



Section for Learning Facilitators

Note:

- Additional online resources can be found on the CCS website – www.ccsonline.ca
- <http://ccsonline.ca/resources/student-resources/field-kit/>

Expectations of the Learning Facilitator

The relationship with the Learning Facilitator is crucial for the student's growth and ministry formation. At the Centre for Christian Studies we use the terminology Learning Facilitator, as opposed to terms like supervisor, in order to indicate that the relationship is:

- primarily about the student's learning and centered in the student's goals and not about providing another worker for the ministry or agency setting
- involves facilitating learning within an atmosphere that permits mistakes, room for growth, and is not a competitive or boss-employee hierarchy.

Many students will have on-site facilitators with experience in the process of reflective learning and will be able to give direct feedback. In other situations, arrangements will need to be made for an off-site Learning Facilitator.

Where there is an off-site Learning Facilitator, the student and Learning Facilitator will need to spend time deciding how they will work together. We encourage off-site Learning Facilitators, where possible, to be or become familiar with the setting in which the student is working and to find opportunities to be able to work with or observe the student in the field placement setting. Where this is not possible, the facilitator and student together will need to determine how experiences from the field placement will be reported. We encourage the use of case studies, verbatim reports, videotapes, etc. as a basis for reflection from time to time. (See section "Resources for Reflection")

It is our anticipation that the Learning Facilitator will be someone who:

- is engaged in the work of ministry
- brings a faith-based perspective
- is willing to support and guide a student in her/his learning
- will raise critical questions of both practice and analysis
- encourages a person to be responsible for her/his own learning
- listens carefully and with care
- is willing to offer support, clear feedback, and challenge as appropriate
- brings skill in theological reflection
- brings skills in social analysis
- is committed to learning and exploring mutual learning
- maintains appropriate professional boundaries.

The work of facilitation includes

- participation in fall CCS orientation session
- working with the student in setting and/or clarifying her/his learning goals
- developing a learning covenant with the student
- assisting the student to reflect on her/his learning goals and adjust as needed
- providing time for the student to reflect on the work that has been happening as the student identifies learnings, anxieties, questions, concerns
- offering feedback as appropriate and challenge as needed
- providing direction as appropriate
- participating in the mid-term and final reviews
- providing support as the student works through issues and problems related to their work

- consider having their own learning goals to work on over the year
- reflecting theologically.

The timing and format of facilitation will

- be the equivalent of one hour per week, either on a weekly or bi-weekly basis
- begin in September and run for the duration of the field April
- include agenda items that the student brings from her/his experience in the work (concerns, experiences, dilemmas, questions)
- include agenda items brought by the facilitator in terms of pressing for depth or analysis as well as in terms of observations or feedback on the student's work
- include theological reflection.

Note: In any instance where a serious conflict arises between student and learning facilitator, a third party may be called on to facilitate a process of conflict mediation. There are often local professionals (in the church or the wider community) who offer these services. The student's primary staff person should be advised of the conflict and may be part of the decision about its resolution.

It is the student's responsibility to:

- *consult with CCS staff re: appropriate Learning Facilitators*
- *contact potential Learning Facilitators*
 - *indicate time commitment, goals, requirements for field, dates of learning circle commitments and orientation session*
- *communicate with CCS staff re: these contacts*
- *submit Proposal for Field Placement form to CCS staff :*
 - *Theme Year and Reflection Year Students by **May 15.***
 - *Leadership Development Module students by **June 30.***
- *Complete the Learning Covenant Form with Learning Facilitator and share copies with CCS staff, Local Committee and Diaconal/Vocational Mentor by **first day of Fall Learning Circle***

The Learning Facilitation Process

Building relationship and trust

The student and the learning facilitator will need to find ways to get to know each other and to develop trust in the relationship. We suggest that each person share:

- expectations and hopes for the learning facilitation process
- your history and experience in the ministry focus of the theme year
- your experience in the church
- your theological perspective.

You will also need to determine how you plan to work together by clarifying:

- your expectations about time - when, where, and how often you will meet
- the kind of atmosphere and format that best meets your needs
- your perspectives on power and mutuality in the relationship
- areas where there might be conflict

Components of Learning Facilitation

1. Reflecting on specific experiences
 - a. a general check in on how the week has been for each of you. This might include: checking in with each other; workload; issues or concerns related to the field.
 - b. determining the content of the work to be done during this session. This would include the sharing of experiences that the student would like to reflect on in some depth and any information that may be pertinent to the areas identified.
 - c. responding to the experiences shared with agreed upon questions for reflection.
What happened to you as a result of the “event?”
What did you feel at the time?
How did you handle the situation?
How do you feel now?
What did you learn?
What might you do another time?

Each session should include both elements of hearing the story/event and reflecting on the student's response to the story/event.

2. Reflecting on work in general
This is an opportunity for general reflection on the student's experience of the placement. We suggest that the following questions serve as a guideline for your conversation:
 - What kind of response are you getting from others?
 - How are you feeling about your field placement? What learning goals are you working on?
 - What have you learned about the theme year ministry area in this setting?
 - What issues in ministry are arising for you?
3. Opportunity for evaluation - of both the situation and the student
 - What gifts and skills do you bring to this situation?
 - What skills have you developed?
 - What skills and capacities do you want to develop further?

Not all three elements may be present at every session. This will depend on the amount and the nature of the work the student brings to the session but all aspects should be worked on regularly.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Other tools that will aid in the role of learning facilitator are located on our website. Please visit www.ccsonline.ca and follow the links:

1. For Students
2. Field Placement Kit
3. Section for Learning Facilitators

The following additional resources are available there:

- Other Elements of Facilitation
- Notes for Evaluation of Learning Facilitation