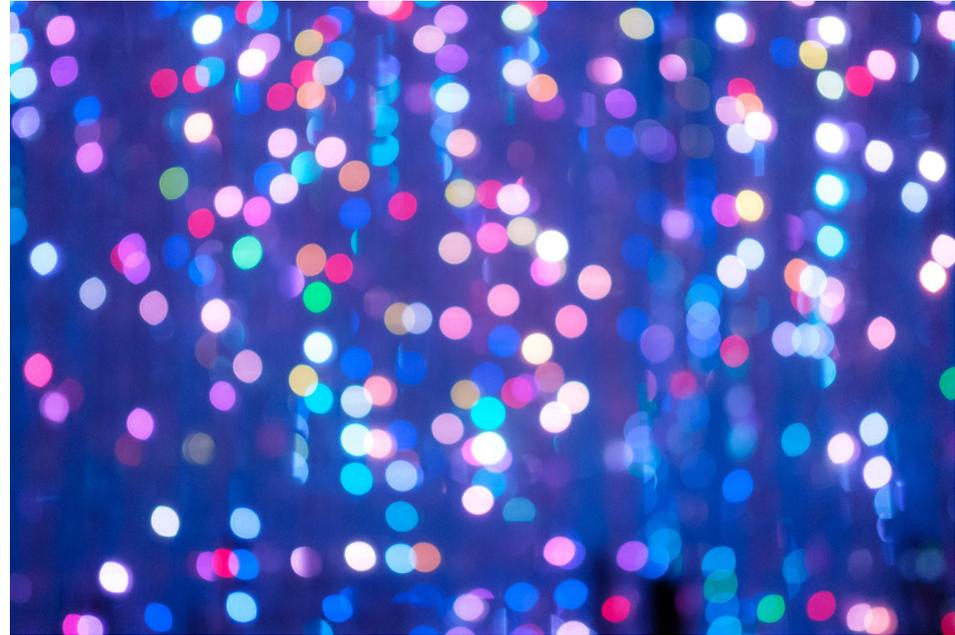
To counter attention fatigue:

Calm is contagious.

Ask for help.

"Could anyone give Julie some advice on logging onto Zoom with android?"

"Who wants to find that resource and share it with everyone in the google doc?

Workshop participants want this to succeed.

Build in a variety of participation avenues.

What makes facilitating online awesome?

Shared Google Docs = huge white board.

Comfy chairs!

The internet is RIGHT THERE.

Collaborative documents engage people.

People really need to feel connected during these wild times. We can help.

Facilitation Skills: Attention

- Be curious.
- Give your attention.
- Listen.

Attention

- Your attention as a facilitator shows what you value.
- Let people interrupt you. Interrupt others only when needed to facilitate.
- When there are difficult topics or emotional topics, be present.
- Reading out the comments in a google doc/chat window is a way of being attentive to those who can't unmute.
- Allow time. If there is a conversational lull, take a breath before doing anything.
  - Remember for anyone to speak in an online setting, they have an extra step of unmuting.

To Practice Attention

In the next conversation with someone, give longer pauses after the other person speaks.

Count to five in your head while still showing interest.

Facilitation Skills: Reflection

- Mirroring
  - *Jane: "I'm going to the post office."*
  - *Me: "To the post office?"*

- Paraphrasing
  - *Jane: "I'm going to the post office."*
  - *Me: "So you're going out?"*

- Reflecting feelings/emotions
  - *Jane: "I'm going to the post office."*
  - *Me: "Sounds like you're unhappy."*
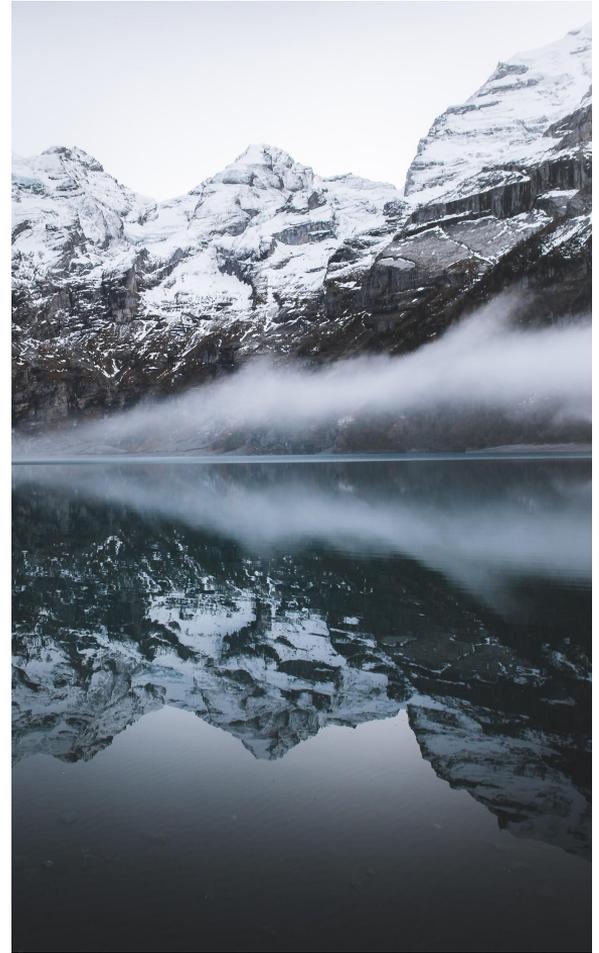
Reflecting

Facilitation Skills: Reflection

"What I heard you say was____"

"Sounds like you were suggesting___"

"Huh... That's really interesting, [paraphrase] "

"I get the sense that ____"

"That point Martha just made sounds similar to the point that Jane made earlier about ___. "

"Seems like there are a lot of concerns about the fall semester."

"In the chat there's been a discussion of conversation starters for workshops."

"In the google doc it looks like several folks are writing about anxiety."

"Tell me more about that..."

"If you'd like, please say more"

To Practice Reflection

Children, especially young ones LOVE reflection and are happy to let you watch them and tell them what they're doing.

If you don't have children, try it on grocery clerks, your partner, family members or a colleague at work.

A little goes a LONG way.

Facilitation Skills: Traffic Control

Online facilitation requires more intentional, verbal traffic control.

You'll do more explaining and directing than you do in an in person setting.

Be kind but directive.
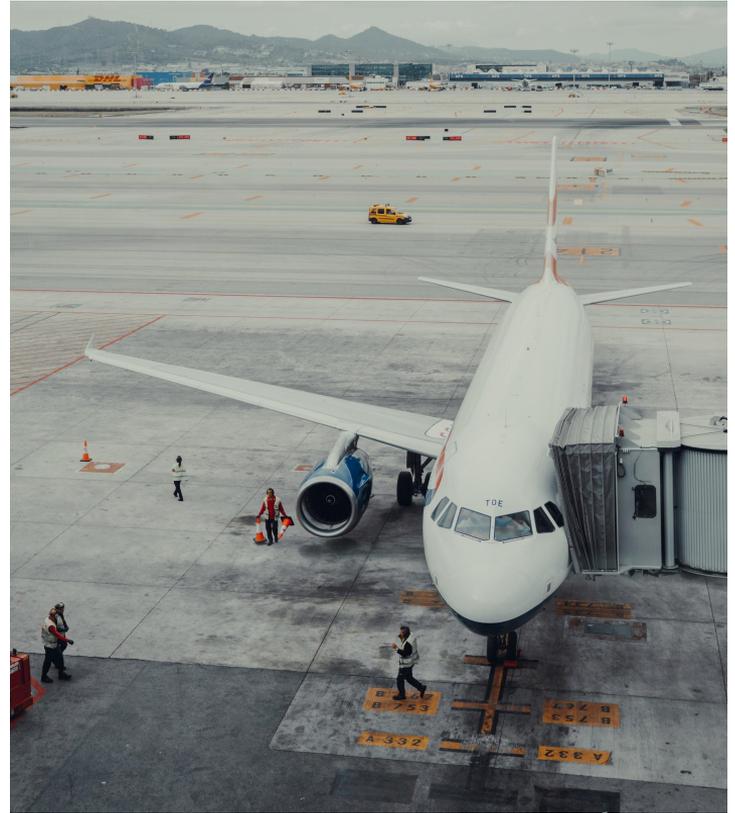
Facilitation Skills: Traffic Control

Prime for engagement later
- "Feel free to unmute if you want to talk about [introduction topic] we have a couple of minutes."
- "In a bit, I'll be asking folks to tell me what they found most interesting in the article."
- "When we get back from breakouts, I'll ask one person to share what you talked about."

Direct the work
- "I know folks are still working on the first question in the document, let's finish up your thoughts there and move to the next question."
- We've got about five minutes left and I'd love to hear if there are more comments.

Facilitation Skills: Traffic Control

Multiple people talking
- "Jane, you go next, then we'll get you Francis."
- "I heard a lot of folks wanting to talk and I want to hear all of it. If you can, write your comments in the google doc."

No one speaking
- "Jane, Francis or Mark, I haven't heard from any of you in a while, do you have any points to share ?"
- "Let's go back to this point. Anyone want to comment on that?"

One person speaking too much
- Francis, I'm going to interrupt you. I love what you're saying but I want to see if there's anything that others have to add to your point on ___. "
- We've got about three minutes left, so I want to make sure to leave time for other folks to make their comments as well."

Practicing Traffic Control

You gotta just do it.

Forgive yourself.

Embrace the Awkward.

Back Pocket Questions

"Would anyone like to summarize___?"

- The responses in the google doc on [topic]?
- What they talked about in their breakout room?
- What they'd like to take away from the speaker?

What questions do you have?

What will you take away from this discussion?

Are there any topics we haven't touched on that folks want to bring up?
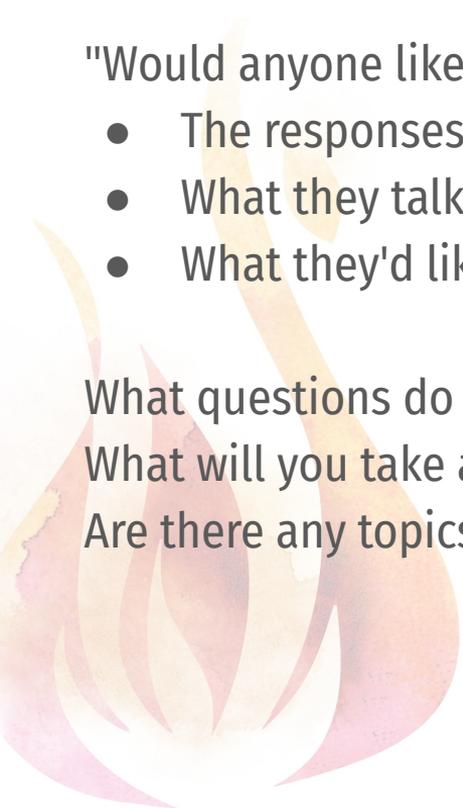
Problem: Too many people want to talk

- Put people in breakout rooms
- Give direction
  - "If you've got points we aren't covering, please put them in the chat/google doc, I really want to hear what you have to say"
- Consider activities like waterfall chats where everyone answers a question with a word or phrase in the chat window.
- Give folks more avenues to chat with one another
  - "Feel free to chat with one another in the slack or private chat function"
- Ask people to line up to speak.
  - Some folks use the convention of typing STACK in the chat window to signal you'd like to speak.

Problem: No one is speaking

- Do a silent google doc writing session on a question
  - Easy questions are "What's going on with you?" or "What would you like me to know?" or "What has been the most useful thing we've talked about so far?"
- Read what has already been written and add your own spin to it
  - "Earlier someone talked about ___. I wanted to add that I think that there's some really interesting directions on this if you think about ____."
- Ask a broad question that let's folks steer the conversation in a new direction
  - "Are there any topics we haven't touched on that folks want to bring up?"
- Sometimes breakout rooms are the answer
  - It let's folks talk in a less stressful environment.

Problem: One person speaks too much

- Use time cues to cut people off
  - "Martha, I would love to hear more, can you summarize that point in the google doc, we need to move on to the next thing on the agenda."
- Restate your interest in giving everyone the chance to speak.
  - "I'd really like to hear from folks who haven't spoken yet.
  - "If folks can't unmute please share your contribution in writing."
- Pivot to silent group writing to encourage more perspectives and to introduce quiet collaboration.
- Put folks into breakout rooms
- Pull person aside and ask that they consider how often/long they share.

Reading the Room

Ask folks to use physical gestures to get feedback
- "Thumbs up if you agree, thumbs down if you disagree"
- "If you want to speak and are unmuting feel free to wave!"

Ask folks who have muted their video to give their feedback (e.g. thumbs up/down) in the chat window.
- "If you're not on video or calling in, please use the chat window for feedback. We'll do our best to keep an eye on that."

As possible, watch videos and engage with folks as they seem to want to talk. Always welcome it if folks don't want to speak.

There are a lot of Open Resources on Online Meetings:

What questions or comments do you have?

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