



# Master Facilitator™

Briefcase Basics Workplace Leaders Vol. 1 Iss. 2

## The First Class

Come to your first class at least 30 minutes before your scheduled start time.

### Main concerns of students in their first class are:

1. What is the course about?
2. What is my role in the course?
3. What will the instructor be like?

The first two concerns can be alleviated by providing a copy of the course outline. The course outline contains:

- Course goals and objectives.
- An outline of course content including a bibliography of required and supplemental readings.
- Course structure.
- Student assessments, clearly indicating frequency and weight of exams, tests, written and oral assignments, etc.

The third concern can be addressed by showing enthusiasm and involvement with the course content, treating each student as an individual, encouraging students to participate in class, and helping students feel comfortable in the class environment.

Giving students clear and adequate information about the course and their role in it, within the context of a supportive and friendly atmosphere, will address their concerns and provide you with a good foundation.

### Tips for instruction and presentation

- Maintain an appropriate energy level.
- Use media effectively (flip charts, overhead transparencies, video equipment, workbooks, etc.) to enhance the learning experience.
- Maintain good vocal projection, vary tone, pitch, speed, and volume to fit the content.

- Avoid distracting actions (pacing, snapping pen top, jingling pocket change).
- Use a variety of instructional techniques; select the one that is most appropriate for the learning objective.
- Be flexible; do not be "glued" to instructor notes.
- Connect content to participants' professional and personal life experiences through the effective use of relevant stories, illustrations and analogies.
- Be acutely aware of time during a workshop.

### Class preparation

Before teaching a workshop answer the following questions:

- Who are the participants? (Upper or middle management, front-line, etc.)
- What is a typical day like in the lives of the participants?
- What challenges do participants face?
- What are the greatest issues facing participants' organizations?
- What do the participants and their organizations hope to gain from the curricula?
- What plans are in place for follow-up training to reinforce the curricula?

### Create a safe learning environment

Participants come to learning experiences with various ideas, feelings and circumstances. Sometimes a participant's background may overwhelm his or her ability to learn. Therefore, it is imperative for you to provide a safe learning environment in which all participants will be invited to learn. An effective facilitator will:

- Acknowledge that all participants' comments, opinions, concerns, feelings and questions are valid.
- Seek first to understand (listen, do not talk!).
- Give feedback to participants to reinforce accurate understanding.

- Sense the needs of an audience (know when to ask questions, take a break, allow a discussion to go over time, or tell a story).
- Actively involve participants by asking questions of participants rather than feeding them answers, asking for related examples from participants and sharing professional and personal examples that relate to the concepts being taught and to the participants' frames of reference.
- Avoid actions that may be perceived by the participant as criticism or a "put down," or any actions that discount participants' experiences and abilities.

### Managing time

Managing time is absolutely essential. You must always balance time for delivery of content, exercises and group discussion. Allowing any segment of the workshop to continue beyond the allotted time will result in "short-cutting" other content. Ways to stay on time:

- Follow your facilitator manual closely.
- Use just enough examples, analogies and stories to illustrate the learning point.
- Balance participant comments with content presentation, exercises and activities.

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