FRA DISCUSSION LEADER GUIDE

A guide for planning and conducting successful continuing education workshops for professional logging and trucking contractors, logging workers, truck drivers, and foresters based on modern principles of adult education.

FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.
1901 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 303
Washington, DC 20006

www.forestresources.org

Phone: 202-296-3937
Fax: 202-296-0562

September 2019
FOREWORD

Leading Workshops for Loggers, Truckers, and Foresters Using Modern Adult Education Methods

DISCUSSION LEADER'S GUIDE

Nearly every forested state in the U.S. and Canada has Logger Training and Education (LT&E) Programs. Since the mid-1990s, most of these comprehensive training programs have offered both loggers and wood procurement personnel continuing education opportunities covering a variety of timber harvesting topics. And with the recent development of the TEAM Safe Trucking curriculum, there are now many continuing education opportunities for truckers.

This guide’s main purpose is to prepare volunteer non-experts as workshop discussion leaders, since experts in the workshop's subject matter or in teaching adults are often in short supply. Discussion leaders will learn how to facilitate the participants' discussion and sharing of expertise effectively, using modern adult education techniques in which the learners are active collaborators in the learning process.

Curriculum content is crucial to the success of our industry’s adult education programs, but curriculum development is beyond the scope of this workshop. This publication focuses on the discussion leader method of presenting new information to learners and assumes that quality teaching materials will be available to workshop discussion leaders.

This guide is a revision of the (former) APA Publication 96-A-4, *APA Discussion Leader Guide*; 96-A-4 was used as a companion to the FRA workshop video Leading Workshops for Loggers and Foresters Using Modern Adult Education Methods.
## CONTENTS

Principles of Adult Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is Adult Learning?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Learning Concepts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of a Successful Workshop</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader Roles &amp; Attributes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Goals</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to Stimulate Discussion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Discussion Leaders Ask Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Response to Communication</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to Focus the Discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Response</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Response</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions from Learners</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Response</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Gotcha”</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving Your Effectiveness as a Discussion Leader</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Communication</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Discussion Leaders</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Preparation and Rewards</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Logistics</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader Training</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice, Practice, Practice!</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader’s Reward</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Recognition</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION

I. WHAT IS ADULT LEARNING?

A. BACKGROUND

The Greek philosopher Socrates asked questions of the "students" gathered around him. They were tough questions on interesting, important, and complex issues about the meaning of life and the progress of mankind. Socrates did not provide answers to his questions, and the students increased their knowledge by using their minds and their own experience and knowledge to develop answers. Today, the "Socratic Method" can be a guide to us toward delivering effective adult learning. Socrates did not lecture, instruct, or provide expert answers. Socrates:

- Facilitated learning
- Led discussion
- Managed time
- Counseled learners

In our younger, formative, school age years, we learn from receiving instruction, studying textbooks, preparing for tests and examinations, and agonizing over the results of our respective abilities to recall, repeat, and use the information we are required to commit to memory and practice. The lecture method remains the best technique for structured learning. It's often the only way to provide students with information.

Even in a workshop setting where the learners are professional loggers, truckers, and foresters, some subjects can be best presented using the lecture method of instruction. For example, log truck drivers must prepare for Commercial Driver’s License examinations, and all loggers and supervisors must learn first-aid and CPR skills. The lecture method works best when the subject matter is technical, complex, and/or a new area of learning. If you are an expert in a particular subject and have had successful experience using the lecture method to teach adults, you may want to stop reading here! Keep on doing what works for you and for workshop participants.

But, often there aren't enough experts to staff the number of workshops needed to reach widely dispersed individuals in rural or forested areas effectively. We must then rely on volunteers to help. These volunteers may be knowledgeable and motivated to learn more about the chosen subject but would hesitate to call themselves experts. Unless they've had some experience in teaching adults, they will need to find an educational method they can use and be comfortable with.
Over the years, APA (FRA's predecessor) has trained many volunteer non-experts as workshop discussion leaders. This publication will give you more information about the discussion leader type of adult educational system.

B. ADULT LEARNING CONCEPTS

"Andragogy" is the scientific term for adult learning. Since the days of Socrates, adult learning has been further developed and refined through research and application. Here are some widely accepted concepts which have relevant application to continuing education and professional development in the subject areas in which loggers and foresters want and need to improve their knowledge and skills. A learning experience for loggers and foresters will be successful if it can fairly meet these criteria:

1. **Desire** – Adults want to learn! Loggers and foresters chose their profession and have pride in it. A learner-centered approach focuses on the participant's work experience and encourages the participant to be self-directed and responsible for his or her own learning.

2. **Real Need, Real Benefit** - Most adults want a "no nonsense" learning experience. If they don't feel there's a real need and a real benefit, they'll "walk out," mentally or physically. Problems and examples must be realistic and relevant. Adults will resent time wasted, such as irrelevant story-telling, inappropriate jokes, or "I know it all" lectures. Remember, each learner will want to know, "What's in it for me?"

3. If the subject matter is such that gains in production, improved safety performance, better compliance with laws and regulations, increased earnings or profits, better relations with landowners, customers, or the public seems achievable, you're on the right track. Loggers, foresters, and truckers, like all other adults, want to know "what's in it for me?"

4. **Recognition** – Loggers, truckers, and foresters already know a lot about their profession. As adults, they need and deserve recognition of their knowledge. Give them recognition, and they'll share even more of their knowledge and experience with the other workshop participants.
5. **Participation** – Participants want to be involved personally in the learning process. This means that the learning climate must encourage, permit, and reward their personal contributions.

6. **Relevance** – Adults will relate their learning to what they already know, to their own life experiences. New information presented in workshops should be relevant to existing conditions, realities, and their judgment on what's achievable.

7. **Climate for Learning** – An informal environment is best. Tension inhibits learning. A “peer” relationship between the learners and the person or persons who facilitate the learning process must be maintained. Adults may not learn as effectively in a climate in which the “teacher” is perceived as an authority figure, the atmosphere is rigid or reserved, or the “teacher” is judgmental, argumentative, or critical.

8. **No Tests** – A testing/grading situation may be resented and should be avoided in most cases. Learning flourishes in a win-win, no grades environment. However, written or oral “feedback” from workshop participants can help improve future workshops.

9. **Communication Levels** – Professional logger and trucker audiences will range from persons with advanced college degrees to those who left formal schooling too early to develop their abilities to read or write. While relevant printed information should be available for those who will use it, the essentials should be covered verbally. Where words are used in visual aids, written on flip charts or blackboards, they should also be spoken for the benefit of those who can't read well. Don't risk embarrassment for a participant or yourself by asking for someone to write or read aloud.

10. **Quality Support** – All of us view and listen to "high tech" commercial television and internet. We've come to expect information transfer of high quality. Try to acquire and use the highest quality visual aid support available. If good videos are available, use them or the most appropriate...
portions. Often key words and outlines on handouts or PowerPoint (PPT) are effective. When you use PPT or PDF slides, select only those which have a message, and keep them in order. Learn to use the flip chart to write down key points the participants contribute.

11. Variety Stimulates – A change of pace and technique helps. Avoid long videos or slide programs. If necessary, break long visual presentations into shorter segments. Use a variety of learning aids. Plan for and put in place ample periods for discussion spaced throughout the learning period.

C. ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP

What are some of the basic considerations in effectively leading workshops for loggers and foresters?

1. Content – Subject matter content is crucial to the success of continuing education workshops. The subject matter must be such that the loggers, truckers, and foresters will feel there are opportunities to improve their professional knowledge, skills, and business performance. Most logging contractors want to learn about how to improve their abilities to manage, lead and motivate employees and how to build relationships with market companies, landowners, financial institutions, and the public. They often welcome information on compliance with laws and regulations and forestry subjects such as silviculture and forest management.

Logging workers enjoy workshops which offer opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge of equipment maintenance and operation. Procurement foresters should be familiar with timber harvesting topics that affect logging contractors they contract with for cut-and-haul services. All are intent on improving logging safety.

Well-developed audio visuals which apply to the "real world" of timber harvesting can make the learning process much easier. FRA has videos and discussion leader guides which are intended for specific audiences and have specific objectives. Some of the most recent titles are:

- (13-A-1) Woodyard Safety Video
- (12-A-6) Be Seen, Be Safe, Be Alive
- (12-A-2) TEAM Fire Safety Video
- (10-A-4) OSHA Logging Safety Training Video
- (09-A-7) Wood Chipper / Grinder Safety
- (09-A-6) Storm Damage and Salvage Safety Video
- (08-A-7) Log Loader Safety Video for Log Truck Operators
- (08-A-5) Load Securement for Logs: Tree Length and Cut Up Wood
- (08-A-4) Skidder Safety and Efficiency
- (06-A-6) Timber Harvesting Deck Safety
Quality curriculum materials used in workshops for loggers, truckers, and foresters are available from many other sources, including: forestry schools at colleges and universities, forestry extension offices, state logging and forestry associations, and regional/national associations with an interest in timber harvesting.

2. **Guidance** – The very best method for guiding the learning experience is to ask questions pertaining to the key points of the subject matter. The **overhead** question is asked of the entire group. The **direct** question is asked of one learner. Never use a direct question unless you're reasonably certain the individual can respond.

3. **Positive Feedback** – Give "strokes" for good answers and good questions. People like, and need, to be told when they're doing well. Negative feedback will rally the entire group around the individual a DL "attacks" and will seriously, perhaps fatally, erode any further positive learning experience. Look at each learner as though he or she wore a sign on his or her shirt saying, "Please Make Me Feel Important."

4. **Program Faithful** – A good DL avoids "fillers" such as "ice breakers" or jokes unrelated to the subject matter. **Stay with the program!** Stick with the topic at hand, and don't be afraid of ending early.

5. **Impression/Enthusiasm** – A good DL makes a good first impression and establishes him- or herself as prepared and competent but not infallible. A DL's enthusiasm, when accompanied by a positive learning atmosphere and good workshop materials, can make all the difference between a good and an excellent Workshop. Keep smiling!

6. **Environment** – The workshop location and room arrangement is also important and can facilitate the learning process. We'll go into more detail on this subject later on pages 17-19 of this DL Guide.
D. DISCUSSION LEADER ROLES AND ATTRIBUTES

The discussion leader (we will sometimes use the abbreviation: "DL") presents knowledge or skills to adults using techniques in learning environments that are very different from traditional classroom settings. The discussion leader in a workshop setting must acquire quality teaching materials, must have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter, and must actively engage workshop participants during the learning process.

In DL led workshops, the interactions among the learners are at the heart of the learning experience. Following the presentation of new information to workshop participants, the DL asks questions to encourage a discussion about the key concepts just presented to learners. The discussion leader merely steps in occasionally to keep things going, and to guide the experience within the bounds of the subject matter and the allotted time frame.

If the discussion leader finds that he or she is the only one talking for 10 or 15 minutes, it's a warning sign that learners need a chance to give their opinions and get personally involved in the workshop experience. Don't get trapped by the pleasing sound of your own voice.

Following are the basic attributes of a good Discussion Leader:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. DL serves as a FACILITATOR, GUIDE, MANAGER, COUNSELOR</td>
<td>(Not as an expert, lecturer, proponent, or instructor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DL is a QUESTION PROVIDER</td>
<td>(Not an answer provider)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. DL is NEUTRAL, OPEN, INTERESTED, RECEPTIVE, and ENTHUSIASTIC (An active listener who accepts all views)</td>
<td>(Not judgmental, argumentative, a moralizer, preacher, interrogator, critic, acting rigid or reserved)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. DL is a PEER, EMPATHETIC, FRIENDLY, and POLITE</td>
<td>(Not a stern, aloof authority figure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Discussion Leader should thoroughly review the workshop materials.
The discussion leader must serve many roles in a workshop setting for loggers and foresters. He or she should be all of the following:

- **Facilitator** – A good DL recognizes that each learner is an important member of the learning team. Learners do the work while the DL oversees and intervenes on occasion to provide direction. A good DL is a change-agent, not an instructor. A good DL subverts his own ego gratification needs and encourages learners to express themselves.

- **Manager** – The DL generally must manage time and resources, including all the logistics and details of room arrangement, learner comfort, etc.

- **Guide and Question Provider** – When the subject has to do with logging or trucking and the learners are experienced loggers/truckers, they are the experts. A good DL establishes this fact early. Even so, because the DL stands at the front of the room, a knowledgeable challenge can come from a learner. A good DL admits personal lack of knowledge/experience and, where possible, refers to the pertinent content of the audio visuals or resource materials, or places the issue out for response and comment from other learners. Learners will accept a DL's admission that he or she doesn't know all the answers.

- **Democratic** – A DL may begin a discussion with a question that he or she believes is the most important point, but learners want to discuss

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> DL is PROGRAM FAITHFUL (Stays with subject matter at hand)</td>
<td>(Not an innovator, joker, story teller, entertainer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> DL is a STROKE GIVER, a RECOGNITION PROVIDER, and CONGRATULATES participants for worthy input</td>
<td>(Not self-centered, trying to gratify ego or build own esteem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong> DL has genuine respect for LOGGERS/TRUCKERS and LOGGING/TRUCKING</td>
<td>(Not condescending or critical of logging as a profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong> DL is PREPARED (Has reviewed and knows the subject matter thoroughly.)</td>
<td>(Doesn't “wing it,” bluff it through, or read from a script or manual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.</strong> DL is COMFORTABLE (Patient, relaxed, unflappable, waits for response)</td>
<td>(Not nervous, fidgety, hyper, insecure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.</strong> DL is ACTIVE and an ACTIVE LISTENER (Stands and moves, maintains eye contact, stays “tuned in” to participants' contributions)</td>
<td>(Doesn’t sit behind a table, stand behind a lectern, freeze in position, or get lost in space)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
something else. In adult education, a democratic approach has been proven to achieve more positive results. As long as the discussion relates to the subject matter, a DL gives up the need to control. However, a DL may have to be autocratic when there’s a time shortage problem.

- **Flexible** – When learners are having a hot and heavy discussion about a key point, a good DL doesn't jump in and take control. When it's going good, let it flow!

- **Counselor** – On occasion, a learner brings up an issue that is not easy for the DL to resolve. Often, the learner really only wants someone to listen for a few minutes. If the DL can help, he or she should do so. If not, a good DL will solicit responses from other learners. In some cases, just listening to the problem and admitting that the DL can't solve the issue are all that's possible.

- **Learner** – A good DL can learn from the learners, should always be open to this opportunity, and should recognize and give credit for good learner input.

- **Human Being** – A poor DL acts as though he or she were doing the learners a favor. A good DL is empathetic with the learners. Remember, learners are human too. They will generally understand, forgive, and survive the DL’s mistakes.

- **Receptive** – The DL by demeanor, vocal quality, facial expression, and posture indicates receptiveness to learner input. Even when a learner's response is negative, off track, or indicates a "hidden agenda" the DL accepts and recognizes the learner's willingness to contribute.

- **Businesslike** – All learners are present at the workshop to learn. The business at the workshop is timber harvesting, and the business of learning is serious, important, and in the participant's and the general public's interest.

E. **WORKSHOP GOALS**

In summary, the best adult education approach says, "Here is some information from your professional peers; you will take it and use it if you believe it will benefit you." The bottom line is, the educational experience is successful if the learner is a changed person as a result of the process.

The goal of many workshops for loggers, truckers, and foresters is to induce changes in the knowledge, perception, or behavior of workshop participants, not just to "expose" people to information or to "cover" a subject.
But, as the old saying goes, "If the student hasn't learned, the teacher hasn't taught." What's needed for effective continuing education and professional development programs for loggers and foresters is a trained, motivated, and prepared discussion leader! We want you to be that person!

II. **HOW TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION**

Tell the audience up front, in your introductory remarks, that they're the experts at their profession, not you (unless you really are in their profession). You'll be asking questions and hope they'll provide answers so everyone can learn from each other.

There is no need for you to overstress the learners' participatory role. The subject matter and visuals should be such that they will interest and excite workshop participants, who will express themselves even if uninvited. A common problem is two, three, or four learners trying to participate at the same time.

A. **EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION LEADERS ASK QUESTIONS**

There's no better way to get learners involved than by asking questions. The discussion leader's questions should initiate answers which stimulate the learners' discussion and enrich the learning experience. The following questioning techniques provoke thinking, challenge beliefs, and promote discussion.

1. **Overhead** questions are asked of the whole audience and are a good way to begin a discussion. By asking overhead questions, the DL does not put anyone "on the spot" to answer his or her question, because any learner may respond. As learners answer the DL's overhead questions, the DL can look for other interested, involved learners to ask a follow-up question using a . . .

2. **Direct** question. Often, you can spot sufficient interest by observing the learner's posture and facial expressions. Direct questions should be evenly distributed, but start out with someone who "looks" ready to answer. Go direct if response is slow to an overhead question.

   Shift back and forth between overhead and direct questions--it adds variety and stimulates discussion. **Remember:** learners should have a reasonable chance of answering your questions.

3. **Open** questions invite responses from workshop participants. A good open question begins with **Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, and If.** A very
good lead in for an open question is, "What is your opinion of...?"

4. Closed questions should be avoided. A closed question is one which will logically get either a "Yes" or "No" response. Since further comment or discussion isn't likely, closed questions tend to limit and stifle the discussion.

B. GOOD RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

1. Active Listening – A good discussion leader actively receives answers. Look directly at the person who answers your question. Smile and maintain eye contact. It's a good idea to walk toward the answer provider. This will let the respondent know you're interested in the answer. Your posture, facial expression, hands, and arms should let learners know you will actively receive and welcome all answers.

2. Positive Feedback – Positive response to a learner's positive communication is easy. When the communication is negative or off-course, the DL can:

   • ask a friendly, open question;
   • ask other learners how they'd respond;
   • admit the lack of an answer.

The DL should accept all input from learners. Arguing with, lecturing, or correcting one participant will cause the group to sympathize with the participant under "attack" from the "power figure" (discussion leader).

In our experience facilitating and observing workshops over many years, most learners give POSITIVE, USEFUL, and INTELLIGENT responses to a DL's questions. A good DL REWARDS learners who provide positive responses. An extra wide smile can show appreciation. It helps to say "Thank you," "That's an interesting answer," or "Hey, here's an idea we can all learn from."

But, discussion leaders who are just about to lead their first workshop, often worry about "problem responses." With up to 50 participants in the room, you may get some input that isn't positive or helpful. Let's look at some unusual— but possible—situations which need special attention.

III. HOW TO FOCUS THE DISCUSSION

How can a discussion leader keep the participant's attention focused on the subject matter of the workshop? Preparation is important. You should divide the subject matter or visual aids into short segments. Examine each program
segment and decide on a few questions about the subject which are likely to interest loggers and stimulate discussion. Make sure in your mind that the learners will have a reasonable chance of answering your questions.

A. POSITIVE RESPONSE

Most participants will give you a positive response. Loggers, truckers, and foresters want to learn, want to be involved in the learning process, and enjoy the chance to provide good, supportive information. A good DL will recognize a positive response by smiling at the respondent, nodding affirmatively, or by saying something like "Thank you for sharing that valuable information with us."

Flip charts are wonderful tools! You can use a few titles to organize your questions and when you get answers, write down a few words to record them. This will serve as a form of recognition for the answer-provider and also help keep the discussion on track, avoiding unnecessary repetition.

Sometimes you will receive too much positive response. Often, several learners will try to speak at the same time and you'll have to step in and set some priorities by saying "Let's hear what ____ has to say first and then give others a chance to provide their opinions." Permit the discussion to continue. Only jump in and take control when you risk running out of time to cover the key points from each workshop program segment.

B. SLOW RESPONSE

Response to an early overhead question may be slow. A period of silence of only a few seconds may seem like a very long time to you. Wait, look at your audience in a friendly way, move around. Within 30 seconds someone will answer your question. Remember, the audience can't stand silence very long either.

Don't rush the process and don't answer the question yourself unless all else
fails. Here are the steps to follow if you feel answers are slow in coming:

1. First, rephrase an overhead question or break it down into smaller parts.

2. Ask the question directly to someone who appears interested.

3. Wait at least 30 seconds.

4. Answer yourself only as a last resort. If you provide the answer early on, you may lose your discussion leader status, and the learners may decide you don't really want their opinions after all.

C. QUESTIONS FROM LEARNERS

When learners ask questions, a good DL should not step into the role of an expert by answering questions, but instead should try to get an answer from another learner. Solicit comments on both the question and the potential answers. Do not evade the question or "put down" the questioner. If you say, "We'll get some answers to that question later in the workshop" make sure you do. It's far better to handle questions as they arise even if they're more relevant later on in the workshop. If the question is one to which you and the other learners really don't have an answer, say so, and ask for the opportunity to seek an answer and relay it back to the learner in the near future.

D. PROBLEM RESPONSE

Getting learners involved also opens the door for some "problem" responses. Even if the response is negative, show the learner you appreciate his willingness to speak up by responding in a neutral way, i.e., "I hear and understand what you're saying."

This doesn't mean you agree with or support his answers. Above all, don't "lean" on a negative respondent. Don't:

- Warn
- Threaten
- Lecture
- Criticize
- Ridicule
- Interrogate
- Preach
- Moralize
- Judge
- Disagree
- Probe
- Criticize
- Interrogate

Since the whole group will rally around the person a discussion leader "attacks," such responses can erode or destroy any further positive learning experience.
After you've recognized—but not agreed with—a negative response, pose the
response as a question either to the group or to another person. You'll more
than likely get a positive view from someone else.

Here are three types of problem responders a good DL should recognize and
learn to manage.

1. **The Clown** – A little humor helps, but the clown often carries it too far. In
the clown's effort to be heard, the humor can become ill-fitting, irritating,
irrelevant, or even gross. Don't reward inappropriate attempts at humor.
Try to tap into and reward this person's serious side.

2. **Monopolizers** – The monopolizer may dominate a discussion to the extent
that other learners are unable to contribute to the discussion. This learner
(1) actually knows a lot, (2) wants to help, (3) is enthusiastic, (4) is
impatient to move on, (5) has a “know it all” personality, (6) wants to be
the leader of the group, or (7) has a strong need for recognition. Here are
the steps you can take to deal effectively with monopolizers:

   - Be patient, recognize the contribution, and call on someone else when
     the learner pauses to take a breath.

   - If the monopolizer persists, politely ask for "equal time" for others in the
     room. Work to establish an equal time policy early in the program and
     stick with it.

   - If that doesn't work, wait the person out. Sooner or later, another
     participant will step in and restore democracy.

3. **Side-Trackers** – The side-tracker's response is irrelevant to the subject
matter. This learner may (1) not understand the objectives, (2) want to
avoid the topic, (3) have difficulty concentrating, (4) want other
information, (5) have a "hidden agenda," or (6) perhaps be angry about
something and is looking for an audience. Examples are:

   "If I made more money, I could afford to do these things."

   "I've been on quota for three months and don't need to learn how to
   increase production."

   "Instead of complying with that law, we ought to go to Congress
   and get it changed."

   "If I could afford to hire smarter people I might be able to improve
   safety on my job."
Here are a few tips for handling side-trackers that have proven successful:

- Listen politely to what the side-tracker says and recognize his or her response without agreeing.
- Politely tell these learners that their responses are "outside the scope" of this program or workshop.
- Ask an "on subject" question to the entire group to get the discussion back on track.
- If the side-tracker persists, offer to discuss the problem with the person during the next break.
- If that doesn't work, there is no easy way out—you'll just have to let the side-tracker get it off his or her chest and return to the program when he or she finally wears out.

E. NO RESPONSE

Silent individuals (no response) could be (1) bored, (2) disinterested, (3) have trouble understanding, (4) have impaired hearing, or (5) feel he or she can't make a contribution. The non-responder could (6) feel he or she doesn't "belong," (7) be a slow thinker, (8) or just not like to talk. Look for ways to involve these folks, but don't force the issue. Don't accuse them of not saying enough! If you really want to help this hesitant or shy person to participate, socialize with him or her during the break. It might have an encouraging impact later.

F. "GOTCHA"

Another problem can arise when you make a mistake and the participants know it and challenge you. Admit you were wrong, apologize, and get on with the program. The learners will understand, forgive, and forget. They're human too, and we all make mistakes.

A good DL at all times must respect the members of the group as individuals. Remember, their reasons for acting as they do, and saying what they do, are valid to them.
IV. IMPROVING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AS A DISCUSSION LEADER

By improving your verbal and non-verbal communication skills, you can improve your effectiveness as a discussion leader. Here are a few tips:

A. POSTURE

Try to avoid negative postures such as:

- crossing your arms in front of you.
- swinging hands behind your back.
- putting hands in your pockets.
- putting hands over your crotch in "fig leaf" fashion.
- playing with a pencil or marker.

These are clues to your audience that you're insecure, uncertain, or not interested.

Use a positive posture such as: standing erect, arms outspread, and leaning forward slightly to display confidence and friendliness toward the workshop participants.

B. POSITION

When leading the discussion stay out in front in full view of all participants. Don't "hide" behind a table or lectern for more than a minute or two. Vary your position. When you are working from an open end of a "U" shaped table formation, get into the opening and approach persons who are responding as a form of recognition. Stay active. Keep moving. Work the crowd! Never try to lead a discussion from a seated position. Try not to lean on a lectern, table, flip chart easel, or other solid object for more than a few moments.

By using the "open" posture and varying your position on your "stage" in the open area created by the "U" formation of tables behind which learners are seated, you'll help generate and hold interest and enthusiasm and facilitate active learner discussion and sharing.

C. VERBAL COMMUNICATION

As you ask learners questions and keep the discussion "on track," your verbal delivery should include the following characteristics:

1. Speak up (normal to slightly loud) and maintain eye contact with the
learners. Vary the pitch of your voice, but be distinct.

2. Don't speak too fast or too slowly.

3. Use correct and natural grammar. (Don't "talk down" to any audience.)

4. Use lots of illustrations, but only those the learners can relate to.

5. Avoid long statements or speeches. Keep it simple!

6. Don't read aloud. (Use an outline if you need it to stay on course.)

7. Cut "er," "ah," and "um" from your word list.

8. Smile frequently.

It's important how you begin the workshop. Don't tell the learners you're nervous, never done this before, haven't prepared yourself, or wish someone else was the discussion leader. They'll believe you.

When you begin well, you have a good chance of staying on track throughout the workshop. Your positive and empathetic demeanor will help learners feel comfortable and will encourage them to regard you as a peer rather than as an authority figure.

D. TEAM DISCUSSION LEADERS

New discussion leaders may feel more comfortable if they can "team up" together, using two discussion leaders to manage a workshop.

The discussion leaders should meet in advance and review the workshop materials to become familiar and comfortable with them. They can then divide the subject matter into short segments and agree who should cover each part.

With two discussion leaders it's possible to use "SAVE ME" techniques, which can work two ways. At any given time during a workshop, one DL is ACTIVE while the other is PASSIVE. Here are the two "SAVE ME" opportunities.

1. Passive Savior – The active DL is having a problem such as running over on time, losing the pace, forgetting the questions, ignoring a learner eager to answer, or whatever. The passive DL standing off to one side is able to see and hear the problem and is also free to think of a solution. The passive DL steps forward, poses a question, and the other DL steps to the sidelines to recover and assume a passive role. The learners will think you
had planned the switch!

2. Pass-the-Ball/Save Me – The active DL gets bogged down, weary, needs a break. The active DL turns to the passive DL and says, "At this point, my partner will lead the discussion." The formerly passive DL steps forward and takes over.

If these "SAVE ME" techniques are going to work, both discussion leaders have to be alert to the possibility and be ready for a spontaneous change in roles. The process does work and the switches between discussion leaders enliven the workshop, provide variety, and keep the pace and quality of the learning experience at good levels.

V. WORKSHOP PREPARATION AND REWARDS

A. WORKSHOP LOGISTICS

There are a lot of steps to be taken in preparing for a successful workshop experience. A good DL should take the responsibility to make sure that the physical learning environment is as conducive to learning as possible. Similarly, when a host invites guests to his or her home, every step is taken to be sure they are comfortable. Here are the basic physical considerations:

1. Room Size and Location – The room should be selected so that workshop participants are not crowded, even if the only practical option is to reduce the number of persons invited. It's always better to have too much rather than too little room (a 40 foot by 80 foot room is ideal for 50 participants).

Of course, a central location will serve to minimize the travel time for learners, but you'll be surprised how far adults will travel to be part of a worthy learning experience.

Try to reserve the location for set up purposes late on the day immediately before the day of the workshop. (It takes up to two hours to set up when everything goes right and you're not missing anything.) If the room is booked by someone else for the prior day, you'll want to get access early on the morning of the workshop to set up.

Successful workshops have been held in schoolrooms, church social halls, equipment dealer garage areas, hunting lodges, fraternal organization buildings, and firehouses. Even where the facilities are marginally suitable, as is often the case in very rural areas, a successful workshop for loggers, truckers, and foresters is achievable in whatever site is available.
If the workshop is for truck drivers or equipment operators, you may need an area outside the workshop room to park the equipment for use during hands-on practice of driver or operator equipment inspection methods.

2. **Room Layout** – A room measuring 40 feet by 80 feet with a 14 foot ceiling is ideal. Here’s a description of the recommended room layout.

   The “front” of the room should be opposite the door where participants will enter and depart. Seating is best in a "U" shape open at the front of the room, i.e., 18 chairs at the outside of each "leg" of the "U" and 14 chairs at the base. Observers should sit at tables and chairs located at the back of the room. Tables are needed at the side of the room for coffee and refreshments.

   A separate registration table near the door is very useful. There’s a sketch in the Appendix on page A8.

   A "U" shaped arrangement of tables and chairs with audio-visual equipment located at the open end of the "U" will provide the best visual aid viewing situation, help stimulate discussion from all in attendance, and give the DL the best opportunity to interact with participants and manage the resource materials.

   Observers present during workshop sessions should be seated apart from the learners at the rear of the room and asked to refrain from active participation in the workshop and discussion.

3. **Audio-Visual Equipment** – Most workshops for loggers, truckers, and foresters use videos or PowerPoint slides as an integral part of the learning experience. A room with windows that can be darkened with existing curtains, blinds, or shades is important. Otherwise, you may need to devise some ingenious method to darken the room for effectively viewing visual aids. A high ceiling is helpful for ideal A/V projection.
Your workshop may require several types of A/V equipment including: DVD player, laptop computer or smartphone, projector, projection screen, table or cart for A/V equipment, extension cords, and power strip.

Remember, set up and test everything in advance, to ensure that your A/V equipment is in proper working order.

4. **Meals and Breaks** – With a full-day workshop, you will need to plan for lunch and refreshments. When the site selected is a hotel or motel, there will probably be meal services available. In other less structured settings you may have to contract with a caterer. In good weather, participants will enjoy eating outside. In some locations it’s easiest to let participants go off for lunch independently but you may lose some time if the local eating places are overwhelmed by the unexpected number of customers. We urge you to do the best you can with what’s available and within the budget.

It's an ideal situation when lunch can be served in a room other than the one where the workshop is being conducted. You will avoid the lost time and distraction which occurs when tables have to be set and then cleared after lunch.

It is strongly recommended that alcoholic beverages not be served because participants will likely be driving home after adjournment.

5. **Invitation** – Letters of invitation or other notices should be clear about times, dates, locations, costs, and the objectives.

6. **Registration** – An advance sign-up period (with advance fee collection if applicable) helps to ensure that the right number of learners will show up. And you’ll have their name tags and tent signs prepared in advance. When you’re prepared for 50, and either 10 or 90 show up, you neglected this important step in your planning process.

A well-organized registration procedure is essential in preparing for a successful workshop.
Unfortunately, no matter how much advance work has been done to get the learners' names, some won't show, and you'll get some substitutions and last minute walk-ins you weren't expecting. Be sure to have blank name badges and tent cards available.

Discussion Leaders and volunteer helpers should arrive on site at least an hour early to manage registration. A registration table is best set up near the room entry door. Registration materials, name tags, and tent cards should be clipped together and arranged alphabetically on the registration table. This will expedite the registration process and it's important to start the workshop on time. Having coffee, water, or other refreshments available as participants arrive seems to work well to establish a friendly, informal atmosphere.

7. **Sponsorship** – Workshops for loggers, truckers, and foresters are often sponsored by a trade association such as a state/local logging or forestry association, but also could be offered by a forestry extension agency, insurance broker, or other organization with an interest in timber harvesting.

Sponsorship of logger workshops by an individual forest products company is not always advisable, because it could lead to unwanted inferences about the independent contractual relationship between purchasers and sellers. To minimize confusion, all written material about the Workshop should identify the sponsoring organization or organizations.

8. **Budgeting** – To defray the cost of meals, refreshment breaks, A/V equipment rental, room rental and set-up fees, certificates, handouts, etc., you may need to prepare a budget estimate and charge a registration fee. Simply add up your estimated expenses and divide by the estimated (or minimum) number of workshop participants.

Charging a nominal registration fee can greatly improve the accuracy of your estimated attendance figures, since participants who register and pay in advance are more likely to attend.

9. **Support Materials** – Following is a sample list of materials you may need for a workshop in addition to A/V equipment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flip Chart and Easel</td>
<td>Handout Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking Pens</td>
<td>Paper Pads/Pencils for Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Tags</td>
<td>Masking Tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent Cards</td>
<td>Coffee or Other Beverage Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition Certificates</td>
<td>Duct Tape (to tape down extension cords to minimize a tripping hazard)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a good learning and sharing environment is no accident. Placement of seats, tables, and screens should facilitate easy viewing by the learners. Seemingly small details like seating arrangements, water and glasses on the tables, name tags and tent cards, etc. really make a difference.

B. DISCUSSION LEADER TRAINING

Frequently, where many workshops are planned or there's a major multi-subject continuing education program in the making, a training session for people who would like to serve as discussion leaders is an efficient way to prepare them to lead workshops for loggers, truckers, and foresters.

Those who wish to serve as discussion leaders should be mailed or e-mailed this DL Guide in advance of the group training/practice session. Inexperienced discussion leaders are encouraged to observe a more experienced DL facilitating a workshop to better prepare themselves. Remember: The DLs must know their materials, rehearse, and rehearse some more.

C. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Practice is needed to become a good discussion leader. Discussion leaders in training should do some role-playing to try out what they've learned, prior to leading an actual workshop. A two-person team should serve as discussion leaders while the others step into the role of participants.

Your practice could include these features:

- Encouraging participants through overhead and direct questions.
- Practicing using open questions.
- Handling negative or off-track responses.
- Handling monopolizers.
- Correcting distracting habits in speech and stance.
- Recognizing good responses and not-so-good responses.
- Handling a "Gotcha."
- Avoiding giving an answer, when you really want one from a participant.

Those who are role-playing as participants should try to come up with both positive and negative responses, stay in the role, and at the end of the practice provide constructive criticism to the discussion leaders in training.

After the practice team has been critiqued, they assume a participants' role while two others practice their skills.
The practice sessions will make you feel more comfortable with the DL educational method. You'll also learn much from the feedback you'll receive from fellow discussion leaders in training.

D. DISCUSSION LEADER’S REWARD

Your major reward will be improved learner knowledge, skills, and behavior. You'll get good feelings back from the learners. This is the ultimate personal reward. When you find comfort with the role of discussion leader, odds are you'll find use for your talents elsewhere. All of us need to communicate positively and effectively with others. Most of the adult education principles used by effective discussion leaders can be easily transferred to our day-to-day interactions with people in both our professional and personal lives.

E. PARTICIPANT RECOGNITION

At the end of the workshop, participants should receive a certificate of completion. Often a small gift, such as a cap or other appropriate reminder of the workshop experience, is a nice "extra touch." Where appropriate, group photos or individual photos should be taken. As a follow up, some sponsors develop press releases for local newspapers including photos of participants.

Providing recognition helps participants value and remember a workshop experience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chart 1</td>
<td>Adult Learning Concepts</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 2</td>
<td>Facilitator vs. Instructor</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 3</td>
<td>Facilitator Attributes</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 4</td>
<td>Question &amp; Answer Techniques</td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 5</td>
<td>Handling Problem Responses</td>
<td>A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 6</td>
<td>Posture Position &amp; Verbal Communication</td>
<td>A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 7</td>
<td>Workshop Logistics</td>
<td>A7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 8</td>
<td>Workshop Room Arrangement</td>
<td>A8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHART 1

ADULT LEARNING

- Desire – adults want to learn
- Real Need – Real Benefit
- Recognition
- Participation
- Relevance – to life experiences
- Climate for Learning
- Variety Stimulates
- Communication Levels
- No Tests
**CHART 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITATOR</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guide</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>Proponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Provider</td>
<td>Answer-Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Judgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Argumentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive</td>
<td>Moralizer/Preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrogator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>Rigid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Authority Figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Faithful</td>
<td>Innovator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entertainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Story-teller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Smiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A peer</td>
<td>Empathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curbs ego</td>
<td>Doesn’t read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (eye) contact</td>
<td>Unflappable, Waits for response, Patient, Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid back</td>
<td>Active listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuned in</td>
<td>Simple prose, brief statements, natural grammar, normal speech and volume,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cut “er,” “ah,” and “um” from speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Stands, moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks naturally</td>
<td>Accepts all views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Strokes, recognizes, congratulates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHART 4

QUESTIONS

Open
Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How
i.e. “What’s your opinion of …?"

Closed
Gets “yes” or “no” response

Overhead
Good early on; ask whole group

Direct
Learner looks ready to answer
(facial expression)

ANSWERS

Accept all
Don’t be negative

Reward “good”
Positive feedback, “thank you”
CHART 5

SLOW RESPONSE

Rephrase
Breakdown
Go "direct"
Wait
Answer yourself

PROBLEM RESPONSE

Silent  Don’t force
Monopoly  Recognize
          Call on someone else
          “Equal time”
          Wait out
Side track  Polite
          “Outside scope”
          Discussion during break
          Wait out
“Gotcha”  Admit mistakes
          Go on
Hidden agenda  Rephrase
              Go “overhead”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POSTURE</strong></th>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stand erect</td>
<td>Cross arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arms outspread</td>
<td>Put arms in pockets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lean forward</td>
<td>Play with “toys” i.e. keys, markers, coins, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POSITION</strong></th>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work the entire “U” space</td>
<td>Hide behind table or podium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VERBAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vary voice pitch</td>
<td>Speak too fast or too slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak clearly</td>
<td>“Talk down”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smile frequently</td>
<td>Read from a script</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKSHOP LOGISTICS

- Room Size and Location
- Room Layout – U-shaped is best
- Audio-Visual Equipment
- Meals and Breaks
- Invitation
- Registration
- Sponsorship
- Budgeting
- Support Materials
CHART 8

WORKSHOP ROOM ARRANGEMENT

(A 40-foot by 80-foot room is IDEAL!)

Room entry door

Observers’ table

Registration table

Seating for 15-50 outside of “U” only

tables

Laptop & projection table(s)/cart, DVD player

tables

Flip chart

Projection screen

Flip chart

Refreshment table