



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute



OLLI AT WMU INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Thank you to the OLLI Instructors, staff, the Executive Committee, and those who provided insights and feedback on this handbook.

Several pieces of this manual were adapted and expanded from resources from the Bernard Osher Foundation and other OLLI programs. Thanks to the following universities for materials utilized from their OLLI programs:

- OLLI University of Connecticut
- OLLI George Mason University
- OLLI University of Cincinnati
- OLLI Furman University
- OLLI University of Southern Maine
- OLLI University of Oregon

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WELCOME TO OLLI

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This manual is designed to support OLLI Instructors by providing information and resources about teaching for OLLI and some tools for instructional methods. The primary audience for this handbook is those who have already been selected to teach, although the information may also aid those who are deciding if teaching for OLLI is right for them.

Inside the handbook you will find information gathered from a wide array of sources including OLLI current and former instructors, OLLI committee members, volunteers, and OLLI course and program evaluations. Information from the Bernard Osher Foundation, OLLI organizations across the country, and resources on teaching and working with older adults were utilized in the development of this handbook.

WHAT IS OLLI AT WMU?

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Western Michigan University (OLLI at WMU) was initiated under the auspices of the WMU Emeriti Council and WMU's Extended University Programs (now called WMUx as a volunteer driven, not-for-credit program designed for people 50 and older with oversight provided by WMU through Extended University Programs. OLLI offers lively and culturally appealing learning experiences; the focus is on intellectual stimulation, personal growth, social engagement, and enrichment. While OLLI at WMU is a young organization, its roots actually extend wide and deep within the WMU community. WMU emeriti, faculty and staff have collaborated for years on educational opportunities for mature adults. Due to the combination of a growing desire on the part of WMU administration to provide support for academic activities for mature adults and the continued commitment of WMU emeriti to lifelong education, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute was established.

Planning for OLLI began with WMU emeriti, the WMU associate vice president of community outreach and Extended University Programs. The Advisory Board was established during the summer of 2010 and has focused on garnering support and participation from both the university and community representatives from around the Kalamazoo area.

The purpose of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Western Michigan University is to:

- Provide intellectual and cultural stimulation, personal growth, and social engagement for adults in an informal, lively learning atmosphere.
- Enrich and extend the quality of life for participants.

- Create a community of learners who can share what they have learned and experienced during their lives.
- Experience what so many have learned at over 400 lifelong learning programs at colleges and universities around the world.

What is Osher? The Osher Foundation was funded by Dr. Bernard Osher to support lifelong learning programs affiliated with colleges and universities. The Bernard Osher Foundation programs “targeted more mature students not necessarily well served by standard continuing education curricula.” The Osher Foundation believes that “the interest of older adults, especially those who have retired, is in learning for the joy of learning—without examinations or grades—and keeping in touch with a larger world” (from the Bernard Osher Foundation website). WMU’s Academy of Lifelong Learning became the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Western Michigan University with an initial grant in 2014.

What do we do at OLLI at WMU? We offer short courses in-person or virtual which are divided into sessions meeting one to six times for 90 minutes to two hours each time. There are no tests and no grades, just exploring many interesting topics. Travel programs and other member events are also a part of OLLI offerings.

Who are our members? OLLI members bring a lifetime of experience and knowledge with them into the course setting. Participants are self-motivated, want to be there and want to contribute as well as learn. OLLI is designed for the age 50 and older learner, however there are no age requirements for membership. Membership simply means that individuals are a part of a community of people committed to lifelong learning who are curiosity seekers. Paid membership in OLLI at WMU entitles individuals to a number of benefits and discounted fees for courses and trips and at some theatres and retail establishments.

What do OLLI members say? OLLI solicits feedback from members through program and course evaluations; these are a few of the common themes we hear from members.

- The greatest benefits of being a member are learning something new, keeping the mind active, and meeting new people.
- OLLI members appreciate the stimulating interactions and enjoy meeting others.
- OLLI is a good value for the money.
- OLLI is stimulating.
- OLLI provides a friendly environment.

Who are OLLI Instructors? OLLI is thrilled to have many enthusiastic and skilled instructors serving as volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and talents with OLLI members. Individuals become instructors for OLLI for several reasons. They may have had an interesting career or a lifelong pursuit or hobby and now want to share some of what they know with the community. Or perhaps they were once teachers or professors and miss being in front of the classroom. Whatever the reason, OLLI is always interested in new instructors bringing new learning opportunities and we encourage instructors to “teach your passion!”

HOW DO YOU TEACH FOR OLLI?

If you would like to teach for OLLI, please read through this handbook to develop a complete understanding of the expectations of an OLLI instructor. If you have any questions or wish to discuss teaching and/or your proposed course topic, feel free to reach out to the Coordinator of Programs at any time. Introducing yourself by email or phone is a great way to learn about the curriculum process.

When you are ready to apply, please submit a course proposal by completing the online course proposal form. The link can be found on the Become an Instructor webpage at <https://wmich.edu/olli/become-instructor>.

Proposal Submission Deadlines:

Apr 1 for Fall semester (September - November)	Sep 1 for Winter/Spring semester (February - April)	Dec 1 for Summer semester (June - July)
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Online Course Proposal Form

Once the deadline passes, you'll receive an email confirming that we've received your proposal. All proposals are then reviewed by our Curriculum committee. You'll receive any follow-up questions and feedback and/or an acceptance email within 30 days after the deadline. New instructors can expect to complete a background check form, which is required by WMU. Confirmation of the exact date, time, and venue of your class will be sent by email about 1-2 months before the semester begins.

WMU CIVILITY STATEMENT

Western Michigan University is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that honors the inherent dignity and worth of all members of the WMU community. Respectful behavior expressed verbally, textually, visually, and physically should be the norm in all university communications and venues including classrooms, meetings, offices, workplaces, forums, events, social media and residential communities.

As an institution of higher education, we welcome a diverse range of perspectives and opinions and uphold the importance of civil debate. We fully support the free exchange of ideas and beliefs, as well as the expression of provocative or unpopular ideas. It is through this process that we generate knowledge and deepen our understanding of humanity.

Freedom of thought and expression may create conflict, strong emotions, and divergent ideological positions. While these effects are expected and welcomed, all members of the community have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not harm others nor creates a hostile environment. Behavior that attacks, humiliates, belittles, or conveys hatred towards others diminishes our thriving and safe university environment.

Each member of our academic community is encouraged to be thoughtful and sensitive in their choice of words and behaviors. We should be aware of how our behavior affects others. Furthermore, we carry a responsibility to challenge those who communicate intolerance, hatred and bigotry. Words and actions matter. Everyone is asked to do their part in creating a healthy and positive university community and a culture that truly values each member's uniqueness experiences, and perspectives.

OLDER ADULT LEARNING

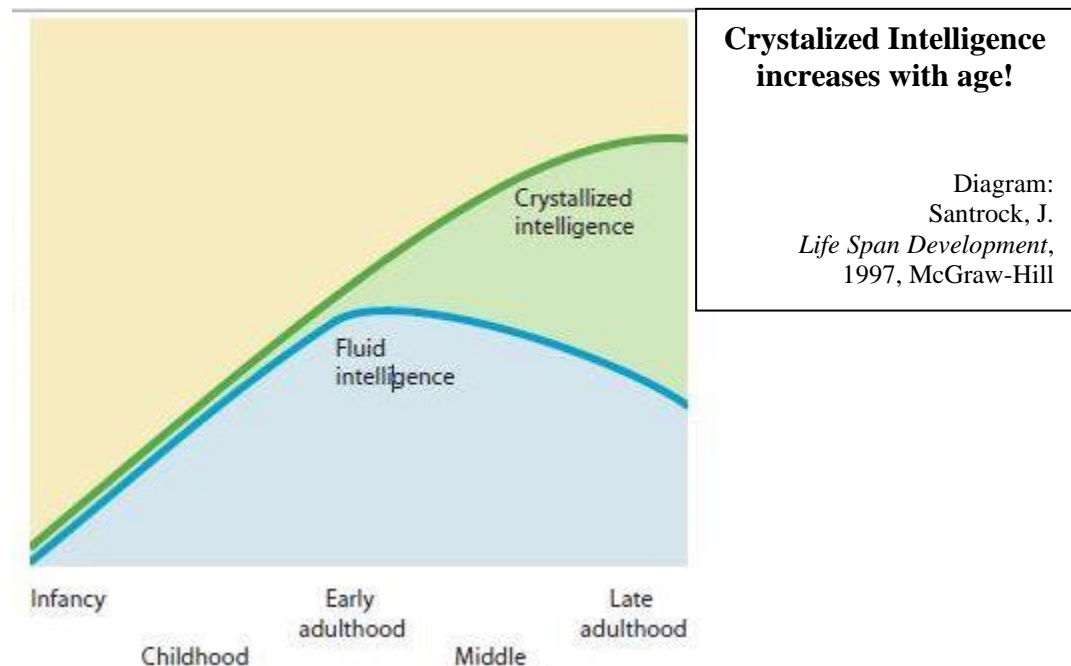
Negative myths, stereotypes and assumptions about older adults and their learning abilities are constantly being disproved by those living well into their late years. Early theories about aging often came from a deficit perspective. One early theory called “disengagement” focused on the older years being a period of decline and actually suggested that older adults should retreat from society. Today we benefit from a more informed understanding of aging and have moved into an era of “successful” or “active” aging, where the emphasis is on living full and active lives well into old age.

Older adults can learn, retain what they learn and benefit from being engaged in lifelong learning activities. Significant age-related declines in intelligence and memory are not inevitable. Bernard Osher, the founder of the Lifelong Learning Institutes, believes this and wanted to encourage older adults to continue learning and using their intelligence, and to maintain physical activity, focus on nutrition and be engaged in meaningful, stimulating activities.

SOME KEY RESEARCH POINTS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT OLDER ADULT LEARNING

- Research clearly shows that older persons can and do learn new things—quite well. The saying “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” may apply to dogs, but not to people!
- While age does bring inevitable physiological changes, often in a declining direction, this does not necessarily detract from one’s ability to learn as one grows older.
- Barring physical complications people can and do have the ability to continue learning, and gain expertise and skills in particular areas throughout life.
- Use it, don’t lose it! Brain plasticity is the ability of the brain to change physically in response to new learning. This can happen at any age. New neural pathways of the brain and connections can continue to grow if you continue to challenge yourself. The more you use your brain, the more cells will be produced.
- Crystallized Intelligence (CI). CI often refers to the knowledge and abilities an individual acquires through education and lifelong experiences, and it continues to grow slowly throughout adulthood. CI includes judgement, verbal meaning, and the application of skills and knowledge to solving problems.

- While some skills or functions experience declines with age, these can be compensated for with CI.
 - “Continued self-directed learning and education can encourage the growth of CI even after age 60” (Lamdin & Fugate, 1997, p. 47).
- Fluid Intelligence is sometimes called “native mental ability” and includes attention, memory capacity, and the speed of which information can be analyzed.
 - Fluid intelligence tends to show declines earlier in life which some call the “classic aging pattern.”



- Since not everyone ages in the same way, the items below may not describe everyone; generally, attention should be given to the following age related changes that can affect the learning experiences of older adults.
 - The capacity to perceive relationships or think in abstract terms changes in such a way that the older adults may need more time to think through new information.
 - Visual changes
 - Hearing changes
 - Energy level (sometimes related to physical changes or sleep interferences)
 - Occasional short-term memory loss
 - External distracting factors may become more salient



TIPS FOR TEACHING: TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN TEACHING OLDER ADULTS

- Lighting - Have appropriate lighting and avoid standing in a glare spot.
- Screens - When displaying a screen consider lighting and glare positioning from the point of the audience.
- Visual aids and handouts - Font should be large and clear; leave enough white space; and minimize the number of words on a PowerPoint screen. Let the *6-6 Rule* guide you: no more than 6 words per line and no more than 6 lines per slide.
- Speaking - Speak loudly and clearly; verify that you can be seen and heard by asking the audience. Consider asking at the beginning of the session if anyone has a hearing issue.
- Where you stand - Let the audience see you; don't turn your back while talking.
- Physical - Be sure to allow time for breaks, stretching and thought.

THEORIES OF LEARNING RELATED TO OLDER ADULTS

Theory, research, and experience tell us a bit about “why” individuals get involved and what brings older adults to educational opportunities. Where the participants in your classes lie on these continuums will likely influence their reasons for being in your classroom and how they will interact with your material. The most important point is that people participate for many different reasons.

Howard McClusky

The field of older adult learning benefited from Howard McClusky’s early work presented at the landmark 1971 White House Conference on Aging. McClusky, a prolific scholar in adult education and educational gerontology, was one of the first to clearly point out that older adults have a desire and need to learn, and that it is different from adults (typically thought of those between 24-50). McClusky shared,

One can teach an old dog new tricks! He [sic.] may not want to learn new tricks or he may think that his old tricks are good enough, but an “old dog” can no longer hide behind an assumed lack of ability to learn as an excuse for not learning. In fact, because of his age there are probably some tricks that an old dog can learn better than a younger.
(McClusky, 1971b, p. 416)

McClusky identified five learning needs of older adults that educational programs can address:

- Coping needs - topics that help older adults deal with the social, psychological, or physiological changes of aging
- Expressive needs - this is the learning for the joy of learning and promotion of activities where participants can express creativity, meaning making, and internal integrity
- Contribution needs - providing opportunity for fulfillment or promoting feelings of being needed, wanted and useful
- Influence needs - helping older adults see how they can assert their own freedoms and rights, or assume leadership roles within their community
- Transcendence needs - activities that promote rising above age-related changes or limitations

Fisher & Wolf (2000)

Fisher and Wolf made a call for older adult learning programs that meet a wide variety of needs; thus, they asserted that we should avoid treating older adult learning as a “one size fits all approach” or overly focused on just leisure or entertainment. They divided the learning needs and interests of older adults into three broad categories:

- Learning for Employment - this is the instrumental or skill building, language acquisition, learning a trade, changing careers or encore careers
- Learning for Inclusion - this is about belonging, being needed and socialization
- Learning for Meaning Making - this is learning for learning's sake or sometimes called "transformational" learning; the category emphasizes self-reflection, self-actualization, identity, and purpose



TEACHING TIP - Consider how your course might address some of these various needs of older adult learners.

THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF OLLI COURSES

Teaching OLLI members is different from teaching in other settings.

Sometimes instructors think that teaching in OLLI is no different from teaching in college, high school, or elementary settings. However, that is just not true. While some elements may be the same, the biggest difference is that **OLLI members bring a lifetime of experience and knowledge with them into the course setting**. Participants are self-motivated, they want to be there, and they want to contribute as well as learn.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS WANT FROM COURSES

Our members have varied opinions about their preferred OLLI experience and have provided us a great deal of feedback through course evaluations about what they like or don't like about courses. We know that each course will be different and each instructor will have a unique style of teaching, and we know that participants' preferences are varied. Below is some information about teaching for OLLI based on feedback and some general "best practices" for older adult learning and OLLI programs.

The dominant reason OLLI participants enrolled in the courses were:

- personal interest in topic
- instructor's reputation

What Participants Love about Courses	Where Participants Say there is Room for Improvement in Courses
Organization of course material and instructor	Lack of organization from instructor
Instructors who involve their participants	More interaction; more conversation; less lecture
Variety of instructional methods Meeting different learning styles	Simple handouts
Use of illustrations, visual aids, examples; keep them talking and moving	More show and tell or examples
Good, instructor-led class discussion	Too much unstructured discussion
Instructor enthusiasm and passion for the topic	Having too much information Trying to squeeze in too much to a session
Instructors that are knowledgeable and up to date on their information	Not having any up to date statistics or references

A clear course description that matches what is done in the class	Content not what expected; the description in the OLLI course catalogue does not match what is presented in class
Seating arrangements so participants can look at each other	Not being able to hear instructor; not using a microphone (when one is available)



Here are some tips for teaching OLLI courses based on feedback from participants.

- **Organization.** Members prefer instructors who are organized; the lowest ratings as implied by written comments in course evaluations were when instructors were not well organized.
- **Clear descriptions and staying on topic.** Participants want clear descriptions of what the course is about and what will be expected in the course. Stay on topic and stay focused on what you wrote in the course description.
 - Look at the OLLI Course Catalog and review your description in the *Course Proposal Form* (CPF). What did you say that the course would be about in your CPF? If you accurately describe your course in your *CPF*, it will help to match participant expectations to reality.
- **Creating community in the classroom.** For many OLLI members, class time is an important social time. Consider what you can do to develop a cooperative atmosphere and feeling of community in the classroom, which often leads to interesting class discussions. Leaving time for breaks, offering the right balance of audience participation or introductions can all help. Talk to other OLLI instructors about how they do this.
- **Instructor enthusiasm and knowledge.**
 - Your passion for and knowledge of the topic makes you the *expert*, but you are not expected to know everything! It's okay to say you don't know but are willing to explore!
 - Show that you are up to date with current information by incorporating a few current references or resources.
 - Remember that at OLLI, members are learning for the joy of learning. Be sure to keep the joy in there.

- **Move from straight lecture to include dialogue and/or appropriate activities.**
 - Avoid a session of straight lecture by including your participants and incorporating time for dialogue, questions, or well-planned, interactive activities. Allow others to be a part of the conversation and allow ample time for discussion. Utilize audio or visual aids, props, anecdotes, and stories.
- **Instructor-led discussions.** OLLI members have a **low preference for participant-led discussions.** This might seem like somewhat of a paradox considering they like interaction, but OLLI participants have come to expect the instructor to lead the course. While encouraging discussion and interaction is important, generally participants do not want to be asked to lead the class themselves or to have other class members leading. Thus, a delicate balance of instructor-led material with engaging questions tends to work best.
- **Avoid unstructured discussions or unstructured group work.** When including discussion or small group work in the session, ensure that you as the instructor continue to lead, set time limits, and be sure that activities are related to specific tasks and course objectives. Generally, participants have reported that they do not enjoy “free flow” conversation. As the instructor, continue to lead the discussion, and avoid letting others take over the discussion.
- **Homework?** While some courses may require participants to read novels, short stories, or watch movies to fully engage in the discussion, generally requiring homework is not favored by OLLI participants. However, if out-of-class assignments are required, please include that information in the OLLI Course Proposal Form and in the OLLI Course Catalog so that learners are not surprised by your expectations.

PREPARING AND ORGANIZING FOR CLASS

Content Planning. Planning adequately for your course will help you be organized, which is important to our participants. Sequence your material logically to create a sense of continuity for each session and the course as a whole. Be sure to have a plan for the class, but also you will need to remain flexible.

- **Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives.** For the overall course and for each session, you should have clear objectives for what you are trying to accomplish. These objectives can frame your entire lesson including discussions. What specifically do you want your participants to take away from the course or session? The more specific you are, the

more focused and clear your session will be. Consider sharing these at the start of the session.

Practice. Practice or rehearsal before a session is never a bad idea; it can help with confidence and with timing. It will also help you consider if you have sufficient material or too much. Usually, instructors have much more material than the time allows. Know your material so that you don't need to read word-for-word from slides or notes.

Audience Awareness and Involvement. OLLI members bring a lifetime of experience and education with them to class. They make connections, initiate related topics of discussion, contribute knowledge of the subject at hand and ask and answer questions. Be prepared to honor and embrace their knowledge.

Visual Aids and Props. Using varied resources creates a lively learning environment and caters to a wider variety of learning styles.

- **You may want to include:** visual aids, props, objects, literary selections, illustrations, anecdotes, modern day examples, handouts, videos, or music.
- **Anecdotes or stories.** You may opt for using anecdotes or stories to illustrate your point. Connecting material to topics relevant to people's lives today usually works well!
- **Engage the senses?** Think about how you might engage all the senses or connect with individuals with various learning styles. Consider how sound, touch, smell, and taste might provide opportunities for enhancing your teaching.
- **Handouts.** Many OLLI members like simple handouts; if you utilize handouts make sure they are clear and easy to follow, cite your resources and respect all copyright laws. Remember that too many handouts can be overwhelming. You may email supplemental material to students. You may provide a bibliography to participants as options for those who want to learn more.

Guest Speakers. If you are planning to have guest speakers, be sure that you have provided them adequate information and double check your plans with them.

CLASSROOM PRESENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS

Class Liaison. When possible, a Class Liaison, who has registered for the course, is scheduled to assist. This is an OLLI member who has volunteered to assist in the course. Feel free to speak or meet the Liaison prior to the start of class. The Liaison will take attendance, make OLLI announcements, remind participants about the importance of evaluations, take a few photos and be the general representative for OLLI. However, they are not there for logistics or technology support.

Arrive Early. Plan to arrive at your classroom with plenty of time before your class is to begin. Arriving early can help you feel less rushed. *Please note that some rooms may not be available immediately prior to your time.*

Set up. Check your room set-up and check your audio/video equipment.

- Test your audio/video aids, slides, microphone, or web links so that you are ready to go when class starts. Most classroom sites have tech support.
- You may want to set up your room in an arrangement that encourages interaction. A circle or U format can be helpful so that the class members can see one another during discussions.
- To reduce visual pollution, erase the board except for the items being discussed.

Welcome your Class. When you arrive early and are ready to go, it gives you time to greet and chat with early arrivals. Establishing rapport with participants and helping them get to know one another is part of the joy of being in OLLI. If you have reviewed your roster prior to class, it will help you get comfortable with your participants and their names.

Opening. Start the class with something to get their attention.

- Consider an amusing anecdote, a joke, or whatever will relax the group before settling down for the serious business at hand.
- Several OLLI Instructors shared that participants like it when they jump right into course content and save participant introductions until after the first break.

Move. To keep your group engaged, consider moving while you are speaking. Also give the group time to move or provide short 'stand up and stretch' breaks. Two-hour sessions should include a 10-minute break.

- It helps to keep participants' attention by movement on your part; perhaps cross to another side of the room or step into the group area to make a point or to answer a question from someone in a back row.

- Avoid standing in front of windows or light source because they tend to silhouette you and hinder visual cues.
- Breaks. Be sure to give the appropriate break so that participants can stretch and move or go to the restroom.
- Consider a brief interactive activity that offers an opportunity to move about.

Eye contact. As you speak, make eye contact with one or another in the class, moving your attention from people in the front to those in the back or on either side. Don't be offended if someone's eyes are closed; they may be listening or even have nodded off; that's common enough for seniors. It's not likely they are bored.

Be heard. You want to be heard and participants want to hear you. Consider your volume, pitch, tone, and speed. OLLI participants share that not being able to hear the instructor is one of the major problems.

- **Reduce background noise** by closing the classroom door.
- Speak **loudly enough** that the entire class can hear you even in the back of the room.
- **Ask** your group if they can hear you! Consider asking for a show of hands indicating how many participants are hearing impaired.
- **Microphone.** You may need to utilize a microphone. OLLI has a microphone and speaker available for instructors to use. Call the OLLI office to reserve it.
- **Face your participants;** do not talk while writing on the board or with your back to the students.
- **Speak clearly,** avoid mumbling; use a natural, normal pace (unless asked to slow down).
- **Pitching your voice.** Even if you are using a mike, be aware that you should keep your voice constant. Speakers sometimes tend to drop their voices at the end of sentences and their listeners miss the total thought conveyed.
- **Vary your voice,** especially if you will be reading from a script. As you read, emphasize the important points; slow down, change the pace, or laugh at your own words if that is appropriate.

Mutual respect. The teacher should not talk down to the participants, although at times you may be unsure about their level of understanding of the subject or a term and may have to ask if everyone knows what a particular term is. On the same point, you should remember that OLLI learners want the teacher to succeed. They will be very understanding if you can't answer a question, if your notes get muddled, or if something

unexpected occurs. Complicated concepts or arguments should be presented as simply as possible.

Avoid bias. The lectern is not your personal soapbox. Neutrality encourages healthy discussion without excluding individuals who may not agree with your opinions.

Clarification and questions. Offer participants the opportunity for information clarification and/or ask a follow-up questions of the group to see if they understood.

- When participants ask questions, it can be a good idea to **repeat the question for the others to hear before you answer it.**

Ending the session. Keep your eye on the clock so that you have a few moments to tie up your points at the end and offer some enticing clues about what they can expect in the next session.

- Don't forget to say goodbye and thank your class.
- Power down any equipment, lock the door (if required), and gather belongings. If participants left anything behind, the Course Liaison can assist in getting it back to the OLLI office.

WHEN THE OLLI COURSE IS OVER

When the course ends, be sure to thank your learners for being a part of the class and OLLI and remind them how they can follow up with you.

- **Course Evaluations.** When your course concludes, class participants will be asked for feedback. As instructor, you will get a compilation of their (anonymous) ratings, kudos, and suggestions for improvements. We strive to send this information to you two to three weeks following completion of the class. Likewise, you will also get an emailed invitation to complete an instructor's survey. Finally, your Course Liaison will also be asked if the course ran smoothly and if there were logistical issues that OLLI needs to address.
- **Continuing the conversation through Special Interest Groups (SIGS).** If participants express interest in the topic and want to continue the conversation, you might consider points of discussion through the development of a SIG. SIGS can meet on a more informal basis. Register your SIG through the OLLI office. Participants must also register for SIGs.
- **Reflect.** When your OLLI course comes to a final close you might want to spend some time thinking about the class, how it went and what you might want to do next time. Also, we encourage you to take time to review the comments from your participants.
- **Preparing for next time.** Take a little time to get your notes, thoughts, and materials organized all in one place so that you can find them more easily the next time.

TIPS ON LEADING DISCUSSIONS*

There's no argument whether OLLI members enjoy diving into a discussion. However, they also respect the time and effort instructors spend preparing lectures and they defer to the instructor's words as to when to participate, ask questions and offer comment. Therefore, the instructor must make clear at what point class involvement is welcomed. OLLI members in a class may have particular knowledge about the topic. In fact, some may know more about one or another aspect of that topic than does the instructor. **As the instructor you should continue to lead the discussion.**

- Consider the size of your class when you prepare to teach. Very large groups may respond better to a lecture format, while a small group easily facilitates large amounts of discussion.
- Prepare your group in advance by telling them how and if questions will be addressed.
- Repeat either a question or response, or both, so that all may hear it.
- Determine when to close the discussion of one topic and move on.

Open-ended questions. An open-ended question calls for thoughtful consideration on the part of the group. Allowing time between the questions asked and expected responses permits thinkers to digest the issue and decide on what to say. Such as: What are some of your insights? How did you see this as helpful/useful? What do you want to know more about? What have you seen/experienced/read?

Encourage inquisitiveness. Statements like "Let's explore that further." or "Tell me more." or "Can you think of an example?" or "How might you approach that issue?" encourage discussion and thought from the audience.

Silence. Expecting a quick answer, the instructor may conclude that no one in the group has a reply, understands the question, or chooses to speak up. In fact, the group members may each be framing a response in their own minds before uttering a word. Give them some think time.

Divisive Statement/s. Not all discussion arises from questions; a controversial quotation or a stated opinion on a topic could result in a spirited discussion as in a political forum, or religious or social situation.

- Sometimes in a situation like this, the leader or a member of the group may take the "devil's advocate" position in order to widen the discussion or cause a more in-depth consideration of the topic. He/she may announce that is the intention in advance or remain silent about his/her personal belief.

- The leader should be careful to maintain control of the discussion as emotions can lead to lack of order, too many persons speaking, and, sometimes, chaos.
- Let it be known that not all questions have conclusions or problems have solutions based on one or two discussions, or ever. Suffice it that these matters were aired and that maybe just one aspect of the issue has been clarified. Participants may each walk away with a totally different sense of what was learned during the session.

**Thanks to OLLI at George Mason for much of the information on leading discussions.*

GETTING INTERACTIVE IN YOUR TEACHING

Consider using any of the following as interactive activities to get your audience involved. Many of these you can find explained further on the Internet or see reference section of this document.

- ◆ Case studies
- ◆ Demonstrations; simulations
- ◆ Small group, well-planned and purposeful tasks
- ◆ Audio/Visuals - music, movies, or engage the senses
- ◆ Role-play or games
- ◆ Participant polling (Polleverywhere.com)
- ◆ Self-assessment instruments

Think-Pair-Share - Think-Pair-Share is an activity where you as the instructor determine question/questions ahead of time. Present the question/s to the participants. Give the participants a pre-determined amount of time to think about the question and answer it; generally, it helps if they jot it down on paper. Then ask the participants to pair up with someone and they each share their answer. Be sure to let them know how much time they have.

1-minute reflection - The 1-minute reflection can be done at the beginning, middle, or end of a class. Select a question/s and ask participants to write or reflect for one-minute on a particular topic. You can collect written responses to gauge where the participants are in their learning process or have some of them share aloud or share in small groups.

Skeleton Notes or Interactive Worksheet - Skeleton notes involves providing participants with a pre-developed handout activity and having them fill in the blanks as you go through the class session. Ideas are to use: an outline with some blank spaces; or use a bingo board; or divide the paper into squares regarding the information presented. This can help the learners follow along.

Hand-held response cards - By using handheld response cards you can keep your audience engaged. You can have red-no cards or green-yes cards and ask questions of your audience and ask them to hold up the card with their answer.

I Learned/Re-learned and I Wish - Nice closure activity either shared or written and submitted anonymously on index cards. Asking for 'wishes' can solicit some feedback that might be negative but that the instructor might be able to address in future sessions.

Picture Prompt - Audience is shown an image with no explanation and asked to identify/explain it and justify their answers. Or ask participants to write or think about it using terms from the lecture points.

Think-Break - Ask a rhetorical question and give the audience 20-30 seconds to think about the problem before you go on to explain or before others can answer.

Quote Minus-1 - Provide a quote relevant to your topic but leave out a crucial word and ask participants to guess what it might be.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

INTERACTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUE RESOURCES

- ♦ Interactive Techniques by Kevin Yee
http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Assessment/content/101_Tips.pdf
- ♦ Preventing Death by Lecture (book) by Sharon Bowman or
<http://bowperson.com/sharons-articles/>
- ♦ The Ten-Minute Trainer (book) by Sharon Bowman

OLLI PROGRAM RESOURCES AND WEBSITES OF INTEREST

- ♦ Bernard Osher Foundation - <http://www.osherfoundation.org/>
- ♦ OLLI National Resource Center - <http://nrc.northwestern.edu/>
- ♦ OLLI at University of Oregon - <http://osher.uoregon.edu/>
- ♦ OLLI University of Connecticut -
<http://production.wordpress.uconn.edu/olli/wp-content/uploads/sites/306/2014/10/Presenter-Guidebook-2014.pdf>
- ♦ OLLI George Mason - <http://olli.gmu.edu/for-our-instructors/>

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