

Leadership Waupaca County
Important Tips for Moderators

Moderating a session is not complicated but very important. There are some strategies that a moderator can use to help ensure a successful session. **The most important points are to make the speakers feel comfortable, appreciated, to “build up the speaker” prior to the talk, and develop the interest of the audience.**

For all seminars, the speaker will receive a confirmation letter that:

- identifies the subject matter he/she will address.
- the time that the speaker is allotted.
- the location and time of the seminar.

Additionally, following these guidelines will help make for a smooth and effective learning environment.

1) Opening the day

- a) Begin on time by gathering the participants 5 minutes prior to starting time.
- b) Welcome the group to the day's sessions.

2) Prior to the speaker's session:

- a) Introduce yourself to the speaker and get acquainted with them to the extent possible on the day of the seminar or if you wish before the seminar (contact Mike Koles for contact information on speakers).
- b) Be sure to ask how to correctly pronounce the speaker's name, business, etc.
- c) Review with the speaker the time limits, signals you might give them, etc.

3) The introduction:

- a) When a moderator is called upon to introduce a speaker the moderator should:
 - be brief, giving only the speaker's relevant background.
 - give an upbeat introduction. The speaker is sharing his/her time with the group and deserves to have the group on the edge of their seats when the floor is given to them.
 - introduce the speaker in such a way that the audience becomes interested in hearing him/her.
 - give the topic of the session.

- emphasize the importance of the topic.
- conclude the introduction with a statement that emphasizes your pleasure in having them attend: "It is a great pleasure to introduce..."

4) As the speaker begins, check:

- a) Can the group see the visuals?
- b) Can the group hear the speaker?

5) As the talk progresses:

- a) Think of one or two general questions that you could ask just in case nobody in the group has a question immediately after the talk ends.
- b) Be a good listener.

6) As the speaker approaches the time limit:

- a) Begin your signaling process (e.g., flash cards, hands signals). Any method you use should be considerate of the speaker and should not cause the speaker any embarrassment.

7) After the speaker is finished:

- a) Begin the applause to avoid any awkward moment of silence, as the audience tries to decide whether or not to applaud.
- b) Briefly, thank the speaker personally, shaking their hand and using the speaker's name.
- c) Make a brief, positive complement about the content and about the speaker.
- d) Begin the question and answer session.

Example: "Thank you, Mr. Gladmouth, for your informative talk. We appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to address our group. I am sure that we will apply these concepts again and again. We have a few minutes for question."

8) Taking questions:

- a) Lay out any ground rules before taking questions (e.g., we have 4 minutes for questions).

- b) Everyone in the group should be allowed to participate within time constraints.
- c) Take everyone's first question before allowing anyone to ask a second question.
- d) Also, you may want to keep a mental list of those raising their hands in the order you see them. Then go down the list for questions. This way no one needs to continue trying to obtain recognition once they catch your eye and you put them on your list.

9) Closing the session:

- a) Thank the speaker and shake their hand again.
- b) Suggest to the audience to give the speaker a final round of applause.
- c) Close the session on time.

10) Breaks:

- a) Moderators will begin to re-assemble the group 5 minutes before the break concludes.

11) Closing the day:

- a) Collect all evaluation sheets and give them to Mike Koles.
- b) Provide your critique of the session.
- c) Hand over dismissal to Mike Koles.

Other suggestions for moderators:

Speak well of yourself. Speak with sincerity and enthusiasm. Make no negative remarks or excuses. When you are standing before an audience and do not know what to say next, if you listen, ideas will come. The audience is not thinking about you but the ideas that will reach them through you as a moderator. Be yourself. Be natural and free. Do not try to imitate anyone else.

- Go to the front of the room ahead of time. Get a feel for the size of the room. Locate your chair.
- Keep your forward foot flat on the floor, feet touching; generally don't cross your legs while you are seated at the front of the room.
- Be gracious to all those around you. Listen while others are speaking. Do not rattle papers or go over your notes or speak to others while the speaker is talking. You set the example for the rest of the group.

- Forget yourself and your clothing. Keep your hands away from your face and hair. Breathe deeply, it will help you relax.
- When walking to the front or the podium, walk naturally. Have your notes ready and marked in large print. Take your time; don't hurry.
- Wait for the audience to become completely quiet before you speak. Have a friendly feeling toward your audience. Look at your audience before you speak each time. Recognize those farthest back in the room. Just being conscious of them will enable you to reach them with your voice.