

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE SEDONA/VERDE VALLEY

FACILITATOR GUIDELINES

WHO FACILITATES?

Those passionate about their subject matter and willing to learn how to facilitate; retired or semi-retired instructors with expertise in their subject who can make the transition from lecturing to facilitating; and responsible and organized individuals who can set up speakers and/or trips around which a learning group is focused.

HOW DOES FACILITATING A LEARNING GROUP DIFFER FROM A REGULAR COLLEGE CLASS?

First of all, there are no tests, no papers and no grades. The facilitators are not paid and offer their expertise from a love of learning and teaching. The facilitator encourages participants to share and become involved in the learning process. Although lecture material, reading from texts, viewing of videos may be included, the learning groups draw on the experience and knowledge of the participants in an appropriate, balanced way. The facilitator is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points. The facilitator makes sure that single participants do not monopolize the discussion, and that friendly disagreement prevails in this active listening supportive environment.

WHY FACILITATE?

Anyone who has ever been a teacher, instructor, professor or mentor knows the joys of turning on others' minds, watching mental light bulbs go on, seeing skills advance knowing that their words or approach make a difference, plus sharing the fruits of their own labors. Facilitating is fulfilling and satisfying. People who never facilitated before can bloom in self-confidence with a little support from others. It's a growth experience and they now "own" their OLLI experience in a new way. Facilitating draws on planning skills resulting in satisfied involvement. Facilitators gain a real appreciation for those of varying views, an expanded understanding of the subject matter, stimulated thinking and meaningful interaction. Besides that, it's fun!

STYLES OF FACILITATING

Note there are as many styles in facilitating as there are facilitators and each will uncover his/her strengths and approaches as experience dictates.

- The facilitator determines the curriculum and provides materials (excerpts, texts, videos, audio, articles, handouts) with specific discussion points to be covered with group participation
- A facilitator may be someone who knows nothing about the proposed subject, but who is willing and excited about researching and presenting the material and the questions that arise.

- When a specific skill is being taught, the facilitator may use the scheduled time to teach and practice with the students. Some skill teaching (beading, tai chi, etc.) is not appropriately shared teaching. Certainly, students may be called upon to share how they were able to obtain special effects, but the instructor in this case will take on responsibility to teach the skill according to his/her expertise.
- A facilitator may make arrangements with local experts to present specific subject matter focused on the learning group's intention.
- A facilitator may use videos around which to focus knowledge and discussion. Videos may come from the The Teaching Company, library sources and the facilitators own resources.
- CD's, audio tapes and records may also be utilized to augment the learning experience and discussion.
- Because of the lifestyles of senior citizens who may travel or have other commitments, co-facilitating is a convenient way to run a learning group. The co-facilitator may be arranged before or once the learning group is established. Another possibility is to draw upon a guest speaker from the groups or elsewhere who would be responsible for a relevant program during an absence of the facilitator.

GROUP FORMATS: Class meetings may be scheduled in a variety of time frames. On the Facilitator Proposal website you are able to indicate the number of weeks, the day of the week and the time of day that is most convenient for you to facilitate the class. Learning Groups usually meet 1.5 hours from four to six weeks and workshops for three to four hours on one day. If you wish to arrange for a field trip experience, please contact the OLLI Coordinator regarding the additional fees that may be necessary.