Facilitator Guide

Table of Contents

52326

Central Rappahannock Regional

Library

INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING

540-372-1144
804-472-3820

/crrlnews
librarypoint.org

Key Terms

Civic Engagement: refers to opportunities that promote and facilitate:

- A deeper, more critical understanding of how civic institutions operate;
- A broader, more empathetic knowledge of how issues, policies, and decisions affect lives; and
- An increased awareness of and confidence in one's ability to take an active role in civic discourse and participate in community decision making.

Civic Lab: an interactive experience offering information, activities, and conversation about issues that affect our community.

Content: the resources used and referenced during the program; i.e. databases, videos, books, podcasts, etc.

Facilitator: an individual whose job is to help to manage a process of information exchange, whose role is to help with HOW the discussion is proceeding.

Process: the tools, methods and strategies used to engage participants and share knowledge.

52326

Central Rappahannock Regional Library

INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING

540-372-1144
804-472-3820

f ᴇ /crrlnews
librarypoint.org

Overview

The Civic Lab is a casual, drop-in, and interactive program offering information, activities, and conversation about issues that affect our community.

- Relevant topics promoting direct conversation and civic engagement
- Facilitator encourages critical inquiry with questions and activities
- Starts with the belief that everyone in our community can learn and grow in open conversation with one another

Civic Lab Components

Collection

The resources provided during the Civic Lab should be curated to provide the most current and informative materials available. The Goal is to provide *credible* information, not simply what is currently checked in at the branch, so be picky about what materials are selected and plan ahead so you can acquire the resources on time.

The curated collection should cater to all-ages and literacy levels, materials for children and teens are also useful for adults!

Resources should be:

- **Current**: Most recent news articles, regularly updated websites/databases
- **Credible**: Aim for objectivity, avoid opinion
- **Accessible**: Easy to understand, Available at no cost
  - *Multi-format* - print, audio, online resources

Critical Inquiry

Conversation starters
Interactive stations
Voting
Resource handout

52326

Central Rappahannock Regional Library

INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING

540-372-1144
804-472-3820

/crrlnews
librarypoint.org

Design

Location: Open and Central
- Preferably with high foot traffic.

Collaboration
    Community partners

Replication
- Staff teams as co-presenters, co-planners
- Repeat topics (don't reinvent the wheel)
    - Update as necessary

Collaboration and Planning
- Buy-in from every department at your branch
- 2 staff members for each Civic Lab
    - More perspectives = less bias, more oversight
    - Shared responsibilities for planning and presenting
    - Ideally, from 2 different branches in separate jurisdictions
- Choosing a date for each location

Selecting a topic
- What issues are most relevant to our customers?
    - Topics in the news - ex. Space Exploration
    - Civic literacy - ex. Getting Ready for Election Day
    - News literacy - ex. Social Media & Viral News
    - Timely topics, Seasonal - ex. Let's Talk Taxes
        - Easy to plan in advance

Create the Handout
- Format
    - Style
        - CRRL Style Guidelines
    - CRRL Civic Lab branding
    - Layout
        - structure, spacing, headings
        - "In Partnership with: …"
- Content
        - Multi-Format
            - Listen & Watch
            - Read
            - Explore

CIVIC LAB

TEMPLATE HANDOUT
Event Topic

Topic description - 2-3 sentences

Conversation Questions

1. (--)
2. (--)
3. (--)

Key Definitions (from *XXXX*)

- (--)
- (--)

Listen & Watch
(space for multiple resources, including titles, links, and descriptions)

Read
(space for multiple resources, including titles, links, and descriptions)

Explore
(space for multiple resources, including titles, links, and descriptions)

The Facilitator

General Qualities of a Dialogue Facilitator
(adapted from Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change)

Strong listening skills
➢ depend on the ability of facilitators to *let go of their own agendas*.

Personal awareness and authenticity
➢ ability to be honest about one's own limitations (what one is and isn't capable of),
➢ and the willingness to hand over a process to participants when they are ready.

Asking good questions
➢ Effective questions will wake participants up,
➢ Link into what they care deeply about,
➢ Make visible their *inter*dependence in finding the answers.
➢ simple phrasing of a question can determine whether people feel hopeless and despairing or curious, energized, strong and excited.

A holistic approach
● assess which method to use in a given situation
● requires a facilitator to understand the particular context

Role Of The Civic Lab Facilitator: Setting The Context
(adapted from "The Process Of Dialogue: Creating Effective Communication" by Edgar H. Schein)

The role of the Civic Lab facilitator can include the following activities:
❖ Organize the physical space.
❖ Introduce the general concept of Civic Lab.
❖ Ask participants to share their ideas with other participants
❖ Ask group members to share their ideas or answers to questions and write these characteristics on a whiteboard.
   ■ Ask the group to reflect on these answers.
   ■ Let the conversation flow naturally once everyone has commented.
   ■ Intervene as necessary to clarify, using concepts and data that illustrate participants ideas/comments.

Day-of-Event

● Set-up, ~30 min
● Event, 1.5 hours, 10-50 attendees

- Materials
  - Civic Lab Poster & Handout
  - Whiteboards for activity
  - Post-it notes, etc. for activity
  - 2+ tables (includes table for partner)
  - Laptop, tv monitor
  - Books for Display

- Activities & Discussion:
  - Thought-provoking, open-ended activities for all ages
  - Conversation Questions:
    - *What is our responsibility..? How do we decide..? What does ____ mean to you..?*
  - Whiteboard questions:
    - How do you decide who to vote for?
    - Post-It Note Polls, eg. Will you vote in November 2018?

  - Watch: videos
  - Listen: podcasts, oral history
  - Featured websites
  - Books, DVDs
  - Interactive activities: games, writing letters.

52326

540-372-1144
804-472-3820
/crrlnews
librarypoint.org