

Deliberative Lab Communication Facilitation Quick Guide

Remember, your role as a facilitator is to guide, not to evaluate.

Focus on encouraging varied viewpoints, fostering constructive conversation, and maintaining a welcoming environment.

Why Deliberative Lab Communication (DLC) Matters

DLC provides a way to incorporate discussion of ethical issues in research into the routine daily life of the lab, tied to the work that lab members are doing. This makes it personal, relevant, and real, as opposed to more theoretical and delivered by outside experts as through RCR courses.

Opening the Session

Setting an open and respectful tone for a DLC session is the foundation for this process. Welcoming participants, establishing ground rules, and framing the discussion thoughtfully can help foster meaningful and productive conversations.

Welcome:

"Thank you for joining today. I'm here to guide our conversation, not to evaluate or offer expertise. This space is for open, constructive conversation on [topic]."

Introductions:

"Let's go around and share your name, role, and how long you've been with the lab."

Setting Expectations:

"We're here to explore ideas, not reach consensus."

Facilitator Scripts for Different Situations

Challenges can arise in even the best-facilitated sessions. Practical, personal scripts can help you navigate common situations, including lulls in the conversation, uneven participation, or dominant voices. The purpose of the scripts is to help discussions remain engaging and welcoming for all participants.

When Discussion Lags:

"Is there a different way we should be looking at this?"

"Can you think of any examples of [topic] from any current or past projects?"

Uneven Participation:

"[Person], I'm curious to hear your perspective on this as a [role-based description]. What has been your experience with [topic]?"

"It seems like we have plenty of insights from [faculty and staff]; what if we heard more from some graduate students?"

Dominating Voices:

"Thank you for your insights. Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet."

Unjustified Statements:

"That's an interesting take--can you share why you think that's the best approach?"

Closing the Session

A thoughtful closing helps reinforce key insights and acknowledges the contributions of all participants. Summarizing discussions effectively and highlighting participants' contributions can leave everyone with a sense of accomplishment and clarity.

Summarize Key Insights:

"Today we explored [key points]. It's clear that [highlight key themes]."

Thank Participants:

"Thank you for your thoughtful contributions. Your insights help foster a culture of ethical research."

Optional Follow-Up:

"Consider reflecting on today's discussion and how it applies to your work. Feel free to reach out if you'd like to continue the conversation."

Research shows that using this framework for lab conversations leads to participants gaining a deeper understanding of and appreciation for specific topics, including authorship and data management.

