



SIMONA CERRATO | 18 - 19 NOVEMBER 2021

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES: DISCUSSION GAMES

DISCUSSION GAME MANIFESTO

Discussion games are not used to convince people or to make social, environmental campaigns, or to promote healthy behaviors, etc.

- **helps participants learn about and form an opinion about a particular issue, and to explore the differences of opinion among participants**
- **there are not people who are wrong and people who have the truth – there are only differences of opinions**
- **helps people to explore why they think the way they do**
- **the materials present all opinions as equally acceptable/understandable/reasonable**
- **is not an occasion to persuade people to your point of view or to campaign for something**
- **helps to learn facts and understand concepts**
- **the facilitator guarantees the quality of the discussion for all participants**

INGREDIENTS OF A DISCUSSION GAME

DESIGN

Define topic

Choose a topic that can be addressed from a plurality of perspectives and offers opportunities for helpful discussion

Define the target audience

Each audience has its own needs, so think ahead of time to whom the game is aimed

Define purpose

Ask yourself what you want to achieve with this game: raise awareness? spread knowledge on a cutting-edge topic? involve people in a real decision-making process? it is important that the purpose is clear to you and the participants.

PRODUCTION

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Research | Explore the topic from many different perspectives and collect data, open problems and any other possible info and documentation |
| List of possible issues | Among all possible issues to present, select the most suitable ones and prepare a draft of the text |
| Write the cards | From the selected topics, choose 6-10 only and write the texts to present them in a clear and neutral way |
| Images | Choose images which may illustrate the issues presented on the cards, helping participants to better understand |
| Produce cards | Put the texts and images together in a nice layout, print enough copies |
| Further reading and references | Prepare some documentation to give participants if interested |
| Test | Test the prototype with a test group and get feedback |
| Improve your prototype | Produce the final cards based on the test |
| Produce the game | Improve texts, images, layout and produce the game in its final form |

DELIVERY

Groups

Find the group(s) among the target audience and organize the event

Spaces

Find the venue and set up the space properly

Time

Allocate time (when and how long)

Facilitation

To learn how to facilitate see **Participatory techniques of active citizenship: facilitation**

Feedback and documentation

Wrap-up the session with the participants, collect and archive the results

EXAMPLES

PRIORITY GAMES

- 6-10 cards presenting various positions
- place them in a order of priority from the most important to least important



DISCUSSION CONTINUUM

- 6-10 cards presenting various positions, opinions, choices
- players are asked to express their agreement or disagreement



**POSSIBLE OR
IMPOSSIBLE**

CREDIT: MATTEO MERZAGORA

1

TO BUILD ROBOTS WHO HAVE HUMAN FEELINGS



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoAzpa1x7jU>

2

**TO SELECT THE DNA OF THE FETUS TO DETERMINE THE LIFE OF
THE KID**



3

**TO ENTER IN THE MIND OF A PERSON AND TAKE CONTROL OF
THEIR DREAMS**

CLASSIC TRAILER



4

TO MIGRATE ON ANOTHER PLANET



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSWdZVtXT7E>

5

TO TRAVEL IN TIME



CLASSIC TRAILER

WORKSHOP

2. YOUR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE: DESIGN

| specific topic | type of game | connection with the school curriculum | interdisciplinarity |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| vaccines in a global world | discussion continuum | immune system | biology mathematics (statistics) filosophy other? |

HOW TO WRITE CARDS

STYLE

- simple
- precise
- unambiguous

CONTENT

- representing all stakeholders
- balanced
- neutral
- acceptable
- documented

DON'T

- present stereotypes
- present extreme positions
- make your opinion clear

WORKSHOP

2. YOUR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE: LIST OF POSSIBLE ISSUES

| issue 1 | issue 2 | issue 3 | issue 4 | ... |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| should vaccines be compulsory? | vaccines and solidarity | vaccines and developing countries | pharma companies and profits | reliable source of information |

3. YOUR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE: WRITE THE CARDS I

| content | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | strenghts | weaknesses | proposed improvements | scores (1-10) |
| simplicity | | | | |
| precision | | | | |
| ambiguity | | | | |

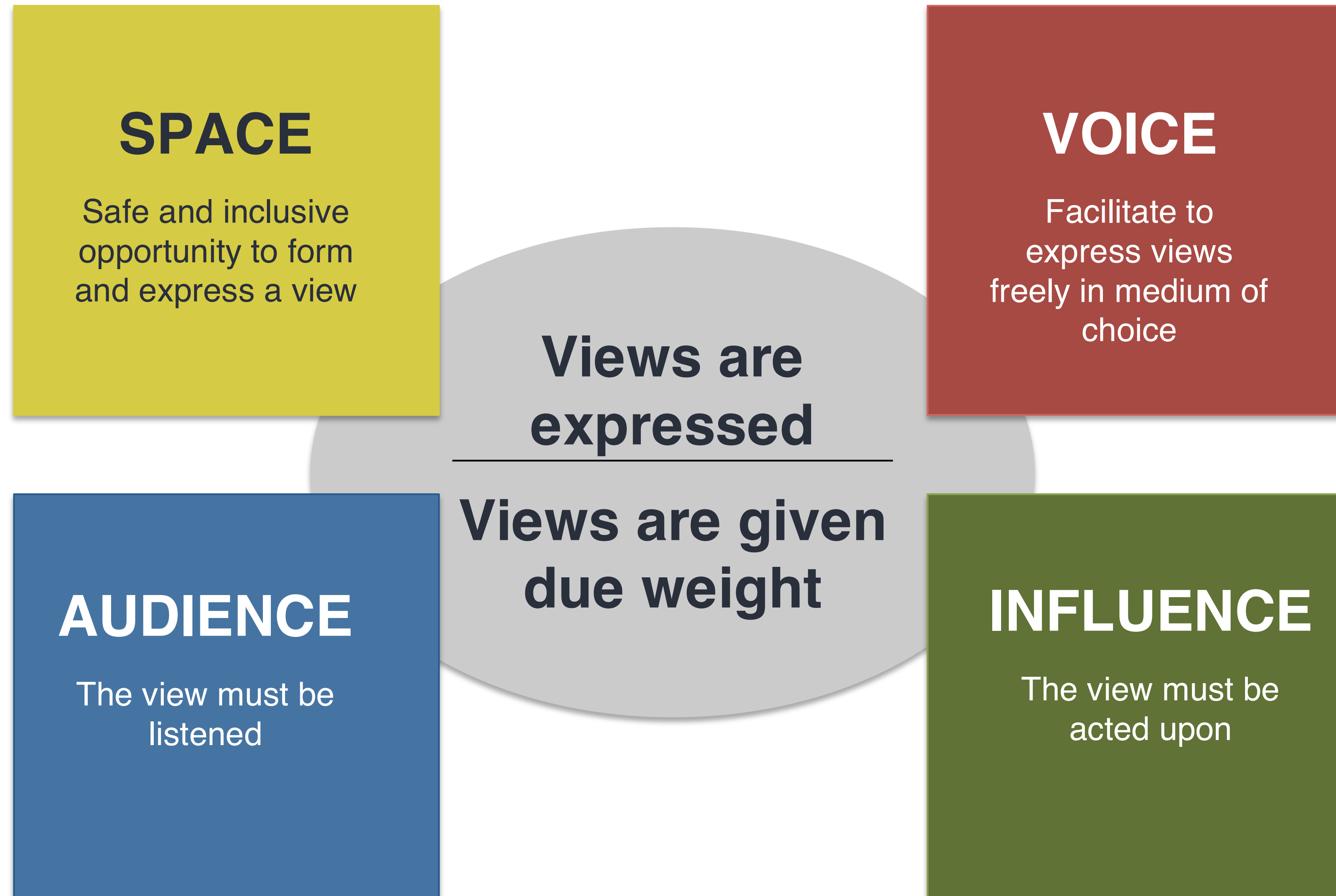
3. YOUR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE: WRITE THE CARDS II

| content | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | strenghts | weaknesses | proposed improvements | scores (1-10) |
| multiple stakeholders | | | | |
| balance | | | | |
| neutrality | | | | |
| acceptability | | | | |
| sources | | | | |

HOW TO CHOOSE IMAGES

- **authentic**
- **connected with the topic and the target audience**
- **culturally relevant**
- **socially relevant**
- **focused on diversity**
- **good quality**

SPACE AND TIME



GROUPS

- casuals
- spontaneous
- suggested by the teacher

SPACE

- tables and chairs
- pen and papers
- blackboard
- a wall





TIME

before

- print the game
- provide all the necessary material
- possibly introduce the method before
- agree on a code of conduct

TIME

during

- explain scope and rules (5-10 minutes)
- remind the code of conduct (2 minutes)
- show the material
- form the groups
- discussion within the groups (10 - 30 minutes)
- collegial discussion (10 - 30 minutes)

TIME

during

“You still have 10 minutes... You still have 5 minutes...

Is it enough? How is it going?

Do you need more time?”

TIME

after

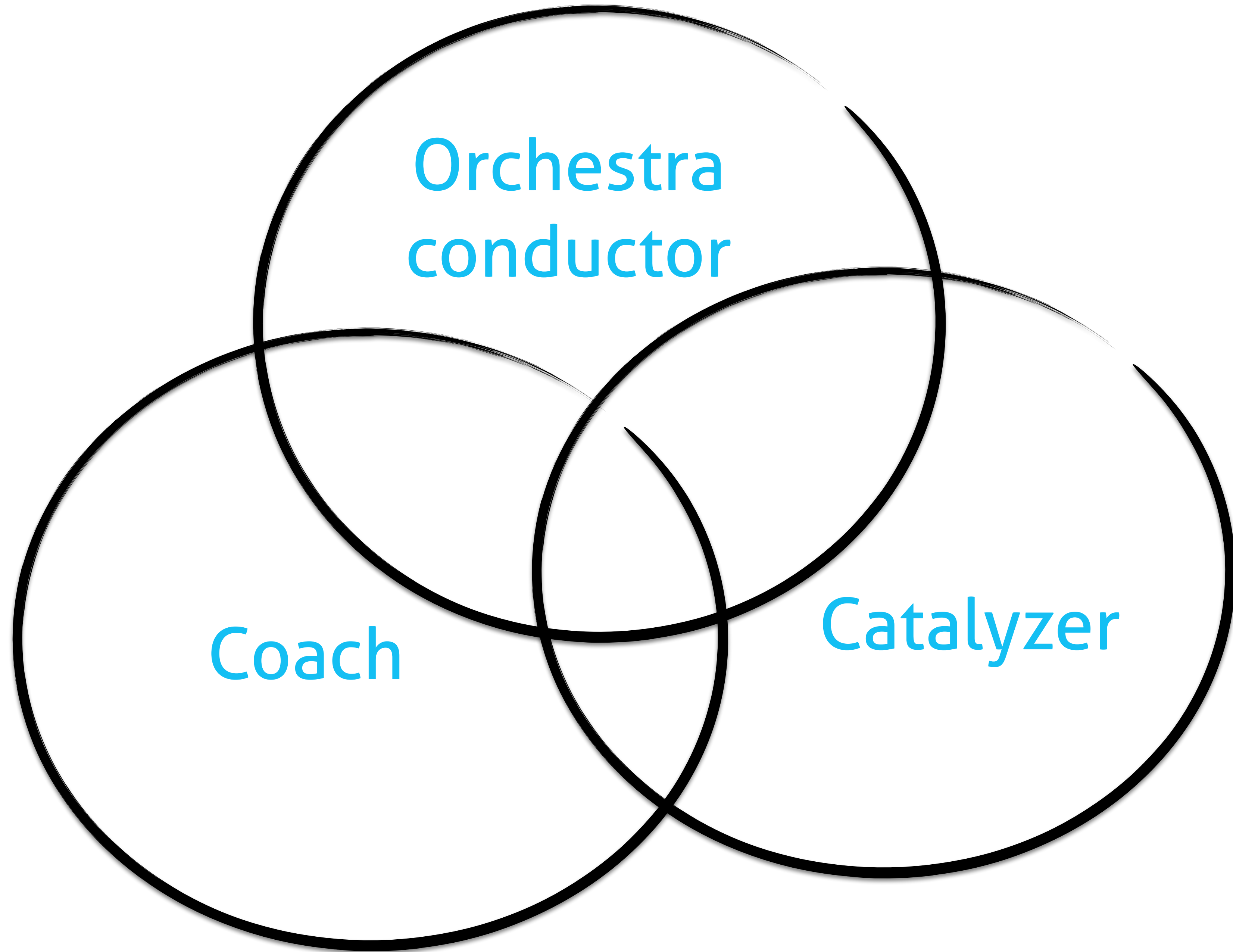
- wrap up
- evaluation
- further reading

FACILITATION

facilitation is a process of non-directive guiding of a working group, with the support of a facilitator or moderator

ROLE OF A FACILITATOR

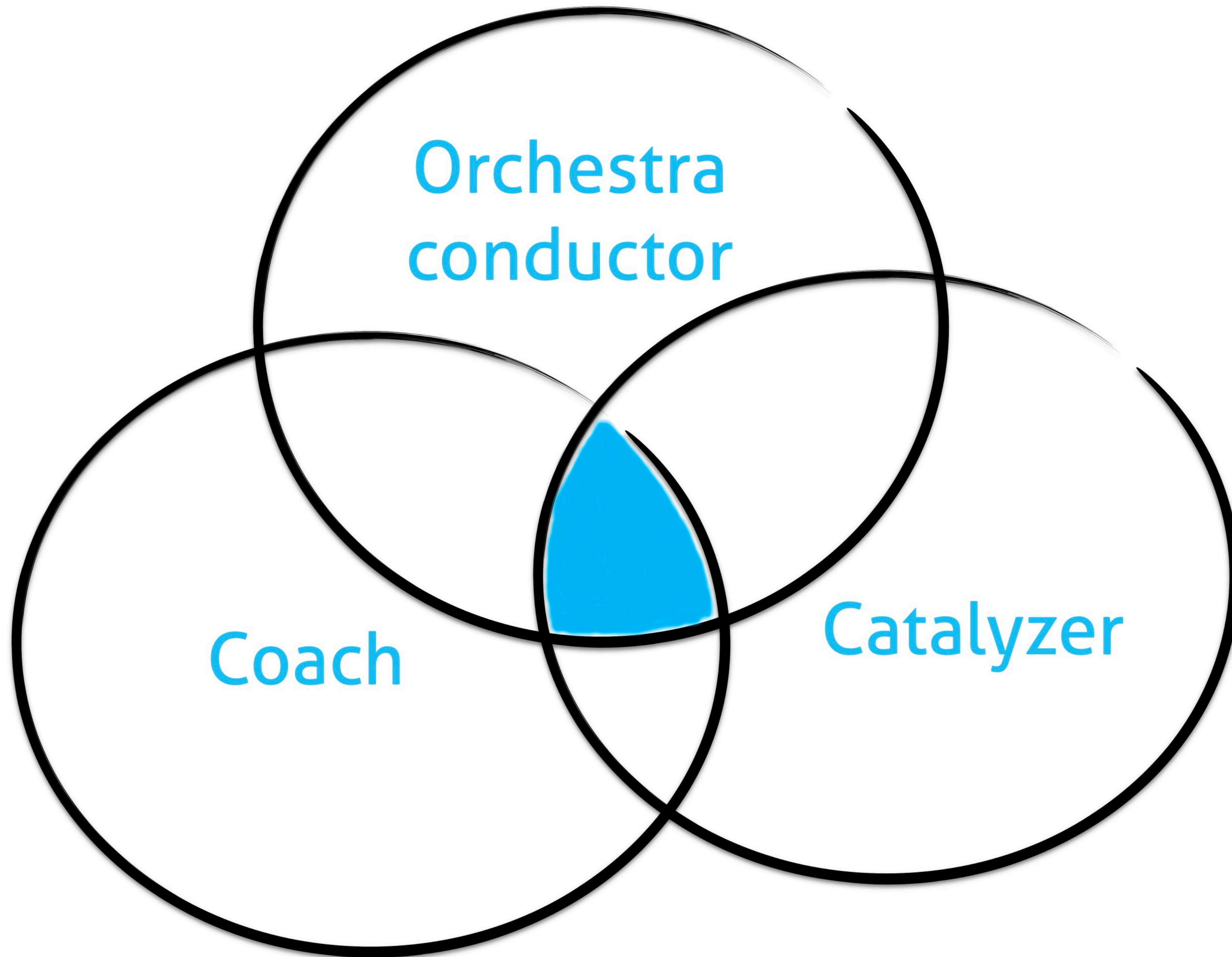
- helps to reach a common goal
- helps the conversation
- include everybody



Orchestra
conductor

Coach

Catalyzer



Orchestra
conductor

Coach

Catalyzer

IN PRACTICE, WHAT DOES A FACILITATOR DO

before

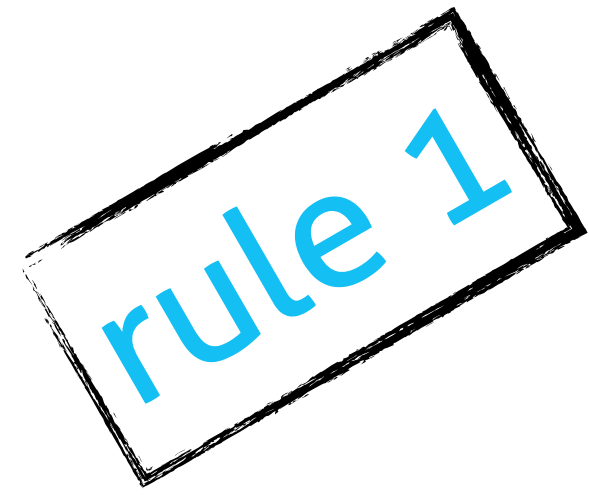
- plan and prepare

IN PRACTICE, WHAT DOES A FACILITATOR DO

during

- defines the rules and share them
- encourages participation and discussion
- keeps the time
- steps in inc case discussion does not work properly with constructive inputs
- gathers the results and documents the process

BASIC RULES



- clear and shared rules

BASIC RULES



- don't reach and don't convince

BASIC RULES

rule 3

- reassure and be friendly

BASIC RULES

rule 4

■ moderate

BASIC RULES

rule 5

- give information, if necessary

BASIC RULES

rule 6

- keep neutrality

BASIC RULES

rule 7

- be flexible

BASIC RULES

rule 7

- be flexible

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

- like/don't like
- paraphrase or summarize
- involve the group
- shift perspective
- give positive feedback

**TEACHER AND
FACILITATOR**

| teaching | facilitating |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| learning | thinking |
| hierarchy | collaboration |
| application | communication |
| linear | flexible |
| long term | short term |

| teacher | facilitator |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| defined role | flexible role |
| aimed at a goal | focused on interaction |
| control | conduct |
| didactic style | a variety of open ended styles |
| is an expert | is not an expert |
| provides information | fosters thinking |

**DISCUSSION:
AND WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES?
WHAT ARE THE COMMON ELEMENTS?**