

The teacher as facilitator of learning

The teacher of SPHE takes on a facilitative role in the classroom.

This involves

- planning for learning in consultation with the students to find out what their particular interests and concerns are in the area being studied.
- using active and collaborative teaching and learning methodologies.
- letting go of the need to be an 'expert' and sometimes acknowledging your own lack of experience or knowledge on questions that arise.

A positive, caring and respectful atmosphere is needed to support you in adopting a facilitator of learning role. This requires a safe classroom in which ground rules and boundaries are clear.

Skills for facilitation of classroom discussion

The teacher

- Engages in active listening
- Reflects back what he/she has heard
- Seeks clarity – what does it look like? Tell me a bit more about that?
- Avoids putting the person on the spot by asking 'why?' or 'what do you mean?'
- When noting ideas from class discussion or brainstorm ensures wording comes from the students themselves
- Asks questions to prompt deeper thinking on the issue
- Doesn't deny any experiences, validates the students' feelings and experiences
- Isn't afraid of the avalanche – and can press pause if needed
- Doesn't personalise - speaks of the issue
- Draws out resistance or alternative perspectives in a controlled way
- Is not afraid of the silences
- Uses people's names, without making anyone feel they are being put on the spot

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Possible statements, questions and phrases to use when facilitating classroom discussion

- *I noticed that a lot of you were ...*
- *I hear some of you say...*
- *Can you say a bit more about that?*
- *Share with me your thoughts...*
- *Does anyone else have ideas?*
- *I hear what you are saying...*
- *But I hear some of you say...*
- *That sounds like something that needs to be looked at more*
- *Does anyone feel differently about ...*
(e.g. if something is said that's negative/unhelpful and you need to create a balance).
- *So we are all agreed that this is an important part of the discussion...*
- *You may / may not think this is worth trying?*
- *Tell me about that* (e.g. if someone says that they can't do x, avoid asking why?)
- *How might you do that in your life?*
- *What would that look like?*
- *I am curious about.....*
- *I was wondering...*
- *Thank you for sharing your viewpoint*
- *I understand that is your experience and I was wondering could there be another explanation?*
- *I wonder what the other person might be thinking*
- *Can you think of a situation when you might think/respond differently* (introduces flexible thinking)
- *I see that works for you*
- *I appreciate your honesty*
- *What does the group think?*
- *How might someone your age ...?*
(takes the focus off the individual feeling exposed)

Other relevant topics

Teacher as facilitator

What makes a safe SPHE/RSE classroom?

What makes an inclusive SPHE/RSE classroom?

Dealing with challenging conversations

Dealing with disclosure about sexual abuse