

**Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
(OLLI)**

Facilitator's Guide

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OLLI Facilitator's Guide

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OLLI Facilitator's Guide

**“The process – democratic discussion among equals –
is as important as the content.”**

“Guidelines for Organizing and Leading a Study Circle”

Introduction

Facilitators play a vital role in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) program. Their importance to the success of OLLI cannot be overstated. They stimulate intellectual curiosity, continued learning, cultural enrichment and participation in the varied offerings of OLLI. They are the core element in the success of this organization.

We recognize that our facilitators come from a wide range of backgrounds, interests, and experience. Their suggestions and ideas constitute a distillation of practical experience. Therefore, this guide was prepared, not as a detailed instruction manual, but as an aid. We believe that these suggestions will enhance your enjoyment and increase your confidence as an OLLI facilitator.

The facilitators plan and organize the discussion groups to be offered, and through their leadership work to provide an enjoyable learning experience for the participants. There are priceless rewards in being an OLLI facilitator, such as:

- The opportunity to be of service to your fellow OLLI members.
- Increased knowledge of the subject matter through preparation for classes.
- The personal satisfaction of achievement.

Qualities of an Effective Leader

Discussion group leaders need not be experts on the discussion topic. Remember that you are not an instructor or teacher. Being an effective discussion group facilitator does not hinge upon how much you know, but rather in your ability to encourage member participation and to keep the discussion focused and informative.

The primary role of the discussion group leader is that of facilitator. The facilitator may want to generate a list of objectives for his/her group, such as becoming better informed, understanding opposing viewpoints, making connections between various issues or gaining insights. Group members may be consulted about their goals as well. Each participant should think about what he/she wants to gain from a discussion. With a specific set of goals, a discussion leader can effectively steer the group in a productive direction.

The most important thing to remember is that your primary job is to help everyone in the group express his/her views. You can do this by helping people get acquainted and keeping the atmosphere relaxed. Allow group members to respond directly to each other. Don't feel that you must comment after each statement or answer every question posed. Your objective is to create dialogue among the participants. The most effective leaders often say very little. Rather, they are constantly thinking about how to move the group toward its goals.

Effective discussion group facilitators must remain neutral. Try to avoid expressing your own views and values. Focus instead on the values and beliefs on which participants base their opinions, and make sure that your group considers a wide range of views. Occasionally, you might want to summarize the discussion or ask another group member to do so.

Facilitator Responsibilities

- Facilitators for learning groups with reading assignments should determine well in advance of getting their course approved by the Curriculum Committee that the text to be used is readily available. This is especially important for books published several years ago which may have gone through the “paperback” cycle and been subsequently discontinued by the publisher.
- Write a brief paragraph for the learning group proposal describing the course to be presented. This should include course title, description of course, materials to be used (for example, book(s) to be used, etc.), type of class (lecture, discussion group or combination, etc.). (See attachment.)
- Be prepared to do a brief, casual presentation about your proposal to the Curriculum Committee and to answer any questions about your group.
- Before the session begins, staff will provide each facilitator with a packet of material that will be useful during the learning group. This will include campus contacts for various needs that may arise, and other classroom supplies and material as noted in the Facilitator Learning Group Protocol. It will also contain any announcements about changes that participants will need to know. The facilitator should become familiar with this material before the first group meeting.
- You may want to prepare a work plan for your learning group.
 - If your course requires a book, you will need to break down the reading assignments for each week of the course. It has been suggested by some of the experienced facilitators that reading assignments are best managed by participants if they are kept to a reasonable number of pages each week. Many facilitators have found that a maximum of approximately 40 pages a week is appreciated by participants. Obviously, the size of the book and/or number of books used, as well as the facilitator’s objectives, will influence this schedule.
 - In the case of fiction, and particularly where more than one book will be used, the order of books to be read should be determined. Those intending to take the course should be advised to get well into the first book before the date of the first class.
 - Books will be ordered through the OLLI office after Curriculum Committee approval, and will be available to participants after the enrollment drawing.

Plan ahead. Be prepared to have someone cover your class in the event that you must be absent.

Measuring success. At the end of the course, your learning group evaluations (see attachment) should be completed, summarizing what participants believe were the accomplishments, achievement of goals, quality of the class, guest speaker contributions, positive highlights and what the participants believe might have improved the course.

Advance Preparation

Preparation is the key to a successful group. This is especially important so that participants may get the most from your leadership as a facilitator. It is generally agreed among experienced facilitators that if a text is to be used, the facilitator should have read the complete book and be thoroughly familiar with the course material prior to the first group session. Following are some additional ideas for helping you organize your class.

- Have an agenda and disclose it to the group. Ask the group for modifications and questions.
- Decide where speakers, corollary reading and videotapes will appropriately fit in.
- Prepare the guest speaker with an overview of the class and some of the issues to be discussed.
 - If a text is used in the course, provide your speaker with the title, name of author and general theme of the book.
 - Send a letter of confirmation. Suggesting some questions that the speaker might respond to is also helpful.
- Plan the reading assignment, speakers and audio/visual aids to fit within the class meeting time.
- If your class is primarily a “discussion group,” plan for adequate time for discussion and questions when speakers and audio/visual materials are used.
- Determine in advance if your book(s) and other study materials will be completed in one session or will continue into a second or even third session. If you plan on more than one session, will people be able to enter the class without having gone through the first session? In the event that multiple sessions are planned, continuity in learning is facilitated by scheduling all sessions in one academic year (fall and spring sessions).

The First Day of Your Discussion Group

“Beginning is half,” says an old Chinese proverb. Set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the start. The goals of the study circle should be discussed and perhaps modified in the first session, as should the ground rules for discussion. It is important that participants “buy in” right from the beginning.

- **Pay attention to how seating is arranged in the classroom.** You will probably have to do some rearranging in order to facilitate discussion or to watch a video, etc. It is important that all participants are seated so that they can see each other as well as the facilitator. Avoid arrangements where class members have to look at the backs of other members.
- **Arrive early.** It might be a good idea for the facilitator to come early the first day and “lay claim” to the chair best located at the table so as to be able to see everyone and for them to see and hear him or her.
- **Take time to review with each class the general procedures and announcements** as outlined in the facilitators learning group protocol, such as allowing participants to make their name plates, cancellations because of weather, new member welcoming, etc.
- **Have participants introduce themselves.** You might set the example by starting first. OLLI members are always interested in knowing something of one’s background, careers, education, interests, how long one has been a member of OLLI and why, and why this course is of particular interest. One of the benefits of OLLI is to meet others sharing like interests.
- **Beginning can be awkward at times.** You might start with a statement introducing the course, going over the objectives and presenting a brief overview of the book or material to be used. You might comment on why this particular subject and/or book is of interest to you.

- **Establish your role as facilitator.** Talk about how a facilitator is different from the role of “teacher.” State what the class can expect from you and what your expectations are for the group.

Guidelines for running a discussion group and tips on leading an effective discussion

Leading a Discussion

The goals are to promote thoughtful discussion, to bring people together to express their ideas and opinions, and to learn from others.

The primary role of the discussion group leader is that of facilitator. You are not expected to be the “font of wisdom.” Actually, the best discussion group leaders speak very little, allowing group members to answer each other’s questions and respond to others’ opinions. As the facilitator, you set the tone for the group.

A Few Simple First Steps

The discussion group leader’s first job is to create a comfortable atmosphere for the group — friendly, relaxed, sociable. This atmosphere allows you to raise the kinds of salient questions that will keep the discussion rolling. Keep in mind that the responsibilities can be rotated, giving each member a chance to lead a discussion.

There are a few simple things you can do to establish a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Arrange seating so that everyone can see each other, either around a table or in a circle of chairs. Each participant should know the other members of the group. Introductions could include name, occupation, information such as international experience (travel or study), and their motivation for joining the discussion group.

The next important step is to agree on ground rules for discussion. Establish a simple set of rules, such as:

- Respect all members’ views.
- All members should be encouraged to express their honest opinions.
- Avoid personalizing disagreements. Let members know that you will not tolerate interruptions, labeling, or personal attacks.

These ground rules should be presented to the group. Ask members if they agree with them, and if they would like to suggest others.

Format of a Learning Group

There is no specific format for a group as long as the central component is the discussion. The format is best determined by evaluating your group and its objectives. Feel free to create a format that suits each specific topic to be discussed, and that reflects the needs and desires of the group. For example, invite a speaker or several speakers to one meeting to address the topic. Another week, read and discuss a novel related to the article at hand. Next time, view the television series that accompanies the program or screen a documentary or even a feature film. Be creative in the format, as the success of the dialogue depends on it.

The following techniques are suggestions for starting the discussion and maintaining its focus.

- **Set the agenda.** State the issues the topic raises at the beginning of the meeting. This can be done by the facilitator, a group participant or an invited guest speaker. This introduction may take the form of an oral summary or it may be a written handout listing the issues relating to the topic. This technique is particularly useful in starting and focusing the discussion. Additionally, this can put the participants on a more equal footing and reassure those less confident about their grasp of the issues.
- **Start each session with a brief review of the readings.** This is best done by a participant and will refresh the memories of those who read the session's material and include those who did not. Recapitulation of the main points will also provide a framework for the discussion.
- **Diversify sources of information.** Encourage group members to seek information from as wide a variety of sources as possible and to share the information with the group.
- **Disentangle the issues.** Break down a complex topic into separate parts rather than allow participants to discuss everything at once. This is an effective method for managing a controversial issue, while at the same time maintaining order in the discussion.

Strategies for Stimulating Discussion

Books have been written on the skills a facilitator may use to stimulate group discussion. Not to worry. We'll keep it brief.

- Guest speakers can bring different perspectives to the topic at hand and provide in-depth understanding of the issues discussed.
- Audio/visual materials can also stimulate follow-up discussion.
- Summarize the reading assignment at beginning of class. Point out some of the significant or relevant points the author makes as a lead-in to discussion.
- Frame open-ended questions based on the reading assignment. Some facilitators use the “Socratic method,” which is based on posing open-ended questions and presenting problematic situations related to the reading assignment. “Open-ended” questions literally *open up* discussion. Avoid questions that can simply be answered with a “yes” or “no.”
- Most often, open-ended questions begin with words like: “How...”, “Why...”, “Who...”, “What...”, “Explain...”, “Tell us about...”.
- Offer encouragement. A nod, a smile, a thank you, a follow-up question, e.g. “tell us more,” or “explain further.”
- You might ask individuals for reports, verbal or written, to be presented to the class. These should be short and may provide deeper insight into a specific area covered in the class.
- Reviewing the previous week’s reading and discussion can reinforce continuity and understanding.
- Don’t be afraid to inject controversial issues into the discussion.
- Encourage supplemental reading and research.
- Class members will often bring in articles from newspapers or magazines that relate to the subject being discussed in class. Plan for a few minutes at the beginning of class so that these can be addressed.
- Identify and utilize class members’ backgrounds and expertise.
- Prepare handouts on a particular area under discussion in order to stimulate more focused attention and discussion.
- Some facilitators have found it helpful to provide questions for the following week’s reading assignment as a means to assist class members in focusing on key points.
- Another facilitator has found it helpful to start classes with a colloquy between himself and the author. For example, finding a passage in the day’s text that he can “passionately” agree or disagree with, or bringing a related incident or other author to mind, and reading the passage aloud with his own observations, is usually sufficient to stimulate spirited discussion.

Managing the Discussion

Maintaining control is the key to solving many problems that may arise. You are in charge, so don't hesitate to exercise your authority.

Keep discussion focused on the session's topic. Straying too far could cause each session to lose its unique value. A delicate balance is best: don't force the group to stick to the topic too rigidly, but don't allow the discussion to drift. Most people do not regard a "bull session" as a valuable use of their time.

Draw out quiet participants. Do not allow anyone to sit quietly in the corner or to be forgotten by the group. Create an opportunity for each participant to contribute. The more you know about each person in the group, the easier this will be.

- Encourage those who are shy or reluctant to speak during discussions.
 - Look for those who show through body language that they have a question or a comment to make. A good facilitator has a "roving eye," taking note of what's going on with each class member.
 - Pose a question that draws on personal experience, moving around the room encouraging each class member to participate. For example, "What do each of you remember about living during the Depression?" (Great open-ended question.)
 - Note comments made earlier by participants and refer back to those individuals in order to draw them into the discussion at hand.
 - Sometimes, individuals simply need your recognition and encouragement with a question that will help them get into the discussion. **It should be remembered, however, that some class members prefer not to enter into the discussion at all and would feel uncomfortable if singled out for a comment.**

Be an active listener. You will need to truly hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively. Listening carefully will set a good example for participants and will alert you to potential conflicts.

- Why do some class members not respond to questions posed by the facilitator?
 - Need more time to think, are bashful or think they may be wrong. They have a fear of not verbalizing well.
 - Facilitator discourages by signaling a specific answer he or she has in mind, or simply cuts off participant with correction.
 - Facilitator may talk too much or too long.
 - Facilitator does not pause and rephrase when there is no immediate response.

Do not allow the aggressive, talkative person or faction to dominate. Doing so is a sure recipe for failure. One of the most difficult aspects of leading is restraining domineering participants. Don't let people call out and gain control of the floor. If you allow this to happen, the aggressive will dominate, you may lose control, and the more polite people will become angry and frustrated.

- Deal with those who tend to dominate the discussion. (It's okay to assert yourself here – remember who's in charge.)
 - Know when to intervene (or just plain interrupt). Some strategies:
 - "Thank you, good point, however, so-and-so has a comment."
 - "Let's hear what someone else has to say on this point."
 - "Interesting viewpoint, now let's move on."

- Consider stating, “Please try to wrap this up within the next minute.”
- Draw individuals aside after class, or call them at home, and explain the problems posed by dominating the discussion. Appeal to their sensitivity and cooperative spirit.

Stay neutral and be cautious about expressing your own values. As the leader, you have considerable power with the group. That power should be used only for the purpose of furthering the discussion and not for establishing the correctness of a particular viewpoint. If you throw your weight behind the ideas of one faction in the study circle, your effectiveness in managing the discussion will be diminished.

Use conflict productively and don’t allow participants to personalize their disagreements. Do not avoid conflict, but try to keep it narrowly focused on the issue at hand. Since everyone’s opinion is important in a study circle, participants should feel comfortable saying what they really think – even if it’s unpopular.

Don’t be afraid of pauses and silences. People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help someone build up the courage to make a valuable point. Leaders who tend to be impatient may find it helpful to count silently to 10 after asking a question.

Do not allow the group to make you the expert or “answer person.” The point of a study circle is not to come up with an answer, but for the participants to share their concerns and develop their understanding. Don’t set yourself up as the final arbiter.

Don’t always be the one to respond to comments and questions. Encourage interaction among the group. Participants should be conversing with each other, not just with the leader. Often, questions or comments are directed at the leader, but they can be deflected to another member of the group.

Synthesize or summarize the discussion occasionally. It is helpful to consolidate related ideas to provide a solid base for the discussion to build upon.

Maintain control.

- Discourage private conversations that inevitably occur.
- Suggest that in order for everyone to have a chance to be heard, hand raising would help the facilitator manage the discussion.
- A sense of humor is most important.
- Encourage feedback from class members individually at break and after class. You might find it helpful to talk with those who drop out as to their reasons for withdrawing.

Challenges

While most discussion sessions will go smoothly, difficulties may arise, as they will in any group process. The following are the most common challenges that face discussion group leaders and several suggestions for dealing with them.

Shy withdrawn participants, reluctant to say anything. Try to draw these individuals out without putting them on the spot. Perhaps they need a few meetings to feel comfortable enough to share their views with the group. Try your best to make them feel at ease, make frequent eye contact and speak to all group members informally before and after each session. Look for non-verbal cues that may indicate they wish to speak. Once they come forward with a comment, encourage them by conveying interest and asking for more information.

An individual who dominates the discussion. It is your responsibility to restrain those who want to dominate the discussion. Interrupt, if necessary, with a gentle but firm reminder that you would like to hear from all members of the group. You might say something like, “We have heard from Bob. Now let’s see what Alice has to say,” or “Bob, we seem to be wandering off the subject. Let’s see if someone can summarize what we’ve been saying up to now.”

Lack of focus among participants. Each discussion is different and a lack of focus in the discussion is difficult to judge. If participants have a genuine interest in exploring a closely-related topic and the conversation is lively, you may want to give the members a freer rein. Bring it to the group’s attention that they’ve changed the subject and give them the opportunity to return to the topic at hand. If, however, only a few members are participating in the new subject, leaving the majority of the group feeling bored or frustrated, bring the discussion back to its original focus by stating, “How does this relate to the issue of ...”, or, be more direct and say, “That’s very interesting, but I’d like to return to the issue of ...”.

Someone volunteers information that you know is false, or participants become stymied in a dispute about a fact and no one knows the answer. Ask if anyone knows of any information that contradicts the information put forth. Offer one yourself if no one else does. If there is a fact in question and the point is not essential to the discussion, move on. If the point is central to the discussion, have group members investigate and present the answer at your next meeting. Keep in mind that there may be no generally accepted answer.

Lack of interest, with little participation. This is a very rare problem, but, should it occur, try to introduce a new perspective on the issue. Bring other views of the topic into the discussion, even if no one present holds them. Ask if anyone knows of people who hold alternative views. Ask them to critique these opinions.

Tension or open conflict within the group that may deteriorate into personal attacks. Discussion group leaders must deal with this problem immediately and assertively. If you have set ground rules, remind the group of them and enforce them. Enlist other group members to assist you in this. Most likely, they will be strongly supportive, as they made the rules themselves.

Using Questions Effectively

Ask hard questions. Don't allow the discussion to simply confirm old assumptions. Avoid following any "line" and encourage participants to re-examine their assumptions. Call attention to points that have not been mentioned or seriously considered, whether you agree with them or not.

Utilize open-ended questions. Questions such as, "What other possibilities have we not yet considered?" do not lend themselves to short, specific answers and are especially helpful for drawing out quiet members of the group.

Concluding the Learning Group

Don't worry about attaining consensus. It's good for the study circle to have a sense of where participants stand, but it's not necessary to achieve consensus. In some cases, a group will be split, and there's no need to hammer out agreement.

Provide some time for the group to evaluate the discussion. Ask them to share their thoughts on the process your group used to discuss the issues, as well as what they learned or will think about in the future. This is also a good time to remind the group about the next meeting, the subject it will cover, and the readings.

Close each session with a summary and perhaps an evaluation. Remind participants of the overall goals of the program and ask them whether the discussion helped the group to move toward those goals. You may want verbal evaluations from the group at the midpoint of the course.

Finally, a little housekeeping. With participants' help, return the classroom to its original configuration.

Final Session

Complete learning group evaluation sheets at the final session. Facilitators should stress the importance of completing the evaluation. If class members understand the importance of the evaluations, they may complete them more conscientiously. These are helpful not only to the facilitator, but also provide useful feedback to the Curriculum Committee. Members of the group may offer:

- Recommendations for new courses to be offered.
- Suggestions for new facilitators and how to recruit.

Sources:

"Guidelines for Organizing and Leading a Study Circle." Study Circles Resource Center.

"Great Decisions: Tips for Discussion Group Leaders." Foreign Policy Association.

"VIVA! Facilitator's Guide." VIVA University College.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Videotapes & Resource Material

April 2005

Title	Distributed by	No. of Tapes/DVD	Subject
<i>Great Decisions: 2002 Series</i>	Foreign Policy Association	1	History
<i>Understanding the Universe: An Introduction to Astronomy, Parts 1-5</i>	Teaching Company	15 tapes, 10 DVD	Science
<i>Rome, Power and Glory</i>	Discovery Channel	6	History
<i>Cosmic Questions: Astronomy from Quark to Quasars</i>	Teaching Company		Science
<i>Einstein's Relativity and the Quantum Revolution: Modern Physics for Nonscientists</i>	Teaching Company	4 (16 lectures + study guide)	Science
<i>The Joy of Mathematics, Parts 1-2</i>	Teaching Company	4 tapes, 24 lectures	Mathematics
<i>The Search for Intelligent Life in Space</i>	Teaching Company	2 tapes, 12 lectures	Science
<i>Particle Physics for Non-Physicists: A Tour of the Microcosmos</i>	Teaching Company	6 tapes, 12 lectures	Science
<i>Physics in Your Life, Parts 1-3</i>	Teaching Company	9 tapes, 6 DVD	Science
<i>The Joy of Science, Parts 1-5</i>	Teaching Company	15	Science
<i>Classics of American Literature, Parts 1-7</i>	Teaching Company	21	Literature
<i>The American Civil War, Parts 1-4</i>	Teaching Company	12	History
<i>The Oregon Trail</i>	Trinklein/Boeltcher	4	History
<i>Frontier House</i>	PBS Home Video	3	History
<i>Founding Fathers</i>	History Channel	4	History
<i>The Great Ideas of Philosophy</i>	Teaching Company	15	Philosophy
<i>The Bible and Western Culture, Parts 1-3</i>	Teaching Company	6 DVD	Religion
<i>Greatest Raids: Halt U-Boats in Zeebrugge</i>	History Channel	1	History
<i>Foot Soldier: World War I</i>	History Channel	1	History
<i>A History of Impressionism</i>	Teaching Channel	6	Art
<i>Mark Twain</i>	PBS Home Video	2	History/Bio
<i>Benjamin Franklin</i>	PBS Home Video	2	History/Bio
<i>Dangers of the Ice Age</i>	Discovery Channel	1	Science
<i>The West (Ken Burns)</i>	PBS DVD Gold	5	History
<i>The Great War</i>	PBS Home Video	4	History
<i>As it Happened: The Spanish American War</i>	History Channel	100 min.	History
<i>Othello</i>	Warner Brothers/Castle Rock	124 min.	Shakespeare/ Literature
<i>The High Middle Ages, Parts 1-2</i>	Teaching Company	6 tapes, 4 DVD	History

<i>Lost Pathway to Peace: JFK</i>	Riden Intl.	30 min.	History/Law
<i>Archimedes The Ancient World's Magic Genius</i>	Teaching Company	1	History
<i>On Our Own Terms</i>	Bill Moyers/copy	2	Philosophy/ Religion
<i>Connections 2: James Burke</i>	PBS/Ambrose Video	5	Science/Philosophy
<i>Connections 3: James Burke</i>	PBS/Ambrose Video	5	Science/Philosophy
<i>How to Listen to and Understand Great Music</i>	Teaching Company	18 tapes, 48 lectures	Music
<i>Elements of Jazz: From Cakewalks to Fusion</i>	Teaching Company	2 tapes, 8 lectures	Music
<i>The Self Under Siege: Philosophy in the Twentieth Century</i>	Teaching Company	2 tapes, 8 lectures	Philosophy/ Religion
<i>Detective Fiction: The Killer, The Detective and Their World</i>	Teaching Company	1	Literature
<i>The Life of the Mind: An Introduction to Psychology</i>	Teaching Company	1	Psychology
<i>Philosophy and Human Values</i>	Teaching Company	1	Philosophy
<i>Technology of Lewis & Clark</i>	History Channel	1	History
<i>The Louisiana Purchase</i>	History Channel	1	History
<i>Hopi slides by Kate Cory</i>	Kate Cory		History/Culture
<i>The U.S. Constitution: The Ratification Debates</i>	Knowledge Products	Audio	History
<i>Lawrence of Arabia, the Battle for the Arab World</i>	PBS	1	History/Bio

Miscellaneous Videotapes and Handbooks:

- Miscellaneous Institute-for-Learning-in-Retirement promos, public access TV appearances, etc.
- Kettering Foundation national issues forums & moderator training tapes
- Local community forum “Everybody’s Hometown”
- *Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*, Sam Kaner. New Society Publishers.

Other Resources

The Study Circles Resource Center, a project of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc., is dedicated to finding ways for all kinds of people to engage in dialogue and problem solving on critical social and political issues.

<http://www.studycircles.org/pages/pub.html>

Elderhostel Institute Network is a national organization of independent Lifelong Learning Institutes.

<http://www.elderhostel.org/ein/intro.asp>

Yavapai College web catalog.

www.yc.edu/library.nsf

Edsitement: The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in partnership with the National Trust for the Humanities and the MarcoPolo Education Foundation presents online humanities resources from some of the world's great museums, libraries, cultural institutions, and universities.

www.edsitement.neh.gov

American Society of Aging, the largest organization of professionals in the field of aging.

www.asaging.org

National Gallery of Art Extension program loans teaching packets, films, videocassettes and CDs for all types of art courses.

www.nga.gov/education/education.htm

Arts and Letters Daily, a service of The Chronicle of Higher Education, has extensive coverage of articles, newspapers, magazines, news services, journals, columnists, etc. It covers such topics as philosophy, aesthetics, literature, language, ideas, criticism, culture, history, music, art, trends, breakthroughs and disputes.

www.aldaily.com

Historical research: DoHistory is a NEH-funded website launched by the Harvard Film Study Center. It uses interactive examples to teach methods for doing effective historical research for yourself or a learning group.

www.dohistory.org/home.html

Facilitator Learning Group Protocol

Before the first learning group meeting:

- Each facilitator will be supplied with a packet containing the following:
Class rosters for facilitator/participants, nameplate cardboard and markers for participants' use, plastic holders for name tags, guest invitations, evaluation forms, facilitator badge, and other material as needed to complete a successful group. It will be helpful to familiarize yourself with the contents.
- Reproducing material for the learning group should be done on the office copier, unless other arrangements have been approved. For large quantities, it is helpful to drop off material, allowing several days for the repro department to complete the duplication; otherwise, facilitators are welcome to use the office copier as available.
- If special purchase items are needed, such as books, contact the OLLI office, allowing sufficient time to procure the needed items.
- If special equipment is needed, such as for video or audio presentations, a projector, etc., contact the OLLI office and make the necessary arrangements in advance of the need. It is suggested that these items be tested before the learning group starts.
- A key will be checked out to you if one is required for the room and the audio/video storage in your assigned room, and it will be included in the facilitator packet. You will keep the key throughout the session, and it should be returned to the OLLI office immediately after the final learning group. If you are using a room with locked a/v equipment, the key(s) will be necessary to open the room and the a/v cabinet. Please remember to relock these after use.

During the learning group session:

- The facilitator should introduce himself and distribute the roster of members attending the learning group.
- Each member should introduce himself, and, if desired, tell something about himself. Particular attention should be given to welcoming new members.
- Summarize the learning group objectives: how it will be conducted, what materials will be used, etc. If reports from members are desired, a list of potential subjects would be helpful, as well as locating information in the library and on the Internet. A written timeline is helpful for participants to know what is expected of them.
- Update members on appropriate OLLI activities, such as upcoming events, special programs, etc.
- Hand out material specific to the learning group.
- Initiate the learning group study.
- At the final learning group meeting, ask a volunteer to distribute and pick up the evaluation sheets, placing them in a provided envelope, then return the completed forms to the OLLI office, along with unused material and your portfolio. The evaluations will provide feedback for your future groups, so it is helpful to read them before handing them in.
- It is important that the classroom be returned to its original configuration after each meeting.

Note: Visitors are always welcome at any learning group to audit one weekly session. They may audit more than one learning group, but only one session per learning group.