FACILITATING LEARNING
IN A SMALL GROUP

1. Establish and maintain a safe learning environment.
   ▪ Make expectations clear.
   ▪ Establish ground rules and refer to them as needed.
   ▪ Recognize conflict in the group, bring it to the group’s attention, and help them resolve it effectively (the group owns the problem).
   ▪ Don’t allow personal attacks.
   ▪ Avoid sarcasm and other kinds of put downs.
   ▪ Elicit and listen to student issues and concerns and respond empathically.

2. Manage the process.
   ▪ Foster participation by all group members.
   ▪ Emphasize purpose, relevance, value, key content.
   ▪ Keep the group on track; redirect when necessary.
   ▪ Summarize or have group summarize periodically.

3. Use questions effectively.
   ▪ Ask open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and reflection.
   ▪ Wait for a response for 10 seconds before saying anything else.
   ▪ Use probing and clarifying questions to check and develop thinking.
   ▪ Defer questions back to the group.

4. Be learning-centered.
   ▪ Clarify learning objectives.
   ▪ Ask rather than tell whenever possible.
   ▪ Take advantage of the “teachable moment” (when there is a recognized “need to know”).
   ▪ When providing information, tell them what you’re going to tell them (introduction), tell them (body), and tell them what you told them (conclusion).
   ▪ Provide or elicit concrete and relevant examples that illustrate a concept or skill.
   ▪ Help students make connections with prior knowledge and the big picture.
   ▪ Check for understanding, accuracy, agreement, questions.
   ▪ Use coaching and constructive feedback to guide student learning and performance.