CORE SKILLS OF A FACILITATOR

Whatever one's beliefs about the best nature of facilitation, the practice usually is best carried out by someone who has strong knowledge and skills regarding group dynamics and processes -- these are often referred to as process skills. Effective facilitation might also involve strong knowledge and skills about the particular topic or content that the group is addressing in order to reach its goals -- these are often referred to as content skills. The argument about how much "process versus content" skills are required by facilitators in certain applications is a very constructive argument that has gone on for years. The following skills are important for facilitators regardless of the type of group or application (groups and applications are listed next in this topic).

Core Interpersonal Skills for Facilitators

Although facilitators work primarily with groups, those groups are comprised of individuals. A good facilitator needs strong expertise in working with individuals as well as groups. The following list includes skills that would be very useful for a facilitator to have.

Body Language
Coaching
Conflict (Interpersonal)
Feedback (Sharing)
Handling Difficult People
Listening
Morale (Boosting)
Motivating
Negotiating
Power and Influence (Managing)
Presenting
Questioning
Trust (Building)
Valuing Diversity

Core Group Skills for Facilitators

Although facilitators work primarily with groups, those groups are comprised of individuals. A good facilitator needs strong expertise in working with individuals as well as groups. The following list includes skills that would be very useful for a facilitator to have.

Group-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making

Group Conflict Management
Group Evaluations
Group Learning
Group Theory and Dynamics
Meeting Management (agendas, ground rules, etc.)
Planning (many kinds, including strategic planning, business planning, etc.)
Team Building