KEY STRATEGIES FOR COURSE LEADERS/HOSTS FOR FACILITATING ONLINE LEARNING

Note: Learning and participating in an online course will work better for some members than for others. Some members may choose not to participate very actively at all; others will find it is a great way to learn. The challenge for all course leaders is to create a learning experience that will work for all (or at least as many as who are willing to give it a try).

Here are key strategies that can be used to encourage peer engagement and thus the building of a successful on-line SLR community.

KEY ONLINE STRATEGIES:

Prior to Course Start

- **Roles**: Course Leaders will be the participants' key contact about course content. The Zoom Host will send out a "readiness" survey to all participants, set up the course meetings and will be participants' contact for technical issues.
- When you receive your class list, the Course Leader contacts everyone (phone or email using bcc), welcomes them, introduces self and Zoom Host, reiterates day and time of each session as well as start and end dates, gives any additional course information, and answers any questions, etc.
    - ❖ For study groups, ask participants to give you their presentation topic and preferred date as soon as possible so you can schedule presentations, especially the first session or two. Keep participants informed of the developing presentation schedule before the first class and as it is updated.
- The Zoom Host also contacts everyone individually about their Zoom readiness and helps each member become comfortable with the technology.
- Zoom Host then convenes a separate orientation meeting to make sure everyone is connected.
- After initially contacting each class member, Course Leader emails "GUIDELINES FOR ALL SLR COURSE PARTICIPANTS ON ZOOM," (see attached) along with any other reminders, clarifications, etc. Can also send Code of Conduct if desired.

Course Start

- Be timely (start and end when you say you will).
- The Host will schedule each class sign-in at least 5-10 minutes ahead of class start (or longer depending on the Host's assessment of the needs of the participants). The Course Leader and participants will join via the link Host has sent.
- As participants arrive, Course Leader acknowledges them with a welcoming greeting and informally connecting the participants to each other as much as possible.
- Host will verify that their camera image is good and they can hear and be heard clearly. In this way, any technical problems can be sorted out before starting.
- Host checks that the name displayed in everyone's image is correct. The Host or participant can change the name if necessary.

The Session (For both Discussion and Study Groups):

- Introductions During First Session - Two Suggestions:
  - Since you can't ask people to go in order to check in or respond to the introductory questions, use the notion of "nominating" the next person to speak — that establishes a sense of connection because the person speaking has to look around and see who else is in the class and who might not have talked yet — it lightens the mood and keeps everyone engaged.

  OR
  - Launch with a personal introduction and ask each member in turn to respond to certain questions. The types of info often shared by each member and the course leader(s) may include info on professional experiences, personal information such as family/friends/interests, why they signed up for the course and what they hope to get from it.
- Ask participants to leave their microphones on **UNLESS** there's construction going on or someone else in the room is talking on the phone or some other such reason. When people unmute, you suddenly hear the sounds that you would if you were sitting together - the slight cough, the murmur of people agreeing or disagreeing, the times when people start to talk at the same time and need to negotiate that, etc. This has been the single most helpful thing for many course

leaders and the group. It brings the normal human sounds back to the meeting and not dull silence.

- Go over the Online Etiquette standards to make sure everyone is on same page.
- Participants will raise their hands to indicate a question or comment. The Host and/or Course Leader keeps track of the order. If someone raises two hands, it means they want to add to what was just said, so they are given priority.
- Keep the pace of discussions moving by asking questions or making comments. If someone speaks for too long, then respectfully interrupt and say that he/she has 15 seconds more and then you must move on to hear others.
- Breaks: Do stretching exercises as well as bathroom breaks or suggest that they are free to send "chat" messages to others. Start back on time.
- Early course feedback: About week 3, ask for informal feedback on "How is the course going?" and "Do you have any suggestions" in order to find out what is working well and what might be changed to enhance the experience.
- Adults learn best when they see how what they are learning links to current news events or life experiences. This is especially true for virtual learning.
- Plan a good closing and wrap up activity for the course which provides opportunities for reflection and integration of useful knowledge, positive social and cognitive experiences.

Study Group Specifics:

- Presentations should be delivered uninterrupted.
- During a presentation, all participants except the speaker should be muted by Host.
- Participants can write down their questions and comments as they arise during the presentation.
- During the discussion, proceed as above.