

# **OLLI** **at DU**



# **FACILITATOR** **HANDBOOK**

**Revised, August 2014**

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# OLLI FACILITATOR HANDBOOK

## PREFACE

The importance of the role that facilitators play in the success of OLLI cannot be overstated. Facilitators come from a wide range of experiences and training.

This handbook was prepared as a resource to make your job easier. Included are tips on how to be a successful facilitator as well as the responsibilities you have as an OLLI facilitator. We hope you and your class members will BOTH enjoy your class.

OLLI thanks you for having accepted this volunteer responsibility. Please do not hesitate to call for assistance from your OLLI Manager.

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## **WHY DID I SAY YES?**

After completing a class, many of our facilitators have commented about what they gained by the experience. In addition to the valuable contribution to helping OLLI succeed, here are some of the benefits mentioned:

- The joy of continued learning
- Fulfilling a desire to teach or share knowledge
- Learning along with the class members
- Exposure to new ideas or knowledge
- Making new friends among other facilitators as well as class members

## **WHAT DOES OLLI EXPECT OF ME?**

All OLLI facilitators are expected to further the goals of OLLI by doing their best to have a successful class. This includes the following behavior guidelines:

- Be open to contrary thoughts and opinions; agree to disagree. It isn't necessary to convert others to your viewpoint.
- Encourage debate and the challenge of new ideas
- Listen to and respect the opinions of the learners – all ideas are important
- Honor your commitment to complete the class
- Share your knowledge
- Facilitate learning – we are all learning together.
- Encourage learners to be resources to you and to each other.
- Learn how to operate any audio-visual equipment you use.

## **WHAT MAY I EXPECT FROM OLLI?**

- Audio Visual equipment and support
- Support from the Curriculum Committee Sub-Chairmen and the OLLI Manager
- Support from the OLLI staff.

## **CLASS PREPARATION**

### **CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE:**

Who are our OLLI class members?

- Age 50+
- Mostly retirees
- Men and women with curiosity who want to learn new things.
- People who want to take some ‘fun’ classes they didn’t have time for earlier.

### **CONSIDER YOUR COURSE OBJECTIVES – start with the end in mind:**

The first step in a successful class is to prepare the “flow” of your class. Consider a logical sequence of the ideas and key points you will be presenting so that there is a clear relationship between the various points. If you are using a textbook, this will be simpler – you will usually follow the chapters in the book and supplement with additional information such as handouts, or class reports. Be sure you have reviewed all the materials thoroughly.

When you prepare your syllabus, consider your goals for the class. You have a specific number of weeks: what do you want to accomplish? What do you want your learners to learn? What issues do you want to highlight for discussion? This analysis will help you formulate discussion questions that will lead the class through the material you have prepared for the class. Determining your specific goals for the class will also help you to evaluate your success at the end of the class.

## PLANNING THE FLOW AND PRESENTATION:

When you are planning your course content keep these points in mind:

- Give the *big picture* first, then the *specific parts*.
- Start with the *most important* item and work to the *least important*.
- Work from the *easier* points to the more *difficult* ones – build your case.

Determine the chronological sequence that best suits the content of your course.

- Note events in the order in which they occur
- Present a procedure in the order it is to be performed?

Choose the proper format for your information. The best classes usually combine several to keep things fun and interesting.

- Lecture or discussion or a combination?
- Multimedia – video, audio, internet, PowerPoint
- Stories, case studies and real life experiences
- Handouts – using email, paper or Portfolio web page (more below)
- Participant input

The sample syllabus in the Appendix follows the textbook chapters, but within each chapter there is at least one specific point that the author is making relating to the issue “the fight for free speech in America”. Having the class identify the main point of each chapter could be an ideal way to start each class. If the facilitator has analyzed the main point of each chapter, this will lead to formulating discussion questions. Discussion could consider whether the class agrees or disagrees with the author or if the author’s premise might lead to legislation or other action. You might choose to introduce supplementary material either supporting or refuting the author – using handouts or a report from a class member.

Remain flexible, so that you can adjust your plan to allow for an unexpected interest in a particular issue. On the other hand, you also will want to have enough discussion questions prepared so that you can fill in if the class participants are not very vocal. You don’t have to use them all, but it is reassuring to have some questions in reserve.

**HANDOUTS AND NOTES:** Number the pages of your handouts and clearly identify each one BEFORE you copy them. This will allow your learners to be able to easily refer to the appropriate handout in class. Before class, organize your class notes and handouts so you are not fumbling through papers during class. If you pass items out during class, don't lecture about that handout until everyone has it. (If you pass it to both sides of the room at the same time, it is faster.)

You can also post handouts on your class Portfolio page. Using this tool avoids having to make copies as your class members can download the information before class. (For information on how to learn more about this program, see the Facilitator Resources Section.) If you do choose to use Portfolio, you will also need to accommodate those learners who don't have access to a computer.

This preparation will help you construct a 'flow' for your class that will lead to a successful conclusion.

## **PORTFOLIO – WHAT IS IT?**

Portfolio is a software program managed by DU that OLLI facilitators can use to set up a class webpage. Once set up, you can post information for your class, in the form of links, to internet web pages, documents or just comments or pictures for your class. After creating the Portfolio page, you will need to instruct your class on how to access the page. The class members would then reference the page prior to each class to check out your postings. There is an instruction sheet detailing how to set up your sheet on the website, [www.portfolio.du.edu/olli](http://www.portfolio.du.edu/olli) then select the Facilitator's Resources tab.

## CLASS MANAGEMENT TIPS

- **Arrange seating** so that everyone can see and hear you and each other. If the tables are arranged in a long rectangle, this may require moving the tables slightly into an “arch” on the long sides. Having class members get to know one another is an important part of the OLLI experience.
- **Time management:** Start the class on time, and don’t stop to “fill in” latecomers. This is disrespectful to those who arrived on time. End the class on time also. Most classrooms have a clock on the wall, but if your room doesn’t, put your watch in front of you on the table to easily note the time.
- **Breaks.** Try to have your class take their break at the normal OLLI break time. (Approximately 10:30 – 10:45 am and 2:00 – 2:15 pm) Part of the enjoyment of taking classes is socializing with other OLLI members. Be sure to tell participants what time to return to class. Start promptly when that time is reached.
- **Remind people to turn off their cell phones, or put them on ‘silent mode’**
- **Class participant reports:** Facilitators may want to ask class members to give short reports on various topics during the class. These can enhance study and discussion.....but..... they can also be problematic. Set clear time limits for the presentations to avoid overly lengthy reports. Allow time for other members of the class to make comments or ask questions. It is also good class management if there are to be a number of reports, to spread them out over the eight weeks. *Remember: participant reports are optional. Do not make anyone feel guilty for not volunteering.*

Some facilitators have had success in having people volunteer for reports by circulating a list of possible reports, and the approximate week they would be presented.

An advantage to OLLI in having class members give reports is that it allows people the opportunity to present information in front of a group. If they

become comfortable doing this, they might also become interested in facilitating a class.

- **Set Ground Rules for Discussion and behavior in class:** While this is optional, some facilitators have found it helpful to distribute a document of “Rules of Engagement” at the first class, or to discuss some simple, respectful, guidelines of expected behavior for class members. This is particularly helpful if the subject of your class is political or potentially controversial. The sample “Rules of Engagement” may be revised to suit your style or class. (If you would like an electronic copy, please contact Michelle Runyon) The suggestions follow on the next page.
- **Discourage private conversations.** This is rude to the speaker and distracting to others. Remind the class of the “ground rules”.

### **Suggested “Rules of Engagement” for OLLI Discussion Classes\***

1. The *Facilitator's* primary role is that of a facilitator of a class-wide discussion (and occasionally a "herder of cats" - not a teacher or lecturer).
2. The facilitator will discourage efforts to "politicize" and/or monopolize any discussion topic by one or more members of the class (facilitator included).
3. It is expected that all comments will be treated with respect. OLLI classes should be a safe environment for expressing opinions without fear of being attacked or ridiculed. – by the class members or the facilitator.
4. All members of the class have a right to be heard or to be silent if that is their desire. When speaking, speak loudly enough to be heard by others.
5. The facilitator will call on any class member who raises his/her hand, thus signifying a desire to speak. (optional, but helpful to discourage monopolizing and encourage participation)
6. The facilitator will strongly discourage "side conversations" while others are speaking. It's rude to the speaker and distracting to others.
7. Class members need to realize that OLLI is an opportunity to broaden knowledge, interact with others, and clarify positions and/or change previously held positions. In other words, the class may not come to any "set in concrete" conclusions relative to any particular topic and that is O.K.
8. Class members will please obey basic rules of courtesy and decorum. One can disagree without being disagreeable. OLLI classes should be a safe environment to express one's opinion.
9. Class will make every attempt to read the materials before the class begins.
10. Everyone will try to speak LOUDLY and DISTINCTLY enough for all to hear.

*\*Idea suggested by long-time OLLI Facilitator, Harry Cullis*

## **TEACHING and FACILITATING: The “Sage on the Stage” vs. The “Guide on the Side”**

Although a good teacher involves his or her class in discussion, facilitating a class of intelligent, experienced adults is different from teaching a group of teenagers or college students. Hopefully, for example, there is less need for “classroom management”, though we can’t guarantee it!

If you have been a classroom teacher or when you think about your own experience as a student, you will likely remember someone standing at the front of a room providing content and imparting information; you may remember relying on the teacher for giving the right answers, for testing to see if you were learning what was being taught and for giving grades and other forms of assessments of what you have learned.

The facilitator isn’t necessarily “the expert: and therefore does not need nor should s/he judge the value of class comments.

Adult learners, and especially OLLI lifelong learners, want to share their considerable knowledge and views, to examine multiple perspectives, to reach their own conclusions, to raise and respond to thoughtful and complex questions, to determine their own interests, and to assess their own learning.

Most of this workbook relates to the techniques used when facilitating, as this is less familiar to us all. However, some of our classes are primarily lecture or teaching a subject so there is also a section of suggestions and tips to enhance the presentation in these types of classes.

### NOTES:

## QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR

*The majority of classes in OLLI are structured around the process of encouraging group discussion about a book or topic. Use of videos and speakers enhance this process. Many facilitators use the Socratic Method, which is based upon posing **open-ended questions** and presenting **problematic situations** related to the material read. Open-ended questions literally **open up** discussion. [more on this later]*

Here are some ways to encourage sharing and contributions from your learners:

- **Don't feel that you must comment after each statement** or answer every question posed. Your objective is to create dialogue among class members. If a question is directed to you, you can turn it back to the class – “What do you think about that?” Does anyone wish to address Tom's question?”
- **Avoid the temptation to answer your own question.** If you do, the class will start to rely upon you for all the answers.
- **BIAS: facilitators should normally remain neutral much of the time.** Try to minimize expressing your own views and values. Focus instead on the values and beliefs upon which participants base their contributions, and make sure that the class considers a variety of viewpoints. If the subject is controversial, and you have a bias, be open regarding that bias and respectful of opposing viewpoints. If your class description clearly described a class topic that was to be discussed from a particular biased viewpoint, then your learners will be forewarned and prepared for you to present that viewpoint. *You will still be expected to be open to and respectful of opposing viewpoints.* It is unacceptable in class, as in life, to interrupt, talk over or be visually disrespectful when an opposing viewpoint is being expressed. It is important that you set a good example of respectful debating techniques for your learners.
- **AVOID READING** large amounts of factual material that the participants were assigned to read for homework. You should assume the participants have come to class prepared to build upon an assignment, not to repeat it. If the information is critical, find some way of imparting that information

without just reading it. Of course, reading a short passage as a preface to discussion is appropriate.

- **Audio Visuals:** If you are using a white board or PowerPoint presentation, supplement it with meaningful input from you. Don't read the slides and don't speak to the board – speak to your audience.
- **Clear up ambiguities.** Don't let them hang in the air. The facilitator might say, “I am not clear about your point; can you be more specific?” The facilitator might try rephrasing or summarizing the point, and asking if that is what the class member intended. However, try not to change the wording too much or you might embarrass the person.
- **Define terms:** If you are using company jargon, be sure to define your terms and acronyms.
- **Questions:** Give people a chance to ask questions before moving to a new topic.
- **Don't shy away from controversy.** “Would someone speak to the other side of this issue?” “Do you all agree?” “How do the rest of you feel about what Mary said?” “Are there other aspects of this issue we should consider or discuss?”
- **Summarize.** At the beginning of each class, some facilitators have found it useful to briefly summarize the previous week's discussion. At the close of class, provide time for a brief wrap-up of the day's discussion and major points. This is also a good time to review any changes in assignment or schedule and to make OLLI announcements.
- **ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE:** Try to be enthusiastic and have fun with the class. It will help everyone to relax and participate.

**REMEMBER - you don't have to do all the talking – try to draw out class members through questions or reports.**

## THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

### **SETTING THE TONE:**

Setting the stage the first day of class can become an important part of the context of each subsequent class discussion. For example:

- In his class, “Culture Matters,” The facilitator’s first words were, “What is culture: how do you define it?” The answers from the class became part of the context for the following class sessions.
- In the class, “The Right To Privacy,” The Facilitator asked these questions the first day:
  - “What does a right to privacy mean to each of us?”
  - “Under what circumstances would you be willing to give up some of those rights?”

The class came back to these questions and their responses throughout the course.

Some Facilitators like to start each class with a story or a joke or an inspirational quote. If that fits your style, some sources for these are:

- Bartlett’s quotations
- “Reader’s Digest” anecdotes.
- Newspapers and magazines fillers
- All those cute emails you receive.

**PORTFOLIO:** If you have created a Portfolio page you will need to let your learners know how to access the information posted there and also make arrangements to accommodate those who do not have internet access. See Appendix M for a “Portfolio Cheat Sheet” for sample instructions to use for your class.

## **FIRST DAY LOGISTICS:**

- **Preparation:** Have all your notes and handouts organized on your table so you are not fumbling through papers during class. Be sure you know how to use the AV equipment or access the internet, if you intend to use either of these.
- **Nametags & Table Tents:** Stress the importance of *wearing name tags and be sure to wear your own nametag at every class*. If you do not have a nametag for yourself, notify Debbie Loftin at the Central OLLI office. Facilitators have had great success using name “tents” made out of card stock with the first name printed by hand or by computer on the front *and back*. With a name on both front and back, all the learners can see the person’s name. The Facilitator can collect these at the end of each class or class members can be asked to bring them to each class. [Check with your site manager for information on where to pick up card stock and markers] Ask your class members to keep the tents for use in other classes.
- **Introductions:** Be sure to introduce yourself - your experience with OLLI, your professional background or why you are interested in the subject of the class. Participant introductions can be helpful, but should be brief and relevant to OLLI: i.e.: “How many years you’ve been taking OLLI classes or why you chose this particular class”. You can also use a show of hands to get a feel for how many experienced OLLI members you have.
- **Identify & welcome new members.** You might ask experienced members to ‘show them the ropes’ or even assign someone to be a ‘mentor’ for the first week or two.
- **OLLI announcements** regarding Holidays, church rules, beverage cups must be covered in classrooms, “snow days” procedures, etc. You will receive these policies at the “Logistics” Facilitator meeting and they should also be reviewed with the OLLI members during the first week of class.

- **Attendance sheet** – It is a good idea to “take attendance” by reading the names at the first class so the facilitators and the students can put names and faces together. At subsequent classes, pass the attendance sheet around for participants to check off their own name. Be sure to ask people to note any classes where they expect to be absent.
- **Email addresses & phone numbers:** You should create a contact list with email addresses and phone numbers of your class members. This will allow you to create an email distribution list, or phone tree, to help you contact class members if there is a need to change or cancel a class. You will receive your class attendance names and the forms from the Facilitator Coordinator.
- **Review the syllabus** with the class so the learners know what to expect. Have extra copies of the syllabus and any other material that was distributed prior to class for those who might not have received it. It’s a good idea to have some hard copies at the first class for those who did not download from the website, or forgot to bring it.
- **Class assistant** –We will find a class assistant for your class from your class list. Make sure this person is trained in the AV equipment along with you. Your assistant can pass out and collect evaluations, help you with handouts, and other valuable assistance. Appendix K has some of the things a class assistant can help you with.

## HOW TO PROMOTE DISCUSSION BY DEVELOPING GOOD QUESTIONS.

Framing questions that not only promote discussion but that also move the discussion along in a direction that enhances the learning, is one of the more difficult tasks for the facilitator and may require more time than expected when preparing for class. *Being an effective facilitator does not rely upon how much you know, but rather on your ability to draw the most out of each class member and to keep the discussion focused, informative and flowing.*

You have thought through the ‘flow’ of the class from week to week so you can now design your discussion questions to fit within that flow. Your questions should coordinate with the information in the text or handouts that the class uses.

To be able to design questions that will lead to a lively discussion requires a willingness to spend time thinking through the process of developing *open-ended questions*. Test the questions on yourself by considering “how would I answer this question?” “Would others contribute, or would the answer tend to end the discussion?”

One helpful strategy is to do extra reading related to your subject. Questions developed from resources beyond what you have assigned the class often provide material and suggest broader questions for stimulating discussion.

It is important that your questions build upon what class members have read, and do not appear to be a “test” to see if class members have read the material.

Here are some helpful guidelines for formulating effective discussion questions:

- A good question is one that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no” response, or the name of a person, place or thing. We call these questions “closed ended.” The answer doesn’t go anywhere – after the answer is given the ‘door’ to discussion is closed.
- Questions should not reflect a *hidden* facilitator bias. Sometimes that can be difficult, especially where politics are involved.

- A good question should “open” the door to discussion. Keep these simple tips in mind: AVOID starting your questions with a verb. DO start it with one of these thought-provoking words: *when, where, what, who or how*. This will help to keep it open-ended.
- Try to avoid “multiple questions” within the primary question. It can be confusing...not to mention, hard to remember. For example: “*If Edward VII supported the Nazi party, as many historians think, do you think Wallis Simpson was also a Nazi supporter, or was she just an ambitious, social-climbing, gold digger who had no clue about anything political, or could it be possible that she was actually a spy for the Nazi party whose mission was to seduce Edward and pass along England’s secrets and war plans.*”

Remember.....IF YOUR QUESTION ISN’T UNDERSTOOD it can’t be answered or discussed. In addition to constructing “good” questions, the facilitator also must be prepared when his or her question is met with a bewildered stare. Fifteen seconds of silence can seem like an eternity. So, be prepared to rephrase the question.

- However, if your question is clearly stated, be comfortable with silence. If you have asked a thought-provoking question, give the group time to think about a response. This can be especially important when you have one or two class members who tend to jump right in. Some class members like to have a little time to process a question before responding.
- Another excellent strategy in formulating a question is to preface the question with a statement of fact, or the results of a survey or poll, a related news story, etc. (Reading and collecting outside resources, as noted above, can offer material for this purpose)

When you use a *Statement of Fact* to introduce a discussion it is important to make sure you are keeping the relationship between the fact and the class focus in mind when you formulate your questions. If you don’t, you risk the class discussion getting side-tracked.

## **SOME EXAMPLES AND A CHANCE TO PRACTICE**

**(Handouts in Appendix H)**

Other helpful hints to promote discussion:

- After a video presentation, you can use the class reaction to promote discussion. For example: “Some of you [laughed, seemed sad, groaned] during the video would you share what you found [funny, sad, upsetting]?”
- In reference to a handout: “What elements in this article [refuted, reinforced] the author’s viewpoint as expressed in the text?”

**NOTES:**

## ASSESSING THE CLASS and ACTIVE LISTENING

**ASSESSING THE CLASS:** Are people following what you are saying? Understanding your point? Following other class member comments? Is the ‘flow’ working? If not, you might want to adjust your class plan. The MID-TERM evaluation [Appendix E] is helpful in assessing what is working and what could be improved.

**NONVERBAL CUES (Body Language):** A good facilitator is alert to the nonverbal cues from class members, and aware of the learners’ nonverbal messages. (Yawning is a dead giveaway!)

- Watch for **facial expressions** that might indicate whether your learners heard and understood the question being asked.
- **Pause and use silence** to let the class know that you are giving them time to think and respond to your questions. (**Get comfortable with moments of silence.**)

**If a class comment is long or confusing,** summarize the key point(s) to confirm with the speaker that you have understood his or her point correctly. Then turn it back to the class for comment, or move on to your own next point for the class to discuss.

### **ACTIVE LISTENING:**

- Give your undivided attention to the speaker.
- *Listen to understand rather than to refute* – rephrase if necessary to be sure you have understood the point.
- Control any negative emotion you may feel regarding the point. Be respectful.
- Listen “actively” – nod your head to show your comprehension and attention.

Again – be sure to stop distracting side conversations, they are distracting.

## HANDLING QUESTIONS FROM THE CLASS

### DO:

- PLAN for and schedule time for questions.
- Anticipate and prepare for likely questions
- Listen carefully to the question to be sure you understand it.
- Repeat (or rephrase) the question if necessary.
- Keep your answer simple and to the point of the question.
- Call on others – you can throw the question to the group to answer and stimulate discussion and participation
- If you don't know the answer, say so. You can also research the answer or have someone else do so, and report back at the next class

### DON'T:

- Fake an answer
- Ramble on and on
- Rush to answer before the question is finished.
- Get sidetracked into an extended discussion of another topic unless you ask the group if they want to explore this tangent.
- Engage in battle
- Let the questioner(s) take control of the room

### NOTES:

## HANDLING CHALLENGING CLASS MEMBERS:

While most classes will go fairly smoothly, difficulties can arise posing challenges for the facilitator.

Here are some suggestions for handling some common “participant challenges”:

**THE QUIET ONE:** Doesn’t contribute to discussion or ask questions, but seems to be paying attention.

**WHY?** Bored, indifferent, feels superior, feels timid, insecure – or simply prefers to learn by listening, not talking.

**WHAT TO DO?** Don’t let someone be a negative force, but remember that OLLI learners can choose not to participate. If that is the case, don’t push. Listening is some people’s preferred style of engagement. Look for non-verbal cues that may indicate that they wish to speak and if so, be sure to give them a chance to participate.



## **OTHER IDEAS:**

**THE DOMINATOR:** Jumps in with comments before anyone else has a chance and continues to dominate the discussion.

**WHY?** This person might be an ‘Eager Beaver’ or a show off. S/he may be exceptionally well informed and eager to show it, or just naturally wordy.

**WHAT TO DO?** Allow them to keep their dignity and don’t embarrass them; you might need their talents later. Acknowledge them, and then say “let’s hear what some others have to say.” Call on someone else to summarize what we’ve been saying up to now.” If this doesn’t help, it may be necessary to call the offending class member aside at break or *after class* to discuss how your efforts to involve other class members are being hampered by this continued domination of the discussion. **Do not challenge a participant in front of others.**



**OTHER IDEAS:**

**THE “INARTICULATOR”** : The comments are unfocused, confused and may not even relate to the subject under discussion.

**WHY:** Lacks the ability to put thoughts in proper order. Has an idea, but can't convey it. She needs your help. He is nervous.

**WHAT TO DO?** Twist their ideas as little as possible, but rephrase to make sense. Ask a clarifying question. Be gentle!



**OTHER IDEAS:**

**THE RAMBLER:** Talks about everything except the subject.

**WHY?** May be looking for acceptance; may desire to be the center of attention. May not understand the topic under discussion.

**WHAT TO DO?** When s/he stops for breath say “thank you” and refocus attention to the topic at hand.

If someone introduces a new line of discussion and a few members begin discussing this tangent, the facilitator must be firm in bringing the discussion back to its original focus. The majority of the group is usually feeling bored or frustrated by the diversion. If the new “tangent topic” might fit in later in your class, you can “park” it for later discussion, or you can agree *as a group*, to take a few minutes to discuss the topic before refocusing the group.



**OTHER IDEAS:**

**THE ATTACKER:** Makes personal attacks on another person’s comment or opinion. This person may seem quite rude, but may not be aware of how offensive s/he is.

**WHY?** This person might be used to speaking definitively, as if there is no valid opinion but the one s/he expresses. They might not realize that they are being disrespectful and abusive of another person’s opinion or might be overly emotional about a controversial subject.

**WHAT TO DO?** *Calm things down quickly.* You can use the “time out” signal and acknowledge that the comments are becoming too heated. Remind the “attacker”, and the rest of the class, of the ground rules for discussion: that we can disagree without being disrespectful of each other and that the classroom should be a safe place to share our opinions. Refocus the discussion on a less controversial aspect of the discussion. You can declare that ‘we will agree to disagree on this point’ and move forward to the next section. If necessary, talk to the offending parties after the class session.

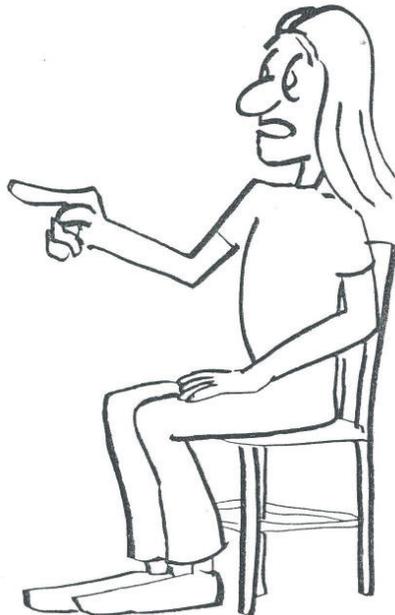


**OTHER IDEAS:**

**THE PERSON WITH AN AGENDA OF THEIR OWN:** Occasionally, for a controversial class, a member may be taking the class to try to promote their own agenda.

**WHY:** They may be trying to convert the class to their own viewpoint; maybe trying to promote a political candidate or action.

**WHAT TO DO:** If they try to hijack the discussion to promote their own ideas, in a way that is disrespectful or belittling of other people's comments, you may have to remind them about the 'Rules of Engagement'. If they continue, speak to them outside of the class and mention that the class is about "A" [ie: the history of the country] and their comments pertain more to "B", [ie: the current politics of the country"]



**OTHER IDEAS:**

## **GOOD CRITICISM – It helps us all**

**MID-COURSE FEEDBACK:** We have created a mid-course feedback form for your use *if you choose*. This is a simple form that will give you feedback early enough that you can identify what parts of your presentation your class members are enjoying and if they might have a suggestion for you to improve the class before it's too late. *These are for your use only and need not be shared with OLLI*. If you wish to use this tool, you may make copies from the sample in the appendix. Let Michelle Runyon know if you would like an electronic copy that can be edited.

**CLASS EVALUATIONS:** Your evaluation packet will be in your OLLI BOX no later than 2 weeks before the class ends. Please distribute the class evaluation forms to your learners 2 weeks before the end of your class. Ask your class assistant to pass them out and collect them. Please emphasize that the comments are very helpful to the Curriculum Committee when planning future terms, so try to get as many returned as possible.

OLLI participants are usually kind in their remarks, and it is important to learn from your evaluations. You should review the evaluations before sending them to the Facilitator Coordinator or your site manager. The evaluations will be summarized for the Curriculum Committee. It is very helpful in planning our curriculum to have this feedback from members. The form also requests suggestions for other classes and often this gives us the information necessary to know whether to repeat a class during a later term or develop a related class.

**FACILITATOR REPORT FORM:** You will be asked to fill out a short report on the class from *your* perspective and include that with the participant evaluations and the attendance list from the class. This is your opportunity to make suggestions to OLLI regarding your class. Your comments will help us improve our facilitator support.

**SELF-EVALUATION:** Take a few minutes to evaluate how you think your class was received – if you accomplished what you wanted, etc. This will be particularly helpful if you are considering repeating the class. For ideas regarding this see the *Facilitator Self- Evaluation form* in Appendix E

## **WHAT HAVE CLASS MEMBERS SAID ABOUT FACILITATORS?**

Here are some of the POSITIVE Facilitator qualities that were mentioned in past OLLI evaluations:

- Animated, enthusiastic, enjoyed the topic.
- Showed respect for all members of the class and for their knowledge, skills or experience.
- Good listener - resisted making judgments,
- Respected participant's comments.
- Informed and knowledgeable about subject.
- Well prepared; organized, had done outside reading.
- Lively discussion with a lot of participation.
- Managed class participation so *all who wanted to* could participate.
- Demonstrated humor and wit and encouraged it in others.
- Kept discussion focused on topic.
- Good balance between lecture and discussion.
- Had a sense of humor.

Here are some of the NEGATIVE Facilitator qualities mentioned in past OLLI evaluations:

- Facilitator not prepared, not organized.
- Facilitator promoted own agenda or viewpoint and didn't listen to dissenting comments.
- Talked too much and answers own questions.
- Showed impatience with class members; too controlling.
- Digressed frequently and got off the topic.
- Didn't manage discussion well – let someone dominate discussion.
- Content or presentation boring.
- Couldn't manage the AV equipment.

## **WHAT DOES AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING GROUP LOOK LIKE?**

- The atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable and relaxed.
- During discussions, many participate.
- Members listen to each other; respecting different opinions.
- Questions are frequent, frank and constructive without personal attacks.
- The facilitator handled the AV equipment effectively.

*(This section may be reviewed on your own)*

## **SUPPOSE MY CLASS IS PRIMARILY LECTURE?**

What if your OLLI class is primarily a lecture? You will be less a facilitator, and more a teacher or lecture – the “sage on the stage”. You may be answering questions from your learners, not posing questions. Your lecture might be to a classroom of learners or to a large group. How can you keep your lecture interesting and engaging? Here are some tips:

### **THE PREPARATION:**

- **LOGIC:** Plan your lecture to flow logically from major point to major point. Let your learners know what they are expected to learn.
- Consider your audience in terms of **DEMOGRAPHICS**, (age, race, etc) and tailor your comments to that audience. Your examples should be appropriate for your audience.
- Make careful **NOTES** and then use them sparingly; it is better to be “artfully spontaneous”. It is preferable to leave something out than to read painfully from your notes. Know the beginning, the middle and the end.
- Leave adequate time for **QUESTIONS**. Schedule some pauses into your lecture to ask for a few questions and then be firm about shutting them off after those few are answered and moving on to your next section.
- **LESS IS MORE.** The audience can only absorb so much in a short time. A general rule is, the more you put in, the less they will remember. Use short sentences to clearly and simply state your ideas. Complicated ideas need to be broken down into smaller segments. A presentation is like poetry; think about the maximum of meaning with a minimum of words
- **FLEXIBILITY:** identify the optional information that can be included if you are on time, or skipped if you are running late.
- If you use handouts, try to leave room on the page for your learners to take notes.

- **HOW TO KEEP PEOPLE FOCUSED AND ATTENTIVE:** To keep people focused, research shows that you need to build in a variety of “attention recall points” to stop their attention from drifting away. Without change, the average attention span is only 10 – 15 minutes. Here are some options for keeping your course engaging:
  - Breaks – full break, or if you feel attention is wandering, just a stretch --- or everyone “wave your hands” “say hi the person on your left” ....something to break things up.
  - Have a show of hands about something that will create interest.
  - Have a mini-quiz – with questions on the screen, or on a handout.
  - Change the environment (stimulus): If they’ve been watching a video presentation in the dark, lighten the room and talk for a while. Mix things up.
  - Try to involve learners whenever possible to establish interaction. The retention will be greater if your learners are involved. You can have them do something in cooperation with each other, or ask a question for them to silently answer, before you lecture on the subject. Then ask if their post-lecture opinion has changed from their ‘instant’ answer.
  
- Choose interesting **RESEARCH**. Don’t just ‘throw numbers out’ Put data in everyday language that your audience can relate to. For example, if you are speaking for sixty minutes about drunk driving, tell your audience how many people will be involved in an accident due to a drunk driver in the sixty minutes of your lecture. This immediacy will grab their attention. Turn information into knowledge. Use your data to compare or evaluate and reach a conclusion.
  
- **PRACTICE** your *entire* lecture! Time it, and then put the full notes aside. You can put key words on flash cards to prompt you. Know your material! Practice really does make your speech perfect.

## THE PRESENTATION:

- Consider your FACILITY and make sure things that you can control are as satisfactory as possible with regard to acoustics, visibility, temperature etc... Try to arrange rows of chairs in a semi-circle or with off-set rows.
- EQUIPMENT: *Before your presentation*, test out the microphone and be sure you know how to operate any audio visual equipment you intend to use.
- WHITE BOARD or FLIP CHART USE: *Remember, talk to your audience, not the board.*
  - Use DARK colors for text and save red for emphasis – red and orange are difficult to read from a distance.
  - Write large enough to be seen from the back of the room.
  - Separate ideas by using bullets, or different colors
- NOTES: Make sure you can read them. Wear glasses or write large enough to read easily. Rather than a complete script, use key words to prompt you.
- If you are using a LARGE SCREEN or multiple screens, don't have chairs too close to the screen. If your group numbers allow it, arrange chairs in a semi-circle around only one screen. Choose the screen that will have the least glare from windows at the time of day that you are presenting.
- CLOTHING: All eyes will be upon you for an extended time. Clothing should be loose enough to move freely, not too revealing and flexible to be comfortable in all temperatures.
- If you choose to break into SMALL GROUPS, have people group with those in front or back, not to the sides. It will be easier to talk as a group without a major shifting of chairs.
- With a large group, it helps to identify smaller groups within the crowd so people feel a part of the group. Ask a question or several questions to identify – how many are \_\_\_\_\_? Have heard of \_\_\_\_\_? Etc.

- Making words work: Speaking well is different from writing well. Don't just read your material; make eye contact. Use visuals and handouts. Here are some tools for ENHANCING YOUR WORDS:
  - Tone of voice accents the really important words
  - Body language gestures provide additional emphasis.
  - Speed of delivery helps learners to distinguish key ideas from background information
  - Facial expressions tell you more about the meaning of the words you say.
  - Repetition provides cues to the relative importance of particular words or phrases.
  - Pitch, volume and all the other controls of your voice may be used to enhance your lecture.

All these provide audible and visual evidence of your own passion and enthusiasm for the topic of the lecture.

- STAGE FRIGHT: Excellent preparation and practice are the best remedy. Other tips:
  - Make sure you know the words to begin your lecture. Write them down and practice; but try not to read them.
  - Take a couple of deep breaths to steady your voice and nerves before beginning your lecture.
  - Have water on hand. This helps with your voice and also buys you "thinking time".
- LOSING THE PLOT: If you lose your place, *don't panic!* What seems to you like an unbearably long silence will appear to be an appropriate pause to your audience. Take a sip of water, a deep breath and check your notes without apologizing or 'um-ing'. Some lecturers like to have a few optional short tasks to give their audience. This can give you a minute or two to regroup. For example: "I'd like you to pause for a minute to identify what, for you, are the most important points that we have covered so far."

- **STARTING THE LECTURE:** too soon – latecomers may miss important context information. Too late – those in their seats will get impatient. Compromise by starting on time but beginning with information or comments that, while interesting to those in their seats, will not be critical information for those who arrive late.
- **TIMING:** People will watch the clock – even if you are a fascinating speaker. If you aren't wrapping it up by 10 minutes before the class is scheduled to end, they will become anxious. Find a natural stopping place and sum up your points. If you are answering questions, indicate your awareness of the time by stating that “time is almost up – one more question.” If you need to close with something important left unsaid, make a note of it for the beginning of the next session.

### **Q & A TIPS:**

- Don't be afraid of silences when you open the floor for questions. People need time to warm up. If nobody volunteers, you can point to someone - preferably someone who looks alert, or even a person you know - and ask them “What do you think?” or “Do you have any experience with \_\_\_\_\_?” Invariably the first question is the hardest. Once that has been asked, others will follow.
- Don't call on somebody twice if you can avoid it. Make sure everyone gets a chance to ask a question.
- If someone goes on and on, wait for a natural break in the flow and say “thanks” answer the question and move on to another person. If their comments are not a question, but just expressing an opinion, you can also say “thanks” and move on. Try not to be rude or abrupt however, sometimes it's better to suffer through long-winded comments than appear rude.
- Don't cut the question time too short. People love to dialogue and while it's sometimes difficult for a presentation, it always works if you can get the audience started.

## FACILITATOR RESOURCES

**OLLI PORTFOLIO:** A program that allows Facilitators to post text, pictures, class information or other information on a webpage accessible to their class members. If you would like to know more about Portfolio, contact your site manager.

**OLLI FACILITATOR MENTORING PROGRAM:** Experienced facilitators volunteer to mentor other facilitators who might like help planning their class or help with class management feedback during the first few classes. If you are interested in learning more about this resource please call or email your site manager for more information.

**AUDIO-VISUAL [AV] EQUIPMENT:** There will be a training session scheduled after the Logistics Meeting. Although there will be a support person at each class location, ***YOU are responsible for learning how to use the equipment.*** It is recommended that you choose a class assistant from your class list, and have that person attend the AV training with you. After the training, please practice with the equipment in your assigned room to be sure you are comfortable with it.

**WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS:** Most classrooms have wireless internet access. If you need to use this, please be sure to let your site manager know so you can be trained on how to access the network.

**THE TEACHING COMPANY: tapes, CDs and DVDs** OLLI has purchased many VCR tapes, CDs and DVDs on a variety of subjects. In addition, OLLI is willing to purchase additional offerings from this company to use during class. You may obtain a list of the resources currently in our library from the OLLI website. If you borrow any of these resources, *please return them promptly* after your class so they will be available to other facilitators. If you would like OLLI to purchase a new item, please submit a request to the Central OLLI office with a short explanation of why it would be of benefit.

**PUBLIC OR DU LIBRARIES:** You might also find supplemental books, tapes or DVDs from your local public library or the Penrose Library at DU. They will usually make arrangements so you can keep the item for longer than the normal check-out time.

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** Guest speakers can bring specialized expertise in a particular field as well as a different perspective to the subject being studied by the class. Preparing the speaker for his or her presentation is a critical role of the facilitator. If you would like to have a DU professor speak to your class, you may call the Department Head for a suggestion. Please **DO NOT** call a specific professor directly unless you have cleared this with the OLLI office to be sure this professor is not already speaking to another OLLI event.

The following steps have proven helpful when working with a speaker:

- Describe the make-up of the class, particularly the education and experience the participants bring to the group. The phrase, “well read, active learners” is an example.
- Provide an overview of the course itself, and identify issues being discussed. Speakers appreciate knowing the questions the class might want addressed as well as what material has already been covered.
- Be sure to inquire if the speaker will bring his or her own equipment or if any audio-visual equipment will be needed from OLLI. Speakers should be advised to arrive early enough to set up their equipment. Please find out if any special help is needed. [Password for internet access, LCD projector, etc] Discuss how long the speaker will have for his/her presentation.
- It is critical to re-confirm the date, day, time and location with your guest speaker before the class session. You could send a letter of confirmation and make a reminder call the day before the speaker is scheduled.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES:** Outside speakers may be eligible for a \$50 gift certificate for the Tattered Cover book store or a local restaurant. Complete the Gift Certificate Request form (**Appendix F**) and send to the OLLI office with at least one week of lead time so that you will have the certificate to give to your guest speaker at the time of his or her visit. Please try to limit your requests to no more than 3 per course, unless you are facilitating an OLLI Speaker Series. [Check eligibility with site manager]

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

#### ***FACILITATOR MEETINGS***

After your class has been confirmed, you will receive an “Important Dates and Times” list of the specific dates and deadlines mentioned below as well as a 1-page calendar of meeting dates and deadlines. **Please put these dates on your personal calendar as soon as you receive them.**

#### **FIRST MEETING – Days & Times: (approximately 1 hour)**

*This meeting and the following information is handled via email.*

This meeting is held shortly after the curriculum for a given term has been finalized. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- **Confirm Schedule of classes** for specific days and times. Facilitators will be asked to notify your site manager of any day and/or time when you will be *unable* to facilitate their class. With this information, a preliminary schedule is put together and will be finalized at the meeting. Therefore, it is very important for all facilitators or their representative to attend the meeting.
- **Audio-visual** needs are discussed and an Equipment Request form is distributed, (**See Appendix G**). Those who will need to use audio-visual equipment during their course should complete the request form, and send it to your site manager by the date requested.
- **Facilitator Handbooks** will be distributed to all new facilitators.
- **The descriptive paragraph with a short facilitator biography** is finalized and the deadline for submitting the syllabus is noted.

## **SECOND MEETING – Rooms and Logistics:**

This meeting is held AT THE LOCATION OF YOUR CLASS approximately five days before classes begin. The purpose of the meeting is:

- **Class Registration Lists** for each facilitator are distributed as Attendance Sheets.
- **Classroom Assignments** are announced. The assignments are based upon enrollment in the class and the type of class.
- **Audio-Visual Equipment Requests** are confirmed.
- **Administrative Details** are reviewed. This is an opportunity for facilitators to ask questions.
- **Audio Visual training follows this meeting.**

## **FACILITATOR WORKSHOP: 9:30 - NOON**

A Facilitator training workshop is held once before each term. It is strongly recommended for all first-time facilitators or for anyone who is considering becoming an OLLI facilitator. Experienced facilitators are encouraged to attend to share their experience with others and to sharpen their skills as facilitators. The largest focus of the workshop is on the **process of facilitating a class**. Formulating open-ended questions and class management skills are just two of the topics covered. Tips and tools useful for lecture classes are included in the Handbook. The Facilitator Handbook has up-to-date procedural and administrative information. For those unable to attend any of the workshops, you are encouraged to contact your site manager for information and a Handbook.

## **TEXT BOOK FOR CLASS**

Facilitators using a book as the basis for their class should have read the entire text prior to the beginning of the class term. This enables you to keep the “big picture” in mind throughout the course. Prior to presenting a course proposal to the Curriculum Committee, it is very important that the Facilitator ensure that any text to be used is available. It is also important to have your learners use the *same edition* of the book, so when text passages are referenced the page numbers are consistent among the participants.

Learners may purchase their textbooks from any bookstore or on-line source, however OLLI will also contact The Tattered Cover book store with a list of the books to be used each term. The Tattered cover on Colfax Ave will stock several copies of your text to make it easier for your learners to purchase the text.

### **DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH WITH SHORT BIOGRAPHY**

The facilitator for a course is responsible for developing a brief “course description” for inclusion in the Course Catalogue sent out with registration materials. *The description should be limited to between 100 and 150 words.* This paragraph describes the content of the course.

The course descriptive paragraph with bio **should be an electronic version.** Please be *concise and clear* in your description and strive to make the description appealing but accurate. Send the paragraph to the sub-chairman of your area by the deadline: (See **Appendix B** for sample paragraphs.)

The following information should be included:

- Description of the course content and/or intent of the course, stated in an engaging manner.
- Resources to be used, i.e., books, handouts, video, speakers, etc. (If books are to be purchased prior to the course follow the procedure listed above.)
- Class format. For example: workshop, speaker series, discussion, guest speakers, etc.
- Number of weeks, if not the full 8-week session.
- Start date, if not starting during the first week of the term.
- Prerequisites, if any
- Fees: list any fees that will be necessary such as material fees (for copies) or transportation or admission to museums.

In addition to the descriptive paragraph, please include a **SHORT BIOGRAPHY** of the facilitator. This should be between 2 and 10 lines and may indicate a strong interest in the subject and/or any expertise the facilitator has in the subject.

## **SYLLABUS**

The syllabus is a brief outline of what the facilitator or lecture course intends to cover each week. Any classes using a book or text, the reading assignment for each week is noted. For Speaker Series classes, it includes speaker name, title and topic for each session. Typically reading assignments are most successful if limited to no more than forty pages per week. If the class includes additional resources, such as use of videos and speakers, those should be noted for the appropriate week in the syllabus. If the facilitator has photocopied material to be read in preparation for the first class, that material should be emailed to participants prior to the first class or may be *posted on a class Portfolio website created by the Facilitator*. **The syllabus or handouts must be an electronic version.** Email as an attachment to your sub chair who will forward them on to Debbie Loftin [ [debra.loftin@du.edu](mailto:debra.loftin@du.edu) ] by the deadline. (See **Appendix C** for a sample of a syllabus)

## **END OF COURSE REPORTS**

At the end of the course, please review the completed *Evaluation Forms* and complete the *Facilitator Report Form*. These should be packaged with the *Attendance Sheet* and processed as instructed at your site. This information is invaluable to the Curriculum Committee. (Samples of these forms are located in **Appendix E.**)

**Recruiting new facilitators:** If someone in your class shows the potential to become an OLLI facilitator, please ask them about their interest. If they would like to know more about the opportunity, please let us know. You can also give them a copy of the pamphlet explaining facilitator responsibilities. They will be contacted and given more information.

## **HANDOUTS & MAKING COPIES**

*REMEMBER PORTFOLIO & EMAIL* – Because of time and cost savings, OLLI recommends the use of DU Portfolio or Email attachments for distributing handouts.

If you plan to distribute hard copies of handouts, follow the guidelines below for making copies. **If handouts exceed 50 pages per participant per eight week term, class members must pay a “materials fee.” To be reimbursed, the facilitator must include this information in the descriptive paragraph for the course.**

**Please wait to make copies until you know how many people will be in your class.**

### **GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING THE MATERIALS FEE:**

- 0 – 50 pages – no fee
- 50 - 100 pages per class member per term = \$5.00
- 100 – 175 pages per class member per term = \$10.00
- 175 – 250 pages per class member per term= \$15.00

If the appropriate materials fee is charged, handouts exceeding 50 copies per person may be made at any printers and paid for by the facilitator. *Be sure to use the DU sales tax exemption certificate. (Appendix D) DU will not reimburse sales tax charges.* A list of printers that will bill OLLI directly is in **Appendix L**. Please make sure they put your name and course name on the invoice so we will know how to record the bill. To be reimbursed for the copies made at another printer, facilitators should submit the *original store receipt, not just the credit card receipt*, stapled to the *Reimbursement Request form* along with a *W9 form*, filled out with the facilitator’s full name, including middle initial. Submit these forms to your site manager. (These two forms are found in **Appendix D**.)

**As another option**, facilitators may use the copy machines at the OLLI office in the University College Building at 2211 South Josephine St. The best times to do photocopying are usually from 11:30 to 1:00 and 3:00 to 4:30. These times are least likely to interfere with the work of the staff in the College. As a

courtesy, facilitators are asked to allow any DU staff to “break in” if they have a quick copy to make. Please try to limit your time on the photocopying machine to 20 minute sessions, **AND** have all materials copy-ready. (I.e.: a pre-sized master copy of articles or books with pages in order.) Check with your site manager for other options.

**Sales Tax Exemption for Purchases:** As part of Denver University, OLLI is eligible for an exemption from Colorado sales tax. If you have received authorization for a purchase for your class, please be sure to give the vendor a copy of the DU sales tax exemption certificate. (A copy of the certificate is in **Appendix D.**)

<b><i>PROCEDURE FOR PROPOSING A NEW CLASS:</i></b>
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If you would like to develop a new class, please use the Course Proposal form in **Appendix A.** When completed, it should be sent to the chair of the appropriate site’s **Curriculum Committee [CC]**. The name and contact information for the CC chair is in the front of the fall Membership Directory or you may call your site manager.

The committee will review the proposal, and may ask for additional information or an interview with the prospective facilitator. The final decision regarding the class proposal will be made by the site’s Curriculum Committee. These procedures are designed to ensure a balanced curriculum each term.

Reviewing potential classes and finding facilitators is a long process. We must allow time for predation of the catalog listing all classes, registering members, etc. *If you are considering a new class, alert the Curriculum Committee chair as soon as possible.*

Members often make suggestions for new classes. The Curriculum Committee has a list of these suggestions. If you might be interested in developing one of these classes, please contact the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, or the appropriate sub-committee chairman, for a list of “potential classes needing facilitators.”

**APPENDIX LIST – the following forms are all located on the  
website: [www.portfolio.du.edu/olli](http://www.portfolio.du.edu/olli), select the  
Facilitator’s Resources tab**

APPENDIX A	Class Proposal Form
APPENDIX B	Descriptive Paragraph & Biography (Examples)
APPENDIX C	Syllabus (example)
APPENDIX D	<u>Reimbursement Forms:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Expense Reimbursement Request Form</li><li>▪ W9 IRS form – for people not already in the DU system.</li><li>▪ DU Sales Tax Exemption Certificate</li></ul>
APPENDIX E	<u>OLLI Evaluation forms:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic Class Evaluation</li><li>• Mid-term feedback</li><li>• End of Class Facilitator Report form</li><li>• Self-Evaluation suggestions</li></ul>
APPENDIX F	Gift Certificate Request Form Gift Certificate Guidelines
APPENDIX G	Equipment Request Form
APPENDIX H	Class Discussion Question Exercises
APPENDIX I	VIVA! OLLI History The OLLI Network
APPENDIX J	OLLI Weather Closure Policy & Procedure
APPENDIX K	Class Assistant Responsibilities
APPENDIX L	Printer Information – All sites
APPENDIX M	<u>Portfolio Information</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Class Member Access</li><li>▪ Portfolio Tutorial Booklet</li></ul>