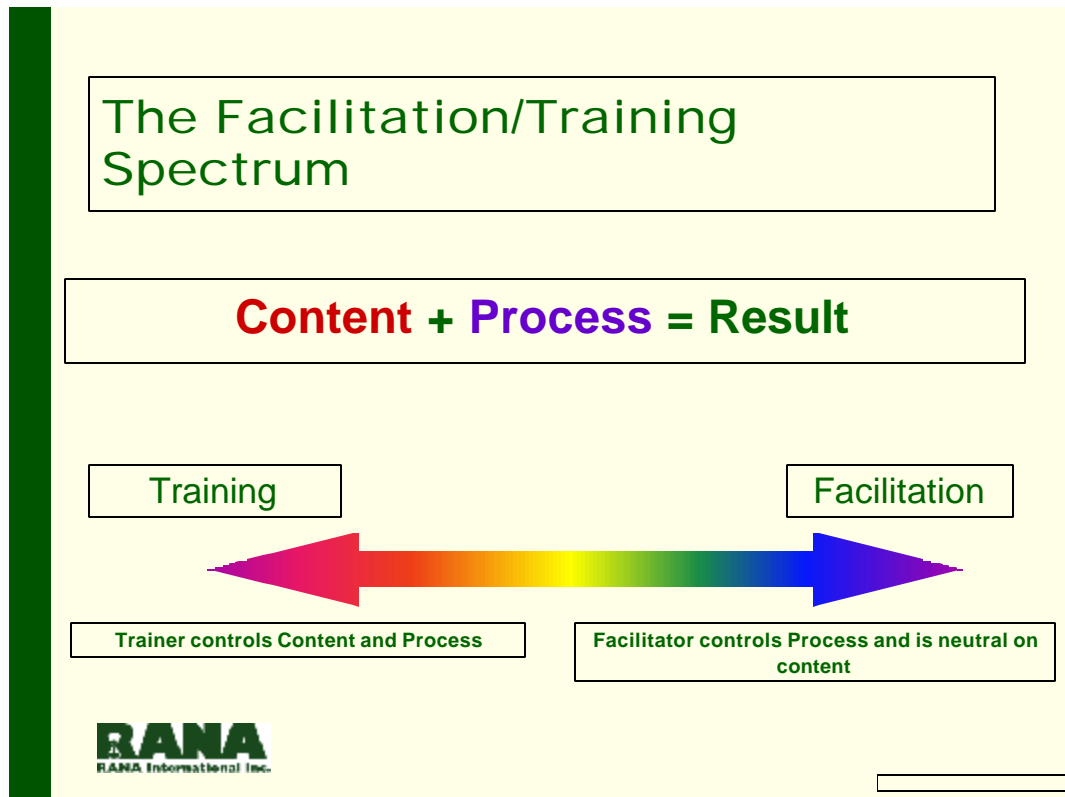


The Links and Differences between Facilitation and Training

Over the years we have received enquiries about IAF certification from individuals whose job title is facilitator but who are, in fact, trainers. In the very early days of the certification program this led to a small number of people being deferred because they delivered training rather than facilitating a session. Very quickly the assessors learned to look for evidence of training rather than facilitation and have worked hard to ensure that no one is coming to a certification event who is likely to be deferred because of a difference in expectation.



At the far left, the trainer comes to a session with both the process and content. They have particular and specific learning objectives they must deliver on and they undoubtedly bring content expertise to the table.

At the far right the facilitator controls the process only. Their deliverable is defined by type: the session may result in a decision or a plan, for example, but the specific content of that result is the responsibility of the group. Facilitators at this end of the spectrum can facilitate session where they have no content knowledge. In fact its often preferable that the facilitator has no content knowledge as a way of ensuring their neutrality. Their role becomes strictly one of helping the group manage the information and knowledge they have to achieve a necessary result in a timely and collaborative manner.

There are, of course, many variations between these two extremes. ***What the IAF is certifying are those skills demonstrated by a facilitator operating at the far right of the spectrum.*** In short, while you may in your practice combine facilitation and training to various degrees depending on the needs of a particular group, it is not appropriate to do so during the certification

event. Nor is it appropriate to list in your experience or synopsis events which combine facilitation and training. You should focus on sessions where you have been the third party assisting a group to come to a collaborative result on a topic that is important to them and where you have not had a content role (even if you had content knowledge). You should also endeavour to run your workshop session during the certification along the same lines.

If you are able to extract parts of a training program that were purely facilitated you may be able to list those in your list of experience. For example if, in the course of a three day training session, you facilitated a two hour discussion to have the group identify their training needs, I believe that would be acceptable to list. For me, the key thing is for you to be able to differentiate clearly between what is skills-building, what is facilitation, and when you are doing what. If you can satisfy the assessors you understand the differences, and not slip into the trainer's role when you should be facilitating, then I believe you will be OK. As with any of this, if there are any doubts or questions, you should discuss this with of your assessors.

If your practice does not include the required number of sessions where you have operated completely outside the content role it is possible this certification is not appropriate for you. If you think that might be the case my best suggestion is for you to discuss your practice with one of your assessors. We have done this before and ended up saving several individuals a good deal of **stress**, time and expense.

I hope this helps. Further question regarding this should be sent to me or can be addressed to your assessor team.

Regards,

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