MGLL

McGill Community for Lifelong Learning

Moderators' Handbook

Updated August 2024

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Introduction

Welcome to the group of moderators of the *McGill Community for Lifelong Learning*. You are essential to the very existence of MCLL and to the continued development of excellence for which we are well known.

And above all enjoy yourself!

Attendance Options for Study Groups and Lectures

Study group formats can be any of the three options below. Lectures can be done with in-person or online attendance only.

In-person

Moderators can set the maximum number of participants up to the classroom capacity of 17 (18 in room 225), moderator included. If a moderator or lecturer is unfamiliar with the MCLL classroom equipment or has specific requirements, they can request a familiarization session. Please email mcll.scs@mcgill.ca to arrange this.

Hybrid

Attendance can be up to 12 in-person and 14 online participants simultaneously. This allows all in-person participants to sit at the table and sets those online to a similar number. The total of 26 is a good maximum for participant presentation and discussion study groups. Moderators can attend either in-person or online, which will be clearly indicated in the program. An assigned MCLL host will be in the classroom to handle the technical aspects of the hybrid session.

MCLL will hold workshops to familiarize prospective moderators with the hybrid equipment and procedures. Prospective moderators are also welcome to briefly join a hybrid session, either in-person or online to see the setup. If interested, please email mcll.scs@mcgill.ca. A video presentation on the MCLL hybrid classrooms can be viewed at this link.

Online

Moderators or lecturers can set the maximum number of participants to a higher number than for discussion or presentation groups. For discussion study groups, 25 faces fill the computer screen and is a good maximum, including the host and moderator. Moderators will be assigned an MCLL host to handle the technical aspects of the Zoom sessions.

Online moderators and lecturers must be able to access Zoom with clear, intelligible audio and smooth, non-jerky video. After coaching from their assigned host, they should understand the basics of Zoom and be able to share their screen and make a presentation. Moderators should not use a smartphone for participating on Zoom. If necessary, a tablet can be borrowed from the office, though a Windows or Mac computer is the recommended equipment.

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MCLL Hosts

A critical factor in MCLL's initial and ongoing success with Zoom is the hosts, who assist with every hybrid or online study group or lecture. They are volunteers who have learned to manage most of the technical details, allowing moderators and lecturers to focus exclusively on their presentation.

Hosts carry out a [full checklist of essential tasks](#). Two weeks prior to the first study group session or lecture, hosts contact moderators and lecturers to ensure they can properly share their content, whether it's a slide show, videos, or music. A week before the first session, the host contacts all participants to ensure they can join Zoom meetings. The day before each scheduled session, the host emails the moderator or lecturer and participants the Zoom link. At the first session, the host makes clear to everyone the basics of Zoom and online etiquette. Other tasks include muting all participants before the moderator/lecturer begins, to avoid extraneous noise. If a study group involves participant presentations, the host will contact those who are presenting to ensure they can properly share their content.

While a host is not meant to be a secretary, s/he is willing to help moderators uncomfortable with technology and coach them to be at ease with MCLL's systems. Above all, moderators and lecturers need to work closely and cooperatively with their host as a team, to deliver a smooth and enjoyable Zoom session.

Remember:

Hosts, like moderators, are volunteers, not IT experts. They do their best to make sure all goes smoothly while dealing with technology that constantly changes. Occasional glitches will occur.

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Getting Started as a Moderator

> **NOTE: Clicking a PDF link gives the options of downloading it or viewing in your browser**

Moderators of hybrid and online study groups will automatically be assigned a host. Moderators and lecturers can request a specific host in their proposal if desired. Normally the Curriculum Committee holds a Moderator's Workshop before the fall and winter terms, to familiarize moderators with the typical procedures and practices. For in-person only moderators and lecturers, contact mcll.scs@mcgill.ca if you need technical information or help for the assigned classroom.

McGill Student Email

A McGill student email and password are required to access many McGill sites and services. As moderator, when you register for your study group, you are automatically given a McGill email address if you don't have one. You'll need to set it up with a password by following these instructions. You will first need your 9-digit McGill ID number which you can get from the MCLL office at 514-398-8234.

Accessing Class Lists

The Instructor Portal provides an easy way for study group moderators to communicate with their participants. **You'll need an active McGill email address and password**, and as a registered moderator you'll be given access to the portal. This link shows instructions on how to access your class list in the Instructor Portal. How to access the Instructor Portal

Role of the liaison

Moderators, lecturers, workshop leaders and outing coordinators are matched with assigned Curriculum Committee members who act as liaisons. Although the liaison will usually get in touch with the moderator, a moderator may write to mcll.scs@mcgill.ca or call 1-514-398-8234 to find out the name and coordinates of his or her liaison.

The liaison can offer support according to need. At one end of the spectrum, the liaison simply follows up on the Call for Proposals; at the other end, a liaison may help in finding a title for the study group, developing content, finding a co-moderator, directing them to where to get help with the classroom equipment, coping with difficult participants, relaying complaints to the Curriculum Committee or assisting in any other way.

Curriculum

The MCLL Difference

Peer learning and active participation are the cornerstones of MCLL's curriculum; they differentiate its programs from traditional university courses and classes. Active learning, involving actions such as recall, presentation, discussion, etc., has been shown to be superior to passive learning (limited to listening or watching) in terms of retention and understanding.

Study Groups

The study group proposal form lists these subject areas, though other topics are possible:

Cultural Studies/Travel	Architecture/Visual Arts	Politics/Economics/Current Events
History	Creative Writing/Literature	Music/Theatre/Film Studies
Science/Technology	Medicine/Health/Wellness	Senior Services/Workshops

Most study groups run for 10 weeks, some are shorter, typically 5 weeks.

Study Group Styles - These study group styles indicate the type of participation expected:

- **Discussion:** Participants look at works of art, read books or magazine articles, watch movies or videos, listen to music, or write journals. The moderator then facilitates discussion among the participants.

- **Participant Presentation:** With the guidance of the group moderator, participants are expected to choose themes and make presentations.

- **Moderator/Participant Presentation:** Participants are encouraged to choose themes and make presentations, although presentations are not mandatory.

- **Moderator Presentation:** The group moderator makes the presentations and facilitates the discussion that follows the presentation.

Lectures

Lectures provide an even wider range of subject areas; audio-visual materials are often used. Lectures are offered over the 10-week fall, winter and spring terms. In the summer term lectures are presented on Wednesdays only; they are called "Wonderful Wednesdays".

Workshops

Workshops can be stand-alone events or part of a series. They can be on a range of subjects, academic or not, and tend to deal with practical issues.

Outings

MCLL members sometimes coordinate outings to various locations in and around the City of Montreal.

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Making a Proposal

Call for Proposals

A week or two after the start of a term, the Call for Proposals for the following term is sent to the entire membership. Two forms are used year-round, one for study groups and one for lectures, workshops and outings. An link to an online form will be sent out with the call for proposals. By pressing Submit, it will automatically go to the office. Alternately you can access an online form at https://www.mcgill.ca/mcll/moderators/making-proposal . A Word version can also be found there. In exceptional cases, a paper can be made available at the MCLL. One form is required for each offering. Proposals can be submitted to: proposalsmcll.scs@mcgill.ca

Title and description -The moderator provides the title and the description of the study group or the lecture, workshop or outing. This is placed on the Proposal Form. The text may be edited for typos, grammar and style. **No changes will go into the program without prior approval of the moderator.**

Proposal acceptance - Those who have submitted a proposal will receive an acknowledgement of receipt within 3 workdays; they should let the office know if they do not receive it. mcll.scs@mcgill.ca, or call 1-514-398-8234

The Curriculum Committee considers each proposal. You will be notified as to whether your proposal has been accepted. You may be contacted to clarify the description.

Proofreading and accuracy are the responsibility of the proposers - Those that have been accepted will receive the final version of the text, along with the proposed scheduling. They should let the office know by the specified deadline if they do not receive them or if changes are needed. Call 1-514-398-8234 or email mcll.scs@mcgill.ca.

Cancellations

If after the 2nd week, the enrolment is under 5, the moderator may choose to cancel the study group. The Curriculum Committee is reluctant to have moderators cancel an event, except for health reasons or other emergencies. Study group moderators are asked to wait until after the first week of the term before cancelling when there are too few applicants since many participants register late or decide to change study groups in the first week. If the number of participants is less than expected, the moderator has the option of shortening the duration of the study group or asking the participants for a greater commitment. Cancellations result in disappointed participants and are therefore to be avoided as much as possible.

Being an MCLL Moderator

Who Can Be a Moderator

Members usually moderate study groups based on their areas of personal expertise or interest. Their primary role is to animate and facilitate the Study Group. Prior to making a study group proposal, moderators should feel free to discuss the idea with their liaison or another member of the Curriculum Committee - i.e., scope and content of the proposed study group, learning objectives, methods of involving participants, their background in the subject, etc. It is recommended that new members attend a few study groups before moderating on their own. **Moderators must register for their own study group.**

Who Can Be a Lecturer, Workshop Leader or Outing Coordinator

While it is not necessary to be a member in order to be a lecturer, workshop coordinator or outing coordinator most of these roles are filled by members.

People who are introduced to MCLL by a member (McGill lecturers, authors, artists or other parties) may offer their services or be invited to do so. The MCLL member can send the proposal link to be filled out by the guest lecturer.

Moderators and their guests are not paid, and they are not allowed to promote their companies, or any sales or services.

Role and Responsibilities of The Moderator

In study groups, the moderator acts as chair of the group with responsibility for ensuring a positive and productive outcome of each session. The moderator largely determines the subject, objectives and scope of the study group. During a session the moderator helps the group remain on topic and clarifies areas of confusion. A moderator is responsible for scheduling presentations, proposing time limitations, making sure that the presentations deal with issues of substance and soliciting a variety of points of view in a climate of mutual respect. The moderator should always allow for some group participation even in Moderator Presentation study groups. Allow some time for questions and discussion.

In a hybrid or online study group, the moderator and the host work collaboratively. To see what hosts do – Please review the above section on hosts

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Some Key Tips for Successful Moderating

- Focus attention on key issues, do stay on topic.

- Contact participants by email a week or more in advance of the first session to elaborate on the description in the Calendar

- Encourage group discussion and encourage reticent members while ensuring that no one dominates the discussion or behaves rudely toward other participants. It is important to discourage private conversations.

- Treat all participants with equal respect.

- Be sure to be open to a diversity of opinions.

- Successful moderators often communicate regularly with members by email throughout the study group.

- Promote participant participation, a key element of MCLL's Peer Learning philosophy. The moderator can use a variety of tools, to promote participation such as:

- Encouraging the use of PowerPoint presentations

- Choose a video for discussion

- Send out an article or link to a video ahead as a preparation for discussion

- Send out questions to participants beforehand to be discussed in class

For Participant Presentation Study Groups

- Distribute a suggested list of topics.

- Assist participants in defining a topic, searching for resources, suggesting readings or reference materials and preparing their presentations.

- Remind people that there are multiple ways to present – slides, read a written text, share a video and have discussion questions...

- It is a good idea to have a backup plan, such as having a presentation on hand or a video to show, in case a person scheduled to make a presentation is unexpectedly absent.

Enriching a Study Group

Audio-visual aids, guest speakers and field trips can add greatly to a study group. Moderators should also urge members to use the university's libraries and attend public lectures, museum exhibitions, film showings, concerts and other events likely to enrich the study group topic.

There is help for making presentations on the Help Site for Members in the section on [Presenting](#).

You can find more information for moderators at the Help Site for Members on the [moderator section.](#)

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Training

A new moderator can learn much by having a mentor, teaming up as co-moderator with an experienced moderator or sitting in on a highly successful study group after obtaining permission from the moderator. Moderators' Workshops are held a few times a year; this provides an opportunity to interact with other moderators and get a summary of the latest survey results to hear what members like or dislike.

SPEAKING TIPS for moderators and participants are provided in Appendix 4.

Class lists

Moderators are expected to use the Instructor Portal to access class lists. For online and hybrid study groups, the host can help the moderator navigate the system. Hosts will usually take attendance and submit it. In-person only moderators can get help to access the Instructor Portal. These instructions show how to access the instructor portal and email participants. How to access the Instructor Portal

In exceptional cases, the office will provide a class list. When using it, **moderators must ensure emails to multiple participants are addressed using BCC. In no case should you share an email address without explicit permission.**

Participants are expected to let the moderator know if they plan to be absent. Any discrepancy noted at the first meeting, or any later addition or withdrawal, should be reported to the office at 514 398 8234 or mcll.scs@mcgill.ca.

Moderators' Checklist

The moderators' checklist can be found here. It outlines the essential tasks expected of moderators as well as offers some tips to help you ensure all goes smoothly.

First Meeting of Study Group

It is strongly recommended that study group moderators take a few minutes to welcome the participants, introduce themselves and ask the participants to do the same. This establishes a sense of community.

For in-person only study groups, name tags for the participants facilitate communication among members and with the moderator.

For hybrid study groups the hosts prepare name tags large enough to be viewed on the camera.

Moderators are encouraged to give new members a special welcome and facilitate their integration into the group.

It is important to explain the concept of peer learning, how it will be applied, and to stress that participants are as responsible as the moderator for the success of the study group.

The next step is to outline the content of the study group. If presentations are required, participants can sign up from a suggested list or propose their own. The moderator then works out a schedule.

At the first meeting the moderator should explain how to use the McGill library and how to contact the McGill librarian.

For in person and hybrid groups it is important to explain the security measures and emergency evacuation procedures posted in each classroom.

For any study groups which fall on holidays such as Thanksgiving, explain that there will be a make-up class at the end of term.

At the End of a Study Group

A survey goes out to all participants after the last class. For those on zoom a message appears when leaving the last session asking participants to fill out a survey. For in person groups and people attending in person in a hybrid group, the host or the office will send out a link to the survey. Moderators should encourage participants to fill out the survey so as to get feedback on what participants find satisfactory and what they find less so. The surveys are completely anonymous.

The moderator will receive a copy of the responses from a member of the curriculum committee.

A sample copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 6 of this document.

At the conclusion of the study group, the moderator or host should submit the attendance sheet. In Zoom study groups and in hybrid study groups, the host usually takes attendance and submits it.

Identifying Future Moderators

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Moderators are encouraged to identify study group participants who show moderating potential. Such members should be encouraged to identify themselves with the Curriculum Committee. Moderators may encourage those who make outstanding presentations to consider presenting the material in a lecture during the Friday or Wednesday lectures.

Practical Information

Facilities

MCLL has the exclusive use of facilities located on the 2nd floor at 680 Sherbrooke St. West. There is a kitchen and a lounge for the use of members; the lounge has a small library, a computer and a telephone (dial 9; outgoing local calls only); the premises are entirely connected to the Internet. There is also a large collection of CDs and DVDs of classical music and Operas donated to MCLL by the estate of Rory O'Sullivan. The materials are available through the MCLL office.

WI-FI

For those with their own devices, you will need your McGill ID and password to join the network. Information on how to connect can be found here for Windows, Android, iOS and for Mac OS

Classrooms

Rooms 241, 243 and 245 can accommodate up to 17 participants, including the moderator whereas room 225 holds up to 18.

Equipment

Room 225 is the "music room"; rooms 241 and 245 have SMART Boards; room 243 has a whiteboard and a projector. All rooms have lecterns with monitors and Windows computers which include DVD players.

For a moderator interested in using information technology for outlines, presentations, screening of videos, listening to music, etc., help is available. To avoid problems, study group moderators and lecturers are encouraged to get assistance from the office, if needed, ahead of time to familiarize themselves with the equipment.

Members of the office staff can provide instructions; it is best to make an appointment. Information and assistance are also available from MCLL's IT Committee as well as McGill's information technology services that can be reached by telephone at 514 398-3398, or by email mcll.scs@mcgill.ca. A valid member's card is required when requesting assistance.

Office

Normally the office is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Thursday. Address: 680 Sherbrooke St. West, Suite 229, Montreal H3A 3R1. The office staff can be reached by

Telephone: 514 398-8234. Fax: 514 398-2757.

E-mail address: mcll.scs@mcgill.ca/mcll. Website: www.mcgill.ca/mcll.

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mcll.joy .

The office is staffed by volunteer members who can probably answer most questions; please be patient and supportive.

Photocopying

For Moderators: You are encouraged to use online handouts (documents can be sent to participants by email). The office can do a small amount of photocopying. Moderators should send the file(s) to be photocopied to the office ahead of time so the people in the office have time to do the photocopying.

For Study Group Participants - Members must pay their own photocopying costs; there are photocopying machines throughout the McGill campus, including MCLL, the SCS building and McGill Libraries. A non-rechargeable card ($5 and $10) can be bought at the McGill bookstore and libraries. Due to copyright regulations, it is preferable that moderators ask participants to find the articles themselves in the library. Participants can ask moderators to distribute electronic handouts

Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to establish a set of core principles to guide and enhance the conduct of all members of MCLL.

MCLL is committed to providing all its members with a welcoming environment conducive to peer group learning. It is committed to maintaining an environment in which each person is valued and respected and has an opportunity for personal learning and development. MCLL values integrity, mutual respect, trust, open communication, cooperation and teamwork.

Respect of McGill Policies and Procedures

The moderator is responsible for supporting the peer-learning spirit of MCLL and respecting McGill policies and procedures.

If a study group proposal requires elements that fall outside of existing MCLL norms, please advise the curriculum committee of such elements on submitting the proposal form. These may include elements of the administrative or practical planning of the functioning of the study group, such as joint projects with other institutions, etc.

This will ensure enough lead-time to enable MCLL and SCS to go through the steps that will support your proposal and to provide participants with all the relevant information about your study group in the program.

Friends are welcome to attend **a single class** as guests provided the moderator/host are informed in advance and there is space in the room for in-person situations.

Process for Resolving Issues

A zero-tolerance policy will be enforced for verbal abuse and any other forms of harassment, as defined by McGill's official policy.

If a member, or members of the group, is concerned that an individual is causing disruption, the matter should be brought to the moderator's attention.

If such a situation arises, moderators and participants should attempt to resolve the issue and calm things down.

If the issue is not resolved participants and moderators may bring the problem to the chair of the Curriculum Committee. Should the problem continue, an incident report will be filed.

Should there be an unsatisfactory conclusion after discussion with the individual, a member of the Executive and/or the moderator may inform the individual that he or she may no longer participate in that study group. Should the individual wish to file a grievance, it will be handled according to McGill's rules and practices.

Copyright

All presenters should be aware of copyright. Though not everything on the internet displays a copyright message, unless there is something that explicitly states that an item (article, image, video) may be used freely, it is assumed to have a copyright. The source of material should be acknowledged. Here are MCLL's guidelines for copyright.

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Lecturers will receive a link to a form regarding recording. A lecturer may opt not to have his/her lecture recorded. If it is recorded, it will only go on MCLL's YouTube channel if the lecturer gives permission, if reviewers feel it meets a high standard, and if the presentation meets the copyright guidelines. A lecturer may also opt to only have the video available to members of MCLL in a password protected area.

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Appendix 1: Key dates

Seasonal Calendars - MCLL operates on the same calendar as McGill University academic terms, for Fall and Winter. In addition, there is a Spring term as well as a Summer session which only features lectures. Seasonal calendars are published online at least two weeks before the start of each registration period.

Study groups are offered Monday to Thursday at 9:30-11:30, 12:00-14:00, 14:30-16:30. All are held on the 2nd floor, in rooms 225, 241, 243 and 245 and/or in zoom.

Lectures are presented on Fridays at 10:00 -12:00 or 13:00-15:00 or at the same time on Wednesdays in the summer. Lectures are held on the 2nd floor or in zoom.

Appendix 2: Curriculum Committee

What it is

This is a subcommittee of Council and is responsible for developing seasonal programs based on proposals submitted by members. Curriculum Committee members are matched with moderators, lecturers, workshop leaders and outing coordinators, to act as liaisons.

Appendix 3: Speaking Tips for Lecturers and Moderators

Use handouts or visuals to enhance your presentation.

Remember: a picture is worth 1000 words. Highlight your key points with bullets. A chart can help clarify a complex issue.

Prepare your presentation ahead of time

For zoom presentations, your host will contact you to ensure that the technical aspects go smoothly.
Avoid information overload; participants can only remember 4 or 5 points every 20 minutes, so keep it simple.
Contact your co-presenter (if there is one) to coordinate your presentations and avoid overlap.
Practice and time your presentation.
Make sure that your presentation is what is promoted in the program. Think of it as a "contract" with the participants and make sure you deliver what you promised.

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First impressions last

> **Start the session on time.**
>
> Arrive early to test the equipment and make certain everything is in order for your presentation.
>
> Briefly introduce yourself and your topic to the participants. Set forth any "rules" or limitations - a road map for the session.

Be certain to leave time for questions

> Be flexible so that you can entertain spontaneous questions and comments from your audience. Many times, they can make your point for you!
>
> Speak slowly, clearly, and loudly.
>
> Repeat all questions and answers that come from the participants. This allows everyone to hear the question.

Finish on a strong note

> Summarize your key points to reinforce your message.
>
> If your presentation is running long and you haven't covered your major points, don't run on. It is better to quit on time and allow time for questions. Often you can find a way to make your final points and answer the questions.

Appendix 4: Ensuring All Goes Smoothly

Peer learning and Discussion

Allow time each week for discussion. This applies to all study group styles, including Moderator Presentation Groups. You could elicit discussion by asking questions prior to or during each meeting.

In encouraging discussion, **be sure to make it clear that all points of view are welcome.**

Presentations

If you can, encourage participants to submit their presentation proposals early so you and they are ready when study groups start. It is always a good idea to leave a couple of slots empty for those who register later.

Make sure that presenters have some help, should they want it, in preparing their presentations: finding research material, showing how their work relates to the main themes of the study group, giving background information on videos, refining the focus of the presentation and, especially, managing PowerPoint presentations so that they do not contain lengthy texts to be read in class. Please inform presenters that they do not need to use the Internet or present videos and are welcome to simply read their presentation. For hybrid and zoom only study groups, hosts can help with technical issues and in preparation of a slide show presentation.

Suggest a time limit for presentations, preferably around 20 minutes.

Presentations can be sent by email to participants after the meeting, if participants agree to share their email addresses, or they can be placed on Google Docs for future reference.

It is nice to send an email to thank a presenter for his/her contribution.

Managing the atmosphere in the class

Keep a firm hand on the discussion so that digressions are not too long.

Be firm in limiting interventions of participants who dominate the conversation or address other participants in a rude or belligerent manner. Such behaviour is not welcome at MCLL.

Be sure speakers take turns and do not interrupt or talk all at once.

Remember that the overriding aim of MCLL is to achieve an atmosphere in which all participants feel welcome to express their views, including opposing views, in a secure environment.

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Appendix 5: Survey for MCLL Lectures

Your feedback is important and appreciated by both MCLL and the lecturer. Negative comments are welcome, though preferably constructive, diplomatic
and encouraging. Answers are anonymous.

1. Title of the lecture you attended
   _____

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
2. Lecturer's preparation and knowledge	O	O	O	O
3. Presentation was interesting and relevant	O	O	O	O
4. Lecturer's clarity and delivery	O	O	O	O
5. Time the lecturer provided for questions and discussion	O	O	O	O
6. Overall assessment of the lecture	O	O	O	O

7. Comments or suggestions:

_____

_____

Thank you for your response.

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Appendix 6: Survey for MCLL Study Groups

Your feedback is important, and is much appreciated by MCLL and the moderator. It will help us to improve the study group experience. Negative comments are welcome, preferably constructive and encouraging. Answers are anonymous.

1. Title of the study group you attended

    _____

		No	Well Enough	Yes
2. The study group matched my expectations:		O	O	O

		No	Well Enough	Yes
3. The study group matched the program description:		O	O	O

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
4. The discussion and participation were:	O	O	O	O

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
5. The overall study group experience was:	O	O	O	O

	Yes	No
6. Would you recommend this study group to a friend?	O	O

7. Comments or suggestions:

_____

_____

If it was a hybrid study group, please answer these questions:

	In-person	Online
8. How did you attend?	O	O

	Yes	No	Maybe
9. Would you attend another hybrid study group?	O	O	O

10. Comments or suggestions on your hybrid experience:
_____

_____
Thank you for your response.

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