Summary of Art of Hosting Training Feedback

July/August 2011, January 2012, June 2012 and June 2013

Prepared by UMN Center for Integrative Leadership

Center for Integrative Leadership

University of Minnesota
The University of Minnesota’s Center for Integrative Leadership has offered Art of Hosting trainings annually since 2011 as a leadership development opportunity for University faculty, staff and student leaders. The College of Design offered an Art of Hosting training specifically for its faculty, staff and student leaders in January 2012. Response rates to post-training surveys sent out via SurveyMonkey have fallen consistently from 96% in 2011 to only 49% in 2013. This follows a more widespread phenomenon of online survey fatigue and suggests that other evaluation methods, such as in-person surveys or follow up focus groups should be tested for future trainings hosted at the University of Minnesota.

What follows is a summary of themes emerging from the responses of the participants from all four trainings hosted at the University of Minnesota since 2011.

**Overall Value**

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” to having an increased understanding of how to host conversations as a resource for participatory leadership following the training.

**Benefits**

1. **Listening & Speaking**
   - Between all four surveys, ninety five percent (95%) of the respondents agreed that the structure of the training allowed them to share their viewpoints honestly and openly.
   - Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the respondents agreed that the structure of the training helped them to listen to the viewpoints of others with an open mind.

2. **Learning by Practice:** Respondents highlighted the value of the experiential, non-hierarchical nature of the experience
   - 82% of the respondents agreed they had sufficient opportunities to practice what they were learning during the training.

   *I found the concepts very relevant and the approach effective. I liked the learn by doing approach and that we tried out the different types of sessions -- much more effective about understanding how they can be used and makes me more confident to use them. I also value having the resources to refer to in the workbook.* (Jan 2012)

   *I loved most that each event had hosts culled from the general population of learners. It allowed everyone to participate equally, even if there was not yet mastery of a particular skill.* (June 2013)

3. **Deeper connections and relationships**
   - 94% of the respondents agreed that they made new connections and/or deepened relationships with colleagues during the training.

   *I liked the opportunity to come together with like-minded but diverse people and share ideas about a broad but shared topic.* (June 2013)
4. Skill development for hosting conversations and harvesting ideas

- 88% of the respondents agreed that they “deepened their harvesting skills” (i.e. making meaning of what is collectively discovered through conversations).

**Critiques and Recommendations**

1. Several respondents mentioned the structure and pace of the training being ‘too much’ for introverts and suggested ways in which introverts needs could be better accommodated.

   *Before the end of the first day, I was feeling overwhelmed and needing space. For an introvert, it was a challenge to move into so much face-time, and little reflective time. The only thing I would suggest is to enable (encourage) the introverts to take some time alone at lunch. I powered through lunch with people, but really craved some time to be alone with my thoughts and to not feel "on." I feel like I would have been able to bring more energy to the afternoon if I had some down time at lunch. (Jan 12)*

2. About 25% of the respondents communicated that an overview of concepts to be covered in the workshop and participant bios shared before the training would be valuable.

3. Several respondents requested a little more in-depth description of participant-host expectations. One of them says:

   *Perhaps some who aren't as adventurous do not sign up for the experience because the description was ambiguous (Jan 12)*

**Application**

- 95% of the University respondents agreed that they are likely to incorporate some of the hosting skills and practice what they learned in this training into their work at the University.
- 94% of the University respondents agreed that they are likely to incorporate some of the hosting skills and practices they learned in this training into their life outside the University.