

# **OLLI at DU South Campus**

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# **FACILITATOR HANDBOOK**

Revised January 31, 2019  
OLLI South

# OLLI FACILITATOR HANDBOOK

## PREFACE

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This handbook is provided as a resource to make your job easier. Included are tips for improving your facilitation skills and your responsibilities as an OLLI facilitator. Our goal is to help prepare you for a successful class, and to provide guidance that will help both you and your class members enjoy learning together.

OLLI South thanks you for having accepted this volunteer responsibility. Olli Facilitators play a huge role in the success of our program. Please do not hesitate to call for assistance from your OLLI Team.

## HOW TO FIND WHAT YOU NEED

OLLI South has a comprehensive website that you can access through <https://portfolio.du.edu/ollisouth>.

- **Check out the Home tab.** You will find upcoming registration dates, a pdf of the current catalog of courses, general information about OLLI, and contact information for each of the OLLI at DU sites. **A calendar** of OLLI South events is also included under the Home tab.
- **The OLLI South Master Calendar** tab shows a calendar of all OLLI South activities. This is a google calendar, and the dates can be synced to your own google calendar. Facilitators and members will find pertinent dates for each term of classes here. The calendar is updated regularly. **By tapping on a specific activity, you will open a window that shows all the details** regarding that activity for your planning.
- **Under the Site Contacts tab** you will find a comprehensive listing of OLLI South Administrative personnel and their contact information. Paid staff, volunteer Curriculum Committee co-chairs, sub-committee co-chairs and committee members, Member Relations Committee leadership and members are included in the list. These are your contacts and resources for your development as a facilitator.
- **The Facilitator Information tab** provides you with the course proposal process. A “watch here” button allows you to view a tutorial of the course proposal form. **A “press here” button** opens the course proposal form when you are ready to submit your proposal for an upcoming term. There are additional facilitator aids available to you under this tab.

In order to keep this Facilitator Handbook up-to-date, we have referred you to the website and the above specific tabs on the website. This allows you to access “who’s who” and “what’s what” at OLLI South in one place. When personnel changes occur, the handbook remains current.

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## **OLLI SOUTH CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

The Curriculum Committee is composed of multiple sub-committees. OLLI South members are welcome to serve on a curriculum committee that aligns with their interests. Contact the appropriate Curriculum Committee co-chairs if you are interested. (<https://portfolio.du.edu/ollisouth>)

**SUB COMMITTEES include the following:**

**---Alive and Well! (formerly WellAware)**

**---Extracurricular (formerly Interactive Learning)**

**---History**

**---Literature and Writing**

**---Political Science/Current Affairs (includes Economics)**

**---Philosophy, Religion and Culture**

**---Science, Math, Technology**

**---Soci-OLLgies**

**---Visual and Performing Arts**

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Thank you for agreeing to facilitate a class at OLLI South! Facilitators are the strength of the quality product that we offer to our members.*

### **FACILITATOR PERKS....**

- 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
- One free term of classes at OLLI South
- An invitation to the Facilitator Appreciation Dinner at the end of the year

### **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 expectations and guidelines:

- Attend all required training workshops.
- Learn how to operate any audio-visual equipment you use.
- Listen to and respect contrary thoughts and opinions of other learners; agree to disagree. It isn't necessary to convert others to your viewpoint.
- Encourage debate and the challenge of new ideas.
- 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.



## WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM OLLI?

### Support from OLLI South Includes:

- The Curriculum Committee
- Sub-Committee Co-Chairs
- Facilitator Development and Support Staff
- Our technical equipment expert and Geek Squad
- Your Classroom Assistant

## FACILITATOR RESOURCES

**OLLI FACILITATOR MENTORING PROGRAM:** Experienced facilitators are available 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 email the Curriculum Committee Co-Chairs.

### **TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT:**

***YOU are responsible for learning how to use the equipment.*** The AV training is held the week before classes begin each term. You will receive an email with information about the training and the time you will need to attend, based on your class schedule.

**WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS:** We have wireless internet available, but as you know, sometimes it can be unexpectedly unavailable. It is highly recommended that you download any videos you plan on showing instead of relying on the internet for access.

**GREAT COURSES/THE TEACHING COMPANY: CDs and DVDs** OLLI has purchased 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 of classes by looking on the OLLI South portfolio site, listed under Facilitator Aids in the Facilitator Information tab. 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 OLLI South site manager.

**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.

### **PORTFOLIO – WHAT IS IT AND WHERE DO I FIND IT?**

*Portfolio* is a web based program that allows you to post text, pictures, or class information, links to Internet web pages, documents, or other content that is then accessible to class members. It is managed by DU and OLLI facilitators can use it to set up a class webpage.

You will need to instruct your class on how to access the page, so that participants can then reference the content you posted prior to each class.

**Information on and assistance in setting up, creating and maintaining a DU Portfolio web page can be found by contacting the Portfolio Resource person for OLLI South, whose email is listed under the Facilitator Information tab on the OLLI South website.**

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** Please discuss inviting a guest speaker with your site manager before issuing an invitation.

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. 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.
- 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.
- Tell the speaker what materials are being used in the class, i.e., title of book(s), DVDs viewed, etc.
- 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 get their equipment set up. 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.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES:** Outside speakers may be eligible for a gift card (see guidelines below). **Make your request to the OLLI South Manager, with at least two weeks of lead time** to ensure you receive the cards in time. If you are facilitating an OLLI Speaker Series, please work with the OLLI South Manager to coordinate the gift certificate option. Then formally present the gift certificate to your guest speaker during the class.

**\*\*Gift Certificate Guidelines**

A gift certificate may be given to an outside speaker at the discretion of the facilitator. It is not required. If the facilitator would like to include a gift certificate with the thank you note, the following guidelines apply:

- **Amount:** One (1) \$25 gift certificate per speaker. Two gift cards per facilitator per term.
- **Appropriate Use:** Given to a speaker invited to address an OLLI class.
- **Eligible Recipients:** Working College or University Professors or experts in their field who are not required by their job responsibilities to do community outreach.
- **Ineligible Recipients:**
  1. Any government employee speaking as a representative of their government. (If speaking regarding a different subject, they may be given a gift certificate.)
  2. A non-profit employee or volunteer speaking about, or representing, their non-profit organization.
  3. A business owner or representative speaking about their business.
  4. An author speaking about their published work and bringing copies of their book for sale.
- **Any of these speakers** may bring materials promoting their organization or sell copies of their published work, but their speaking time must be educational, not promotional.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **--FACILITATOR TRAINING**

#### ***FACILITATOR DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS***

\*\*For those who are considering facilitation sometime in the future, a workshop on long-term course planning and organization is offered at least once each year. This training will be announced through the OLLI South email process and listed on the OLLI South Master Calendar.

**\*\*At OLLI South we offer a mandatory workshop for facilitators who are new to OLLI South in the week prior to each term, three times per year. If you have decided to facilitate a class, and your class is scheduled, then this workshop is for you. The primary focus of the workshop is facilitating the course. **Questions and concerns from new facilitators are encouraged.** Administrative details are reviewed, and tips, tools, and class management skills are also covered by the workshop leader.**

**\*\*Experienced facilitators also want to share ideas and discuss “what works” and “what doesn’t work”. During the OLLI course year, one or two workshops may be scheduled for those experienced facilitators to meet for such a common purpose. These workshop events will be announced through the OLLI South email process and listed on the OLLI South Master Calendar.**

## **--FACILITATOR DEADLINES**

**After your online course proposal has been approved by committee co-chairs, and confirmed, you will receive an email listing important dates and deadlines.** This email will identify the due date for your syllabus, as well as dates when you can expect to receive your initial class roster, learn who your class assistant will be, and know the room in which your class will be held for the upcoming term.

***Please put these dates on your personal calendar as soon as you receive them.***

## **--CLASS SCHEDULING**

Preliminary class schedules will be determined by the Site Manager after the curriculum for a given term has been finalized. Please clearly note the days/times/weeks that you are unable to facilitate your class in your online course submission. A finalized schedule is created and sent out to all facilitators, once this information has been received.

**PART ONE--  
PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPING YOUR  
COURSE**

## PROCEDURE FOR PROPOSING A NEW CLASS

*First comes an idea.....*

- **propose a class** by discussing your idea with the appropriate sub-committee co-chairs. In other words, get approval before researching and spending preparation time. If you are not certain into what sub-committee your idea fits best, contact the Curriculum Committee co-chairs or any sub-committee co-chair. Those names can be found on the OLLI South website, under the Site Contacts tab.

Next.....

- **submit an *online course proposal***. The proposal form can be accessed from the OLLI South website (<https://portfolio.du.edu/ollisouth>) under the Facilitator Information tab. When completed, it will be forwarded to the appropriate **sub-committee co-chairs**. You will choose the committee under which you would like your course listed.

*And then.....*

- **curriculum committee co-chairs will contact you** about your course proposal and will guide you through the course approval process. They may ask for additional information, make suggestions, and if you are a new facilitator to OLLI South, they may want to interview you as the prospective facilitator.
- **the final decision** regarding the course proposal will be made by OLLI South's curriculum committee co-chairs and the specific sub-committee co-chairs. 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 preparation and printing of the catalog, listing all classes online, and online registration of members, etc. *If you are considering a new class, alert the Curriculum Committee co-chairs as soon as possible.*

## ACCESSING AND COMPLETING THE COURSE PROPOSAL FORM

Course proposals are to be submitted online, accessed through <https://portfolio.du.edu/ollisouth>, under the Facilitator Information tab. Look for the "Press Here" button, and you will be taken to the online proposal form. As an *introduction to the process*, view the tutorial for completing the course proposal form

(the “Click Here” button) and review a completed form. Both of these resources are found just below the course proposal form button under Facilitator Information.

You will be asked for the following information as you complete the course proposal form:

- Description of the course content and/or intent of the course stated in an engaging manner. Include information about knowledge level and class preparation expectations.
- Biographical statement of 60 words or less.
- Title of the course to be listed in the catalog.
- Resources to be used, i.e., books, handouts, DVDs, speakers, Great Courses, etc.
- Class format. For example: workshop, speaker series, discussion, guest speakers.
- Number of weeks.
- Start date, if not starting during the first week of the term.
- Preferred days and times of the week for the class.
- Maximum number of students preferred.
- Fees: list any fees such as materials, transportation, admissions.
- Biographical statement of 60 words or less.
- AV needs for the course.

## **SYLLABUS**

The *optional* syllabus is a brief outline of what you intend to cover each week. For classes using a book or text, note the reading assignment for each week. For Speaker Series classes, include the 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 DVD and speakers, those should be noted for the appropriate week in the syllabus.

If you have material to be read in preparation for the first class, that material should be emailed to participants prior to the first class or posted on your class Portfolio website. (you will be emailed a class roster one week before the start of your class)

Please include your class title, your name, email, and telephone number on the syllabus. The syllabus must be submitted in Word doc format to [ollisouth@gmail.com](mailto:ollisouth@gmail.com) by the date requested for the specific term.

## TEXT BOOK USED FOR CLASS

Prior to submitting a course proposal online, it is very important that you determine if the text you would like to use is ***available***.

Please note in your online course proposal and on your syllabus if you will be using a particular edition. This will enable all participants to be on the same page number when text passages are referenced.

Members may purchase their books from any bookstore or on-line source. If the book is not available on line or in used copy format, it is up to you to request a book store to have extra copies of the book available. Store should be close to the OLLI South campus.

Unless class preparation with a text book is required for discussion, you are encouraged to structure your course as if class preparation is optional rather than integral to the course instruction.



## HANDOUTS AND MAKING COPIES

*REMEMBER PORTFOLIO* – Because of time and cost savings, OLLI recommends the use of **DU Portfolio** or **email** for distributing handouts. If you wish to charge a materials fee for your course, please discuss with the OLLI South site manager.

If hard copies are required for the course, this is the facilitator's responsibility. OLLI South does not have resources to make copies for class.

## CLASS PREPARATION

### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:

Who are our OLLI class members?

- Age 50+
- Mostly retirees
- Want to learn new things
- Want to take 'fun' classes they couldn't take earlier in life
- May or may not choose to participate in discussion or do the homework

**A KEY TO LEARNING:** *Adult learners remember 10% from what they read, 20% from what they hear, 30% from visual stimuli. However, combine these and the retention increases. Seeing and hearing increases retention to 50%. Assume that you will have all types of learning styles in your class. Vary your presentation, include opportunities for discussion, use DVD's, make the class interesting for all.*

### 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 and class reports

If you choose to prepare a 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. **See specific sections under Facilitator Information on the OLLI South website for examples of a sample Syllabus.**

## PLANNING THE FLOW:

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 and/or discussion
- Multimedia – video, audio, internet, PowerPoint
- Stories, case studies and real-life experiences
- Handouts- delivered via email or DU's Portfolio Web Page. Limit paper handouts.
- Participant input

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.

## 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 lecturer – 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. **Note: Thank you to Dick Lamm for your contributions to the next section.**

## THE PREPARATION for a Lecture Class:

- **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 everyone in 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 to 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.

### **HANDOUTS AND NOTES in your Lecture Class:**

Facilitator notes can help to keep you organized during your class, so you are not searching through materials during class.

If using handouts, number the pages of your handouts and clearly identify each one **BEFORE** you copy or email them. This will allow your learners to be able to easily refer to the appropriate handout in class.

The University of Denver provides OLLI with **PORTFOLIO** that allows you to post classroom content or handouts for your class. Using this tool saves you the time and effort of having to make copies of handouts for your class members. Instead, members can download the information themselves before class.

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

**PART TWO--  
DELIVERING YOUR  
COURSE—  
THE CLASSROOM**

## **FIRST DAY OF CLASS**

*Prior to the first day of class, you are encouraged to contact your class members via email. You will receive an email list of all members who have registered for your class 10 days before classes begin for the term. Emailing class members provides them with your contact information and connects you to them as the facilitator. Please remember to use BCC for all emails to class members in order to protect their privacy.*

## **ARRIVE EARLY AND PREPARE YOUR CLASSROOM**

- Consider your room and make any needed adjustments with regard to acoustics, visibility and temperature. The classroom will be set up according to the needs of the morning class for that day. If you are in the room in the afternoon and want adjustments, you will need to make the changes yourself. Class members are also willing to help rearrange.
- Test any technical equipment you intend to use.
- 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 plan to use either of these.

## **CLASSROOM ADMINISTRATION**

- **Class Roster:** OLLI South Management will provide both you and your class assistant with a class roster prior to the start of the term. 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.
- **Nametags & Table Tents:** Stress the importance of wearing name tags and be sure to wear your own nametag at every class. Your class assistant will have the name tents available prior to the start of class.
- **Introductions:** Be sure to introduce yourself - your experience with OLLI, your professional background, if it applies to the subject of your class, and why you are passionate about 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.
- **Class Assistant Duties:** *You will find that your class assistant will be invaluable to you in the administration of your class.*

- **Announcements:** Each week the class assistant will make the OLLI announcements regarding holidays, Lunch and Learn seminars, special event presentations, and social events. Please be sure to allow the assistant enough time for announcements either before class begins or right after the break. Do not wait until the end of class.
  - **Attendance Sheet:** Each class folder contains the attendance sheet. Your class assistant will bring the folder to class and pass around the attendance sheet. They will ask members to indicate on the sheet if they know ahead of time when they will be absent.
  - **Miscellaneous Duties:** Turn lights on and off for video presentations, ensure all members have name tags and tents. Greet new members and orient them to the facility. Find a Geek Squad member if you need help with technical issues.
  - **Email addresses & phone numbers:** Your class assistant will pass the roster around the first day of class to enable the class members to update or correct information.
- **Review the syllabus** with the class if you plan to use one.
  - **PORTFOLIO:** If you have created a DU Portfolio page you, will need to let your class know how to access the information posted in Portfolio. If using PowerPoint or Keynote, consider making a slide with the log in information and password and encourage them to write down the information.

## SETTING THE TONE

- **Time management:** Start the class on time, and don't stop to "fill in" latecomers. Participants will learn that they will miss information if they arrive late. 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:** Break your class at the normal OLLI break time (approximately 10:30 to 10:40 am and 2:00 to 2:10 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 again promptly at that time.
- **Cell Phones:** Remind people to turn off their cell phones, or put them on silent mode.
- **Set Ground Rules for Discussion and Behavior in class:** Setting ground rules for participant behavior helps to create a "safe climate" for participation and discussion. This is particularly helpful if the subject of your class is political or



potentially controversial. While this is optional, you might find it helpful to discuss some simple, respectful guidelines of expected behavior for class members.

- **Discourage private conversations:** This is rude to the speaker and distracting to others. Remind the class of the “ground rules.”
- **Ending class on time:** 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 noting 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.

## **THE PRESENTATION**

- USING POWER POINT, KEYNOTE, WHITE BOARD, OR FLIP CHART: *Remember, talk to your audience, not the PP or white board.*
  - Use DARK colors for text and save red for emphasis – red and orange are difficult to read from a distance.
  - Write large enough or use a large enough font 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.
- 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.
- *MAKING WORDS WORK:* Speaking well is different from writing well. Don’t just read your material. Make eye contact. Use visuals. 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 even 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.

Each of these provides 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 and a deep breath and check your notes without apologizing or “umm-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.”

## **EFFECTIVE FACILITATION**

*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 approach.*

HOW 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.** Refrain from 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 in class** 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.
  - **Use technical tools effectively.** If you are using PowerPoint/Keynote or some other form of visual presentation, supplement it with meaningful input from you. Don't read the slides and don't speak to the board – speak to your audience. Make sure you know how to use the technical equipment before your class begins. **Be sure to attend the AV training that is offered the week before the term begins.**
  - **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?" You 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.
  - **Don't cut the question time too short.** People love to talk, and while it sometimes shortens your presentation, the discussion can be worthwhile.
  - **Give people a chance to ask questions** before moving to a new topic. Don't be afraid of silence; give participants time to think before responding.
  - **Don't call on somebody repeatedly if you can avoid it.** Make sure everyone gets a chance to ask or answer questions if they wish.
  - **Wait for a natural break when someone talks too long,** saying "thanks" and move on to another person. If participant comments are not a question, but the

person is expressing an opinion, you can also say “thanks” and move on. Curtail distracting side conversations.

- **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.
- **ENJOY YOUR EXPERIENCE!** Be enthusiastic and have fun with the class. It will help everyone to relax and participate.

## ***TEACHING AND FACILITATING: The “sage on the stage” vs the “guide on the side”***

Although a good teacher involves his/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.

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.

Setting the stage on 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 you?”
  - “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 **Internet hyperlinks and Google, or Bartlett's quotations.**

## **ASSESSING THE CLASS AND ACTIVE LISTENING**

**ASSESSING THE CLASS:** Are people following what you are saying? Understanding your point? Following other class comments?

**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 hint at whether your learners heard and/or 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 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 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 side conversations as they are distracting.

### **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 answered, other responses 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.

## **HANDLING QUESTIONS FROM THE CLASS**

### **PROMOTE DISCUSSION BY DEVELOPING GOOD QUESTIONS**

**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.

**Designing 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 on 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: DON’T start 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: *“Do you think the economy now is worse or better than what it was during the great depression, and how do you think the methods used to get through the great depression would work today, or were they not effective then and shouldn’t be used now, and, really, doesn’t anyone have a clue what is going on and how to fix it or are we all just dancing in the dark?”*

**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, learn to become 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, or a related news story.

#### **YES, 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 the group to answer questions and stimulate discussion and participation.
- Admit when you don’t know the answer. You can offer to research the answer or invite someone else to do so, and report back at the next class.

#### **NO, DON’T:**

- Fake an answer.
- Ramble on and on.

- Rush to answer before the question is finished.
- Get sidetracked onto another topic unless you ask the group if they want to explore this tangent.
- Engage in a verbal battle.
- Let the questioner(s) take control of the room.

## **HANDLING CHALLENGING CLASS MEMBERS**

While most classes will go smoothly, difficulties can arise. 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; remember that OLLI learners can choose not to participate. If that is the case, don’t push. Listening can be a member’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.

**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 anxious 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. *Please do not challenge a participant in front of others.*

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

--**WHY?** May lack the ability to put thoughts in proper order or may have an idea, but can’t convey it.



--**WHAT TO DO?** Attempt to rephrase the idea to make sense, or ask a clarifying question. Be gentle!

**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 follow this tangent, you 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.

**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 they are.

--**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 everyone 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 your material. 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.

**THE PARTICIPANT WITH A PERSONAL AGENDA:** Occasionally, for a controversial class, a member may be taking the class to try to promote a personal agenda.

--**WHY?** May be trying to convert the class to his or her own viewpoint. May be promoting a political candidate or action.

--**WHAT TO DO?** If this person tries to hijack the discussion in a way that is disrespectful or belittling of other people’s comments, you may have to remind the class about the guidelines for respectful engagement. If the problem persists, you will need to speak firmly to the person after the class session.

**WHAT IF THESE PROBLEMS/ISSUES PERSIST?** *In that case, please contact the curriculum committee co-chairs or the site manager for support in handling the problem.*

### **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 handles the technical equipment, or other learning tools, effectively.

### **HELPFUL CRITIQUES**

**MID-COURSE FEEDBACK:** A mid-course feedback form will be passed out in the fourth week of an eight-week course. This is a simple form that will give you feedback early enough that you can identify what parts of your presentation are not working for class members. *These are for your use only and need not be shared with OLLI.*

**COURSE EVALUATIONS:** **Final course evaluations are emailed to class members immediately after the course has ended.** The process involves clicking a link in the email that participants receive. The evaluation survey is clear and concise and requires a minute or two of time on the part of the OLLI member. Evaluations are then processed and summarized. Curriculum committee co-chairs review them and then send the results to facilitators. They are also willing to answer any questions that facilitators might have about the evaluation process or results.

OLLI participants are usually kind in their remarks, and it is important to learn from your evaluations. 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 QUESTIONNAIRE:** **Facilitator questionnaires will be emailed to facilitators immediately after the course has ended.** This is an important opportunity for facilitators to communicate their feedback about the term and the OLLI South system.

**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.

### **SAMPLE PARTICIPANT COMMENTS:**

Here are some of the POSITIVE qualities mentioned in past OLLI evaluations.

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

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

- Facilitator not prepared, not organized.
- Facilitator promoted own agenda/viewpoint.
- Talked too much and answers own questions.
- Showed impatience with class members; too controlling.
- Digressed frequently and gets off the topic.
- Didn't manage discussion well – let someone dominate discussion.
- Content or presentation boring.
- Could not manage the technical equipment

### **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 the Curriculum Co-Chairs know. They will be contacted and given more information.