

FACILITATION TECHNIQUE	Seven Words
CORE PURPOSE / FOCUS	#providing feedback #perspective #team-work #collaboration
PHASE	#opening #energizer
SKILL / CONTENT	#communication #evaluation
TIME FRAME	Up to 15 minutes
GROUP SIZE	1-5 / 6-15 / 16-30 / more than 30 persons
FACILITATION LEVEL	Beginner
COMFORT ZONE	Safe

Introduction

Ever heard the cliché, “*It’s not what you say, but how you say it*”? The Seven Words jolt dramatically demonstrates this principle. You demonstrate how the meaning of a sentence changes as you emphasize different words. Later, you invite pairs of participants to explore this concept.

Necessary tools (what you need)

- Use a videoconferencing tool of your choice.

Steps

1. Practice with your sentence. Write a seven-word sentence. Practice saying that sentence repeatedly, emphasizing word at a time.
2. **Write a sentence.** Write a seven-word sentence and share it via your video conferencing tool. Make it a personal sentence saying something about you. *Example: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.*
3. **Say the first versions of the sentence.** Say the sentence from the flip chart, stressing and emphasizing the first word. Ask the participants to comment on the message they heard from the way you said the sentence, going beyond the literal meaning of the words. Pause to collect a few interpretations.
Example:
Emphasis: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.
Possible interpretation: I am not talking about other people. I am talking about me.
4. **Say different versions of the sentence.** Ask the participants to listen carefully. Say the sentence again and again, emphasizing different words. After each time you say

the sentence, invite the participants to share their interpretation of the changed meaning.

Examples:

Second version: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.

Possible interpretation: Many game designers feel the activity to be frustrating. However, I find it pleasant.

Third version: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.

Possible interpretation: There is something special about the act of creating a game.

Fourth version: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.

Possible interpretation: It is not only the act of designing that is enjoyable. There is another thing.

Fifth version: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.

Possible interpretation: I am not just an introverted designer. I also enjoy inviting the people to play the game and watching them.

Sixth version: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.

Possible interpretation: I am not into trivial fun games. I am serious games kind of guy who wants people to learn from the play.

Seventh version: I enjoy designing and conducting training games.

Possible interpretations: I am not into boring training exercises. I want people to play interesting games.

5. **Invite the participants to explore the idea.** Ask each participant to write a seven-word sentence. (It does not matter if the sentence is longer or shorter.) After a suitable pause, ask the participants to pair up. Ask them to take turns to share different versions of their sentences and appropriate interpretations. Assign them to the breakout rooms.
6. **Conduct a debriefing discussion** by asking these types of questions:
 - The meaning of what you say changes depending on how you say it. What workplace examples do you have of this principle?
 - How can you use this principle in your training activities?
 - What precautions do you have to take in giving constructive feedback to the others?
 - Do you feel that people frequently misunderstand what you say? Could it be the way you say it?
 - Do you think non-native speakers of English run into difficulties because they do not stress the key words?

Tips & Tricks



