



OLEVI

How to make change happen in schools

A practical guide to engage, motivate and harness the full potential of your staff to achieve better school outcomes through facilitation.

The only constant is change

Schools are no strangers to managing change. New assessments, remodelled curricula, shifting government policy and pandemics. The list goes on.

On top of this, schools must respond to the evolving learning needs of pupil cohorts, budget constraints, Ofsted judgements and an ever-widening achievement gap.

There is no school leader without a major change programme on their to do list aimed at addressing at least one or two of these concerns at any one time.

But how do you make sure that the change is managed effectively, that your school improvement objectives are met, and the motivation of staff to succeed does not wane with each passing week?

Why change is difficult

A lack of clarity can be one of the biggest obstacles to making change happen in school.

Schools often recognise when change is needed but may not have pinpointed exactly what the goal is or what is required to achieve it.

It can also be difficult to do things differently if the people who are instrumental to making the change do not feel part of the process.

If your team is not convinced or on board with new ideas and approaches – whether that is improving pupil behaviour, middle leadership or addressing attainment gaps – then it is unlikely the goal will be achieved.

A different approach

Educators understand the power of encouraging students to work together to ask questions and suggest alternative ideas to improve learning outcomes.

So, when it comes to improving school outcomes, the same approach could be applied.

Any educator knows instinctively that standing up at the front of their classroom talking for a long time about generating electricity in a science lesson is unlikely to engage their students for very long, nor encourage them to think about effective energy sources. And yet sometimes this is the approach we take with staff when encouraging them to get involved in school improvement to change programmes.

Meetings and inset days can be quite formulaic. Staff sit down while a head teacher or senior leader talks through a presentation on a particular subject, such as improving pupil behaviour or attitudes to learning. As in the classroom, this broadcast style of communication does not encourage staff to work together to find a solution or generate a shared ownership for school improvement.

Instead, adopting more of the collaborative approach taken in the classroom does help school leaders achieve the results they need more quickly. This skill is facilitation.

This is where the school leader guides a group of people to collectively concentrate on achieving a goal or solving an issue.

By using facilitation, you can harvest the broad range of knowledge and experience that exists within a school; challenge expectations to grow aspiration; and create an environment where people feel valued and empowered to become a driving force for positive change.



How does facilitation work?

Prior to any school improvement or change management discussion, the first step is to get the planning right. Be clear on the objective or purpose, how and where it will take place, and who will take part.

The physical set up of a room can be just as important as the content of the discussion. Will you break the group into smaller cohorts? Will the groups work in different rooms and then come together to present their thoughts?

For facilitation to be effective, everyone needs to understand the aim before the session begins.

The facilitator's role

The facilitator's effectiveness is critical in this process too. Many of us have probably left a meeting or workshop at some point with the feeling that nothing was agreed or achieved. The fact is meetings and events such as this have often lacked a vital element:

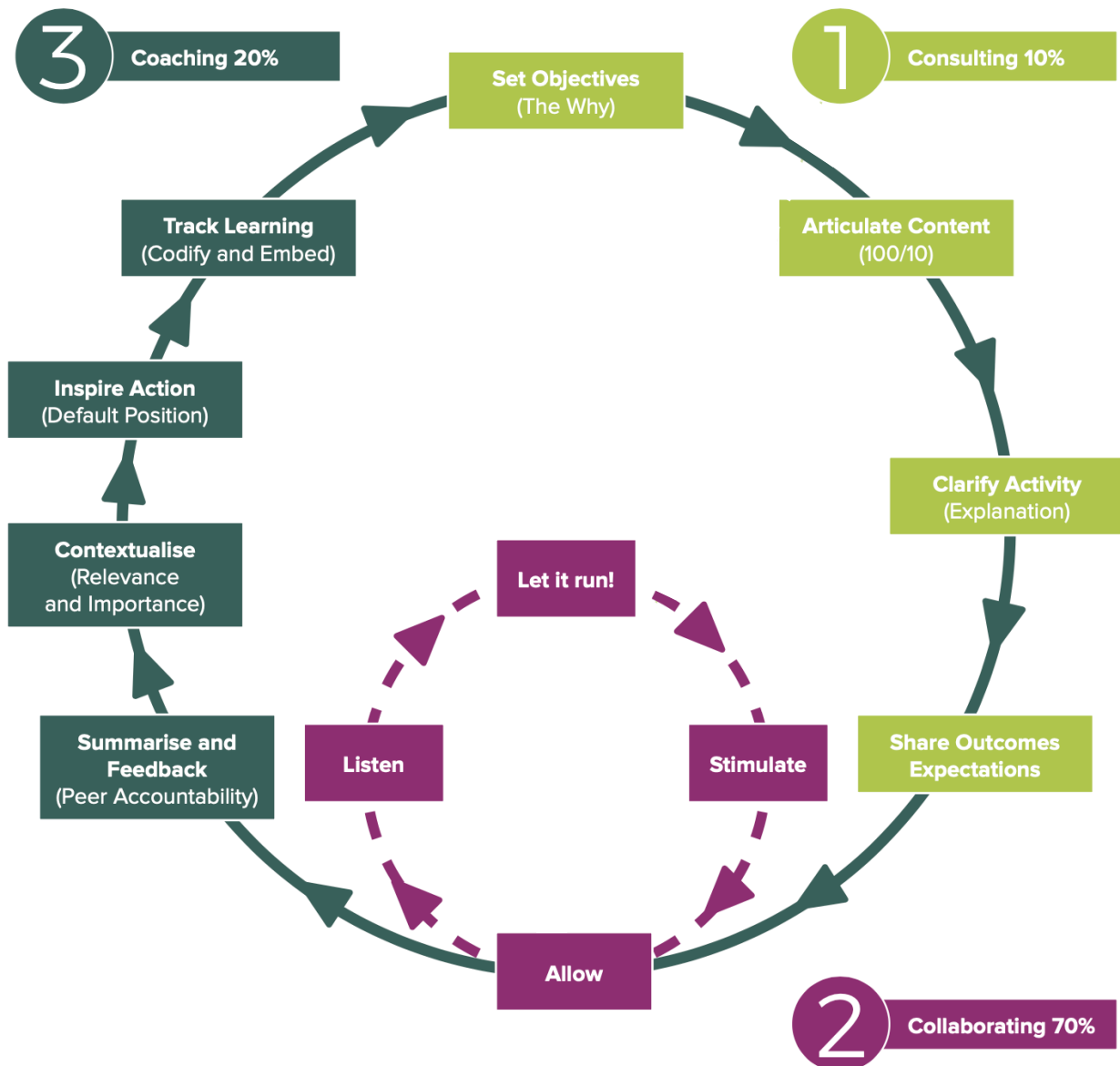
A facilitator!

A facilitator's role is to lead people through a process to reach a mutually agreed decision, resolve an issue, or generate innovative ideas that can be put into action and seen through.

One of the most effective ways to facilitate the process of change is to use the OLEVI 3 Cs Facilitation Model, utilising the skills of consulting, collaborating and coaching.



OLEVI 3 Cs Facilitation Model



1. Consulting

For **10%** of the time, the facilitator provides clarity, setting out the goal, ethos, and expectation.

2. Collaborating

For **70%** of the time, the facilitator manages a collaborative environment that generates deep thinking, stimulates interactive activities and enables complex problem solving.

3. Coaching

For **20%** of the time, the facilitator ensures learning is summarised and tracked; ideas are personalised to each context; and productive actions are agreed and shared.

Using the **OLEVI 3 Cs** Facilitation Model

The model can also be used to plan a session, moving through the consulting, collaborating, and coaching phases. These approaches keep the session focused and ensures people feel more open to contribute and engage in the learning.

It can be used in any context from an assembly to the whole school to an individual lesson for a class; or form a whole staff inset to a departmental meeting.

Embedding the 3 Cs Facilitation Model consistently over time, at every stage of change management, will make it effective, transforming an organisation's practice, approach, and culture much more likely. Here is how to move through the phases during a session:

1

Consulting phase

The consulting phase is led by the facilitator. Only 10% of the session is allocated to the phase. Here, the skill of the facilitator is to provide a clarity of purpose, so participants understand:

- The objective and the importance of the session
- The key learning points and how to articulate them concisely
- The activity and how it will explore the learning
- The expected outcomes from the session and how this will be demonstrated

2

Collaborating phase

The collaborative phase is group work, led by the participants. The majority (70%) of the session should be allocated to this. Here, the skill of the facilitator is to create a stimulating environment where everyone feels confident to share their learning and opinions.

Important elements of the collaborating phase to consider:

- Allow the group to discuss and shape their own conversations avoiding answering questions that may narrow thinking or getting involved and hijacking the direction.
- Listen to check that discussions are at the levels expected from the group. If they are, let the discussions flow i.e. Let it run! This allows understanding to develop and ideas to grow.
- Stimulate the discussion if the level of thinking is not where expected. This could be by asking a question to regain focus, or by setting a challenge to add value.
- Ensure you quickly exit the discussion, so responses are not aimed back towards you and the group takes ownership of their thinking.

3

Coaching phase

It is important that any ideas or learning are explored further and enhanced using quality coaching. It is not enough just to host a good day; success depends on the implementation of the results.

The next step is to:

- Summarise the key feedback and ideas building links to the learning.
- Ensure that your participants have the opportunity to contextualise their learning e.g., 'How can this apply to me and my students, my subject area, or my school?'
- Inspire people to take action by setting clear next steps to ensure change happens. Make sure everyone has the time to explore their default position and how they can avoid reverting to it.
- Encourage people to track their own learning by reflecting on how they will monitor, review and celebrate their progress.



Simon Thompson, Deputy Headteacher at Cardiff High School, explains how using facilitation has transformed the way they run their professional learning sessions.

Before, I might have presented to staff on a key topic, such as what an effective lesson looks like, and talked through several relevant points.

But this approach didn't always generate the outcome we were looking for.

So now, instead of me sharing my thoughts, we might watch a video or review a teaching model and then we work together to identify what is needed to teach an effective lesson. This ensures staff are part of the process and we all agree what a good lesson looks like.

Following the session, we spend time turning the group's suggestions into a rubric or model. As everyone has contributed to the content, we are all on board and motivated to move forward.

School leaders who adopt facilitation, quickly see their staff have the confidence to help drive change for their school.

How useful could facilitation be in your school?

Below are three scenarios to demonstrate how facilitation could enhance group interactions within your school.

Scenario 1: Embedding a 'Culture of Improvement' through Facilitation.

A senior leader wants to launch a plan to embed improved middle leadership, following a recent review.

A senior leader has organised a meeting, with all middle leaders, to discuss how the role can be improved within the school. She wants the session to be a positive experience and to boost teamwork. Rather than telling her team how they could approach this, she wants to develop a shared vision of how they will create good, consistent middle leaders together.

Facilitation tops for this scenario:

1

Consulting

- Be honest and optimistic at the start of the session by explaining that the reviewers have highlighted middle leadership as an area that needs improvement, and that the school agrees.
- Make it clear that this is achievable and that 'we' are going to create outstanding, consistent middle leaders together. Also, explain what the benefits will be of amazing this for them, their teams, and the students.

2

Collaborating

- Organise staff into smaller groups and ask them to design a leadership model that includes all the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they believe an outstanding leader has e.g., skills like delegation and qualities like approachability. There should be deep reflection, discussion and debating to really unpick and explore what it looks like.
- Ask them to think about the potential barriers to mastering these. For example, if it's highlighted that a great leader needs to delegate, what do they think are the things that might stop someone being good at delegation e.g., concerns that it might upset a colleague if they ask them to do something.

3

Coaching

- The facilitator takes feedback and summarises the points from each group.
- Encourage participants to reflect on their own practice and choose one leadership skill they could personally improve on and to think about what support they need to develop this skill.

Post Session Challenge and Next Session:

The facilitator will set a series of post-session challenges. For example, seek feedback from their teams on their foci; meet with their line manager to discuss support; and have a peer coaching session with a colleague to create a 6-week plan.

The next meeting of all middle leaders will be scheduled for 6-weeks' time to share experiences and progress.

How useful could facilitation be in your school? (cont.)

Scenario 2: 'Leading the learning' of other colleagues through Facilitation.

A mentor to Early Careers Teachers (ECT) is leading an ECT. This involves a learning walk focused on improving their assessment and feedback practices.

An ECT mentor had identified that assessment and feedback is an area where additional training would benefit the school's ECTs. They also want the ECTs to become comfortable and value using lesson observation as a tool to deepen their understanding pedagogy, prompt personal reflection on their current teaching, and generate innovative ways forward to improve their practice.

Facilitation tops for this scenario:

1

Consulting

- The facilitator explores and probes the group's existing thinking. For example, what do we already know or think about assessment and feedback? What exactly is it? Why is it important and how do you currently do it effectively? A facilitator might use tools such as academic journals, audits, and models to stimulate further discussions.
- Ensure the observation activity is explained in a clear and concise manner. 2 key messages might be:
 - Observing colleagues is a privilege: show them you appreciate it.
 - Responsibility for finding the value of observing others is theirs.

2

Collaborating

- Conduct an Assessment and Feedback Ward Round: The teachers visit 3-4 classrooms for approximately 5 minutes each. The purpose of this type of observation is to prompt initial questions and to consider how ideas can be adapted to suit different contexts.
- Use the QFF Model - Question, Feeling & Favourite – to record their thoughts: This is a simple model to capture any great ideas you might want to 'magpie' and modify (Favourite) as well as some thought (Feeling) and powerful reflective questions to move them forward (Question). The form is small and has been designed to fit in a person's pocket. It avoids the temptation to write lots down, rather than become immersed in the experience. It also does not become a focus of the observed.

3

Coaching

- When the ECTs return to the training room, the facilitator must manage this conversation. They should focus the learners on the thinking/questions the exercise has promoted about their own professional practice, rather than describing or judging what they saw/heard.
- Agree a date when you will meet back to discuss progress.

How useful could facilitation be in your school? (cont.)

Scenario 3: Implementing an outstanding learning experience as a facilitator.

A teacher wants their students to think more deeply and work more independently.

A Year 10 teacher has noticed that some of his pupils have become passive learners and are struggling to use their initiative in class. With their GCSEs on the horizon, he wants to encourage them to become more independent learners. By taking the role of facilitator, the teacher can move away from being perceived as the expert in the room and transfer some of the responsibility for learning to the students.

Facilitation tops for this scenario:

1

Consulting

- Explain to the class that as they have reached the end of a topic, they will be working in small groups to plan a five-minute presentation to help the rest of the class revise the key points.
- Explain the DR ICE model (below) and how they will be using it to plan and evaluate their presentations.

2

Collaborating

- When the students are in groups, they should share ideas for their presentation.
- Specifically, they should be asking themselves several powerful questions, using the DR ICE Model.
- Has the presentation...
 - Deepened your Thinking?
 - Role Modelled the Learning Processes?
 - Impacted on your Learning and Progress?
 - Challenged your Expectations?
 - Engaged you in the Learning?

3

Coaching

- Bring the students back together to present their group's findings. After each presentation, the rest of the group should provide constructive feedback when reviewing their peers' and their own work against the DR ICE model.
- Ask students if they thought this was a good way to enhance their learning and support their revision, do they have any other ideas on how revising topics could be improved?

Bringing people together to achieve the school's goals

Facilitation enables schools to create a positive environment where people feel confident and comfortable working together to develop an answer to a problem or achieve a specific objective.

It is not about telling a group of people how to do something. The process is about recognising that the knowledge already exists in the room and creating a space where it can be extracted to form a realistic action plan that can be put in place.

Facilitation can be used in several ways in the school setting such as inset days, training and development sessions, classroom teaching or staff meeting.

It ensures people are motivated to make lasting change so they feel valued, are trusted to make decisions, and are empowered to take personal responsibility.



Why work with OLEVI?:

- OLEVI is an international awarding body for the accreditation of facilitation and coaching.
- We have accredited 20,000 coaches and facilitators.
- We are making an impact on schools and trusts in more than 40 countries.

Find out how our facilitation programmes are making a difference to school leaders, teachers, and pupils.



“OLEVI was a breath of fresh air with a ‘wow factor’ that enabled us to achieve sustainable, permanent and continuing improvement”

Dave Vernon, Executive Principal, Diverse Academies Trust.

Let's have a conversation

If you want to develop and grow your colleagues get in touch today.

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