

9 Tips for Training Student Facilitators for Civic & Cultural Events

1

Teach Ways to Structure Dialogue

Help students learn to sequence questions in ways that feel natural. Consider the settings, and coach them to start with light, friendly openers before easing into bigger questions.

2

Emphasize Spatial Awareness

Train students to read the room. Teach them to give participants space to settle in, explore, or observe before starting a conversation.

3

Coach on Body Language and Presence

Facilitators should understand how posture, eye contact, and movement can either invite connection or unintentionally create discomfort.

4

Teach Reflective Listening

Help students mirror back what's heard using phrases like "What I'm hearing is..." Model and role-play different approaches.

5

Foster Emotional Attunement

Train students to listen for underlying emotions or unspoken concerns. Teach them how to acknowledge what's unsaid and respond with care.

6

Prepare for Entry and Exit

Help students develop strategies to gracefully start, pause, or exit conversations—especially when someone (including them) needs a break or isn't ready to engage.

7

Introduce Multiple Modes of Engagement

Teach students how to guide participants through alternatives to verbal Q&A, such as visual prompts, art activities, word walls, journaling, or collaborative storytelling.

8

Frame Intergenerational Awareness

Support students in bridging across ages with respect and openness.

9

Value Their Work

Advocate for compensation and recognition. Student facilitators are leaders, and trainers should honor their time, labor, and lived experience.