AOSPINE

Faculty Support—eLearning

Module 5

Moderating and debating

What you need to know to succeed in AOSpine's online
course for Faculty: a primer in 6 modules.

1-How people
learn

2-Giving a
lecture

3-Running
a practical
exercise

4-Leading
group
discussions

6-Using
multimedia
tools for
teaching

Contents

For best use…

The "Moderating and debating" module consists of this booklet and an online course.

Booklet:
Designed to provide a practical guide to the principles of moderating sessions

Online component, with:
• Knowledge check
• Action plan
• Summary

www.aospine.org > myAOSpine > My faculty tools > Faculty training

Learning outcomes

After completion of this module, you should be able to:

• Explain the role of moderated session in learning and
  on AOSpine courses
• Identify how a panel should be selected
• Define the role of the session moderator
• Plan and structure a moderated session
• Identify when and how to assert control during
  a debate moderation
• Recognize when and how to include the audience
• Summarize outcomes to close a session moderation

There are six modules that compliment each other. Together they give a thorough overview of the most relevant aspects of teaching.

Module 1: How people learn

Module 2: Giving a lecture

Module 3: Running a practical exercise

Module 4: Leading group discussions

Module 5: Moderating a debate

Module 6: Using multimedia tools
          for teaching

Crosslinks:

Booklet
refers from online exercise to booklet

Action plan

Knowledge check

Online exercise

Summary

The role of panel discussion within learning

One of the best ways AOSpine courses can help people to learn is to allow their minds to exercise their own powers through discussion and debate.

What is a debate?
- A discussion involving opposing points; an argument.
- Deliberation; consideration: "passed the motion with little debate".
- A formal contest of argumentation in which two opposing teams defend and attack a given proposition.

In AOSpine courses, panel debates are usually used to build on topics presented during the course or to introduce new and controversial issues.

Value and goals
The Greek teacher, Protagoras, is usually credited as the "father of debate". His methods required learners to consider one side of an issue and then the other—so they understand the reasons behind both sides of an argument.

Socrates, on the other hand, one of Protagoras' greatest critics, felt that debate should be to discern the truth about the subject being debated.

Today, formal and moderated discussions (in the classroom, in the political arena, or on the internet) are usually held to enlighten others, deepen understanding, answer questions and possibly enable participants to reach an agreement about a topic or issue.

All of these approaches demonstrate that discussion can help progression of learning, enabling learners:
- To analyze, then evaluate issues
- To appreciate, then personalize new ideas or beliefs

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE
1. Recall data (facts)	1. Receive (awareness)
2. Understand (comprehend)	2. Respond (react)
3. Apply (use)	3. Appreciate values
4. Analyze	4. Personalize value system
5. Synthesize (create/build)	5. Internalize (change behavior)
6. Evaluate (assess/judge)	-

Bloom's taxonomy (1=low-/5=high-order skills)

When planning learning (especially about a controversial topic), organizing a discussion in which learners are actively involved will be more effective than using a passive technique such as a lecture. Engaging the learner emotionally will also help them to retain more new information:
- Creating the types of personal experiences which are then stored in our episodic memories
- Enabling easier recall at a later date

"Learning is an unavoidable and natural occurrence— you will learn to do things well or you will learn to do things poorly."

William Manson;
UK HR specialist

Moderated sessions at AOSpine Courses
Two key goals:

1. To provide an effective forum for participants' questions
2. To provide the opportunity to hear and respond to faculty debating specific topics

The moderated panel discussion

Ingredients for a good debate:
- A moderator
- A timekeeper
- Expert speakers
- An engaging issue
- An audience

AOSpine courses constantly deal with issues that lend themselves to be discussed—that is, where different or even opposing views are held by different practitioners and faculty members.

The moderated panel discussion

This is a discussion with a panel of experts who answer questions about common topics that have been covered during an AOSpine course or session. The panel discussion enables the consolidation of existing learning and the introduction of new or controversial material. The panel members should ideally hold different opinions about the issues under discussion.

This format is used to enable the audience, ie, course participants:
- To pose questions to the group of experts
- To hear a diversity of responses based on the speakers' beliefs and experiences
- To make judgments on the issues under debate

Panel discussion with a vote

This type of debate is similar to a normal panel debate or discussion except that one central motion (theme) is debated.

Motion

A proposed point of view that panelists can speak for or against and that the audience can vote on.

To ensure a balanced discussion there are ideally four speakers—two for the motion and two against.

Voting is arranged before the discussion gets underway and then again at the end to see if and how opinion has moved. This is usually quite entertaining—but needs really good speakers and a tight timetable to give the audience a chance to have their say as well.

Both types of debate need a few vital elements:
- *A moderator or chairperson*
  Someone to moderate the debate
- *Timekeeper*
  Someone to watch the time and ensure that speakers know and follow the timing rules
- *Panel members (speakers)*
  No discussion can take place without speakers
- *Topics and/or motions*
  Issues/motions that are going to be discussed by the panel
- *Audience*
  The audience's participation and their needs should be central to the debate to ensure any educational benefit

To maximize involvement, learners can be encouraged:
- To research the issues in advance
- To formulate questions to ask the panel
- To speak or vote on the issue or motion

Knowledge check

Organizing a panel discussion

> "Information, usually seen as the precondition of debate, is better understood as its by-product."
>
> **Christopher Lasch;**
> (1932–1994)
> American historian

In a panel discussion the role of the moderator goes beyond introducing the session or the panel members—it requires preparation, skill, quick thinking, and confidence.

The ultimate role of the moderator is to keep discussion and debate going without dominating. To do this, moderators should first consider *OPM*—three key steps in a successful debating session:

- Organization—what needs to be decided in advance?
- Preparation—what do the participants need to know before the session?
- Moderation—what does the moderator need to do during the session?

Organizing the panel discussion

1. Know your audience
Know your audience and ensure that you understand which questions they want answered, on what level of detail.

2. Know the desired outcomes
Make sure you know the outcomes of the course and how the debating session will contribute to these.

3. Choose key topic(s) or motion
The subjects covered in a specific AOSpine course will determine the general topic areas for panel discussion, but remember: For a real discussion to to take place there must be more than one point of view: no conflict, no discussion.

If appropriate, set up a motion to discuss:
"Degenerative discs should be removed"
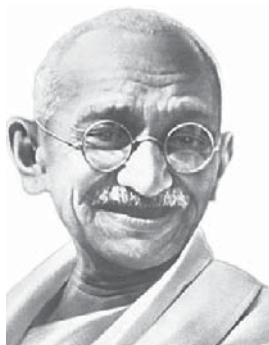*"Multilevel fusion should always be primary treatment"*
Most importantly, ensure that the motion is relevant, interesting and fun!

4. Select the panel
Panelists should be experts in the field and have varying points of view. Between three to four panelists is ideal for a standard panel discussion—with fewer it is difficult to obtain a range of views and more are hard to manage. (Four panelist are required if a motion is to be voted on—two speaking for the motion and two against.)

5. Timing and format
Check the allotted timing for the session—a reasonable panel discussion usually lasts between 1–1½ hours. Plan timing rules according to the time available and the format chosen (see "Preparation" section for more details).

Remember this…

Discussions generate most interest when controversial topics are chosen:

- A proposed change in policy
- A suggested solution
- An alleged truth, belief or value

Consider:

- Who will speak for or against?
- Are there enough arguments on both sides?
- Is the topic relevant and engaging?

How to prepare for a panel discussion

> "Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress"

Mahatma Ghandi;
(1869–1948)
Indian political and spiritual leader
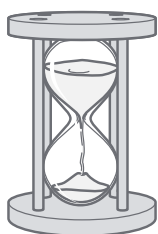
Handy Tip:

Plan timing rules as appropriate:

- Keep introductions brief (30 seconds)
- Opening statements (2–3 minutes)
- Answering audience questions (2 minutes)
- Panel cross-examinations (1 minute)
- Rebuttals (answer to an "attack") (1 minute)
- Each question (30 seconds)
- Closing statements (1–2 minutes)
- Assign a timekeeper to help monitor timing

So, you are getting ready to moderate a panel discussion. What preparations should you make in advance?

Research the subject

As a moderator you will need to prepare so that you can "stir up the pot" with relevant questions about any controversies or hot topics surrounding the issues under debate.

- Have a list of questions ready for the panelists—either to get them warmed up or to keep the discussion going when the audience doesn't know what to ask.

Get to know the speakers

Make sure that you know enough about the speakerst to be able to make a brief (30 second) introduction about each of them at the start of the session.

Develop an agenda

For a *panel discussion*: establish three to five high level bullet-points around which the discussion is to be based. Also see that the panel and audience get these in advance so they can prepare themselves.

Plan your discussion format:

- Allow time for speakers with different points of view to make their opening statements
- Take turns asking questions to "each side" and allow opposing sides time to offer a rebuttal before a new question is presented

- If using ARS, prepare questions
- End the discussion with brief closing statements from both sides and arrange an audience vote (if appropriate)

Check the venue

- Plan where panelists should sit and make sure they all have something to drink.
- Check that microphones are available for the panel and the audience
- Prepare handouts, if appropriate, with details about panelists/topics
- Check that the venue is large enough to seat the audience comfortably
- Avoid the use of PowerPoint—panels should focus on discussion and interaction!

For a *longer and more demanding discussion* you can follow a frequently used structure:

1. Introductions and opening vote
2. Argument *for* the motion (3–5min)
3. Cross examination/rebuttals (2min)
4. Argument *against* the motion (3–5min)
5. Cross examination/rebuttals (2min)
(steps 2–5 repeated for other two panelists to extend the arguments for and against)
6. Questions from the audience
7. Summary and closing vote

Knowledge check

Moderating a panel discussion

> "The conductor must make it possible to eliminate himself in the music. If the orchestra feels him doing that, then everything will go well."

Giuseppe Sinopoli;
(1946–2001)
Italian conductor and composer

To get value out of a panel discussion it needs to be skillfully moderated.

The moderator's role:
To keep the discussion flowing and fair, without actively participating in the questions, answers, or debate
A great moderator invisibly guides the panelists and audience throughout the discussion as if they were *aircraft being routed by aircraft controllers.*

Engines on—take the lead
When moderating, the body language you use will be echoed by the panelists. If you sit up straight or if you nervously fidget, they will follow. Similarly when you have directed a question to the panel, look at the audience and they will do the same when they answer the question.

On the runway—setting the stage
As the first person to speak in the session, set the stage by giving an overview of why the panel session is being held, what will be covered and briefly introduce the panelists. (Remember to stick to the standard session structure of Set—Dialogue—Closure)

Take off—warm up the panel
The moderator should initiate the first discussion item before asking questions. Depending on the format of debate chosen, this may be by posing a "warm up question" or by inviting the first speaker to speak "for" a motion.

Flying high
1. Put the audience first
The audience is more important than the panel so it is important that their needs are being met:
- Ensure questions are understood—repeat and rephrase if necessary
- Ensure the audience is engaged—if not, change the approach to liven up the session
- Ensure questions are being answered—if not, step in and refocus the panel

#### 2. Give speakers time to talk
Direct questions to specific panelists, so that alternative opinions are voiced one-by-one. For a general question, assign one member of the panel to answer it, and then open it up to the rest of the panel for a reaction, if warranted.

3. Know when and how to assert control
Keeping the discussion on track, on time, fair and focused requires some skill—see "Moderating—Tips and Tricks" (next page).
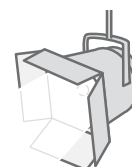
Coming in to land—closing the debate
Thank everyone for their contributions and summarize the key points that have arisen during the discussion.

OPM
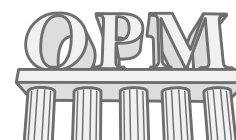
Remember this...
Use OPM to help structure debates
- Organize
- Prepare
- Moderation

The moderator:
- Uses positive body language
- Leads by example
- Provides context
- Introduces the panel
- Uncovers "why" panelists hold their opinions
- Challenges—where is the controversy?
- Reads the audience

Moderating—Tips and Tricks

> "Take time to deliberate, but when the time for action has arrived, stop thinking and go in."

Napoleon Bonaparte;
(1769–1821)
French military and
political leader

Remember this...

10 top tips to be a great moderator:

1. Be quiet
2. Be loud
3. Be invisible
4. Be prepared
5. Be an air-traffic controller
6. Be able to think ahead
7. Be challenging
8. Be clear
9. Be timely
10. Be fun

Use the 5 C's to spice up the debate:

- Conflict
- Contradiction
- Controversy
- Colorful language
- Cast of characters

Great moderators know when and how to assert control and, more importantly, when not to. Here are some tips and tricks how to guide each element of a discussion.

Assert control:

- When a speaker gets off-track
- When a speaker dominates or takes longer than he should
  (step in, compliment their opinion, pass on the question and possibly move to the next one)
- To bring depth to the discussiont— challenge the panel to talk in more detail about risks, benefits or case studies—depending on the topic
- If the audience is weary and bored, try a different approach—always try to involve them.

Moderate efficiently

Be quiet Know when to shut up—being a moderator is not like hosting a game show. Good conversations start on their own—you only need to guide.

Be loud Your job is to visibly and audibly keep everyone on track—let there be no uncertainty that you are in charge and that the session is worthwhile!

Be invisible You are not the star. The panelists and audience are the focus. Step into the background but keep things moving.

Be prepared Know the subject as well as the panelists—you can't steer the debate if you don't understand its issues.

Be a director Orchestrate but don't steer too much—give people room to excite and excel.

Be able to think ahead Listen to the debate. Think about where the discussion needs to go, check the timing, and know when to move on.

Be challenging You are the advocate of the audience—let panelists know if they haven't answered a question. Ask follow up questions, cut off a debate that has lasted too long.

Be clear Ask short questions and make short statements—get to the issue and keep things going. Maintain eye contact with the audience.

Be timely Keep to time—confidently check your watch and let participants know when they are about to run out of time (set up a system with a timekeeper for this). Always finish on time.

Be fun and have fun! Smile. Keep it interesting. Spice it up and keep the audience interested and engaged.
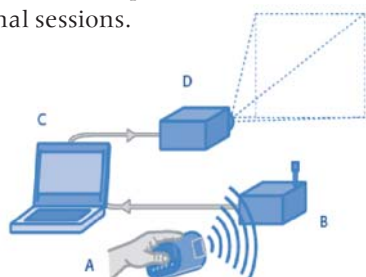
Audience Response Systems (ARS)

> "Never treat your audience as customers, always as partners."

Jimmy Stewart;
(1908–1997)
American stage and screen actor

Involvement of course partici-

pants is an integral part of the AOSpine educational philosophy. It is the reason we stress the use of small groups, hands-on practical experiences and, more recently, the use of audience response systems (ARS) to enhance learning during lectures.

What is ARS?
It is a *group communications* tool that increases both the efficiency and effectiveness of educational sessions.

The components of an Audience Response System

On a specific question the audience records their vote by simply pressing the appropriate button on their individual wireless keypads (A). The base station (B) collects the votes and sends them to the system software on a laptop (C), which immediately collates the results and displays them on the presentation screen (D) for all to see.

The system allows everyone *to express their personal opinion*, free of political or peer pressure.

One more down
Wireless electronic connections enable ARS to be mobile. These systems can be shipped all over the world and set up in any room.

Tangible benefits
The system offers *immediate feedback and anonymous display* of a group's opinion on any given subject. Real time interaction with participants allows them to communicate directly and simultaneously with the presenter.

Different ways to respond
Choosing a specific way to respond is important to obtain a clear, decisive answer. There are four general categories of response:

- Yes/No—Giving your audience only these two choices forces them into a position which makes interpretation very easy and quite accurate.
- True/False—The audience responds to a statement and has to decide between two choices.
- Discrete (or preferential) selection—Multiple-choice alternatives, comparing up to 5 different items, are presented.
- General continuum—Adjectives such as "Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree" are used to define the response parameters.

Remember this...
Audience response systems (ARS) can be appropriate for:
- Pre- and post-test of knowledge
- Pre- and post-attitude inventories
- Learner profiles
- Case studies
- Inserted questions
- Comparison data
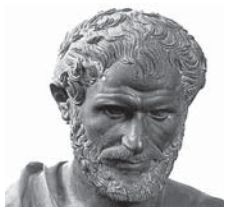
How to use ARS

Spontaneous Ad-hoc-questions

In most cases questions are being developed prior to the session. But it is also possible to incorporate spontaneous questions rising out of a discussion or a specific response. Such a spontaneous ad-hoc-questions may be verbalized to the audience or typed in through the system for immediate display and evaluation. (The most useful and easiest ad-hoc-question still is: Do you agree? Yes/No.)

ARS is just a technology, how you use it is the key to a successful outcome. Generally ARS is most useful for the *following purposes*:

- Determining participant profiles: country of origin, specialty, experience.
- Getting an idea of what participants already know—so one can concentrate on other areas.
- Detecting, exposing and clarifying misconceptions.
- Obtaining an evaluation, of a case study for instance.
- Measuring what has or has not been understood so far (pre- and post-tests of knowledge and attitude).
- Finding out collectively about everybody's personal opinion.
- Getting to know what participants think about the teaching session itself (post-evaluation).

Asking the right questions

The wording of a question (or statement) is the critical element in obtaining a clear and fair response. The questions should be concise as screen space is limited. Furthermore:

1. Keep questions short and readable
Use positive terms and address only one issue per question. Make sure you read the questions aloud.

2. No more than five options
If participants have too much information, they will fail to respond. It also slows down the whole process.

3. Keep voting simple
Although different voting-options exist, it is usually better to use the simpler ones.

4. Build in time for discussion
With an interesting question, discussion is quickly stimulated. If you postpone discussion, spontaneity will be lost.

5. Use questions sparingly
More than five questions per hour can be tedious. Questions should focus on the main learning outcomes.

6. Brief participants and faculty
Clear instructions on how to use ARS will contribute to a high response rate. A first "warm-up" question often helps.

7. Master the mechanics
Get in touch with the ARS support person as early as possible and make sure the ARS equipment is checked and tested.

8. Anticipate possible answers
Good planning involves anticipating answers. Therefore consider different outcomes and how you will deal with them.

9. Analyze the results
With good questions the response will not only be interesting, but also useful to stimulate further learning.

10. Don't overuse!
ARS is a new medium, and it is tempting to use it as much as possible. However, overuse will kill any benefits.

Next steps

Now it's your turn…

This module continues online on the AOSpine Website.

There, on the Faculty Learning Program you have the opportunity to put some of what you have learnt into practice:

- Take a knowledge check
- Fill in your moderating action plan
- Read and save the module summary

Faculty Learning Program:

www.aospine.org > myAOSpine > My faculty tools

The AOSpine vision   The AOSpine community-delivering the knowledge, experience, and evidence to improve patient care, patient outcomes, and ensure cost effective spine surgery

The AOSpine mission   Our purpose and responsibility is to shape our members skills and understanding of spine principles; to establish new values and incentives for the creation of knowledge, the sharing of wisdom, and the development of new tools and techniques that improve patient care, patient outcomes, and the cost effectiveness of spine surgery.

"When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it—this is knowledge."

Confucius;
(551 BC–479 BC)
Chinese philosopher