

From the Chair: We Are All Blended Facilitators Now



Something shifted in the rooms we facilitate — and it didn't shift back.

Before 2020, the question of *where* facilitation happened was largely settled. You booked a room, you flew in the participants, you arranged the flip charts. Virtual facilitation existed, certainly, but it occupied a corner of the profession — a workaround, a compromise, a tool for when geography got in the way. Then everything changed at once. And now, several years on, it's clear that what we experienced wasn't a temporary disruption. It was a permanent expansion of the profession.

Today's facilitator is expected to be fluent across modalities with a variety of methods. In-person, virtual and hybrid, that particular beast that demands you hold the energy of a physical room while simultaneously ensuring the people on screen feel equally present, equally heard, equally part of what's being built. Our clients don't see these as separate skills. They expect all of them, in a single practitioner, delivered seamlessly.

This is the blended program era. And it has fundamentally changed what professional competence looks like.

The Profession Responded. Did Your Credentials?

Here's the honest question I find myself asking more and more: as the demands on facilitators have evolved, have our professional markers kept pace?

A credential earned entirely in in-person environments tells a client something important, but it no longer tells them everything. The facilitator who has only ever worked in a physical room, however brilliantly, has

not been tested in the conditions that many of today's most complex engagements require.

Conversely, the facilitator who came of age during the virtual years, who is extraordinary on Zoom, masterful with digital collaboration tools, and deeply skilled at designing asynchronous touchpoints, may find themselves less confident when the room fills with people and the energy becomes physical and immediate.

The blended era doesn't reward specialization alone. It rewards range.

What the INIFAC Pathway Was Designed For

This is where I believe INIFAC's credential ecosystem becomes not just relevant, but essential. Our certification pathway was never designed as a single destination. It was designed as a developmental arc — one that recognizes facilitation as a multi-dimensional practice that grows in complexity and scope over a career.

The **Certified Virtual Facilitator® (CVF®)** and **Certified Advanced Virtual Facilitator® (CAVF®)** exist because virtual facilitation is its own craft. It requires a different kind of presence, different design principles, and a different relationship with silence, attention, and technology. These credentials say something specific and meaningful: this practitioner has been assessed against a rigorous standard in the virtual environment.

The **Certified Master Facilitator® (CMF®)**, by contrast, demands documentation of thirty sessions — and critically, that requirement spans both in-person and virtual modalities. We hope that some of your documented sessions are hybrid or virtual. That structure is not arbitrary. It is a deliberate recognition that mastery in this profession now requires demonstrated competence across the full spectrum of how groups come together.

And for those whose work sits at the intersection of facilitation and learning — the CLF®, CMLF®, and CFL® pathways speak to the additional complexity of designing experiences that don't just engage people in the moment, but change how they perform long after the session ends.

Taken together, the INIFAC credential pathway is a map of what professional excellence looks like in the new era that demands a blend of skills. It is not a checklist, nor a ladder with a single top rung. A map — because different facilitators are navigating different terrain, and the goal is to meet each practitioner where they are and help them grow toward where the profession is going.

An Invitation for This Season

September has always felt like a beginning to me. The summer pause gives way to renewed energy. Organizations launch new initiatives. Teams come back together. The facilitation calendar fills up. It's also, I'd suggest, a natural moment to ask yourself: where does my credential portfolio reflect the full range of what I'm actually doing?

If you're facilitating virtually but haven't yet validated that expertise, the CVF® or CAVF® may be your next step. If you've built years of experience across both modalities and haven't yet pursued the CMF®, perhaps this is the season. If your work sits in the learning space — designing programs that stick — the CMLF® pathway was built for practitioners like you.

The blended era is not a challenge to survive. For those who embrace it fully — who invest in developing genuine competence across in-person, virtual, and hybrid contexts — it is a profound opportunity to lead.

INIFAC's credentials exist to mark that leadership. To make it visible. To give clients and organizations a reliable signal that the facilitator in front of them has been held to a standard that reflects the full complexity of modern practice.

The profession has expanded. ***Let your credentials expand with it.***

Visit inifac.org to explore the full INIFAC credential pathway and find your next step.

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