**SiSe Journal Club events: notes for facilitators**

Journal club events can be a very rewarding experience for facilitators. Results from pilot projects have shown that SiSe students are keen to take part and value the opportunity to gain skills and feel part of a community.

Journal club events are comprised of two workshops, ideally held approx. 2 weeks apart; the emphasis is on informal, interactive and fun! There is an expectation that the same group of students will attend both workshops.

**Preparing for sessions**

* Liaise with the Education Officer in the secure unit to discuss suitable dates/times for both events.
* Send SiSe flyer (‘*SiSe instructions for Summer Series’*) to the secure unit with agreed dates.
* Education Officers should log sign-ups. Note that sessions work best with <10 students per session (otherwise you’ll run out of time in the second workshop).
* A good relationship with the Education Officer in the unit is vital – and advertising is key. Students will need plenty of warning and plenty of reminders.
* As with any visit to a secure unit, please check restrictions in each unit and allow plenty of time to pass through security, prior to sessions.

**Workshop 1: Introduction and skills development (approx. 1 hr)**

* In this first session, you will meet the group for the first time and explain the ethos of Journal Club and what each student is expected to do in the second session (e.g. prepare and give a short 5 min presentation – on a topic of their choice - to their peers). This initial workshop should be informal and provide plenty of opportunity for students to interact.
* Provide guidance on finding / evaluating / summarising information from a variety of sources. It can be useful to bring some examples of material to work with during the session (e.g. so that you can apply PROMPT to copies of a current magazine article). It can be useful to provide examples of several different short articles – students can discuss the different examples with each other, either in pairs or small groups. Students can work on evaluating, note-taking and summarising skills (and writing in their own words).
* Due to the differences between secure units, students will have variable levels of access to materials. It can be useful to get the students to discuss potential sources of information for their talk. Remember that students are likely to be studying at different levels and be based in different disciplines. To give you an idea, the following work well:
  + Current or previous module material (but not relating to any assessment material)
  + Something from a newspaper / magazine / mainstream news
  + Primary literature
* Provide guidance on presentation skills – again, try to make this as interactive as possible (you can leave a copy of the ‘*General guide to presentation skills’* handout for the students to read afterwards). For example, get students to think about what makes a good (or bad!) presentation.
* Encourage students to consider ‘how’ they will run their presentation. Some students may have access to a computer and be in a position to produce PowerPoint slides, some may use whiteboards, flip charts – some may use other visual aids. Some may simply plan to stand and talk. Encourage students to brainstorm approaches and possible topics with each other.
* Remind students to think about their audience – i.e. their talks need to be understandable to someone unfamiliar with the subject matter.
* Encourage students to consider engaging with their audience, think about talking speed and volume, body language, etc..
* Reassure students that the Journal Club session is informal – and fun – an opportunity to practice their skills and share their passions with others.
* Allow time at the end for ‘questions and concerns’. Giving a presentation can be daunting – reassure students that the idea is that it is fun!

**Workshop 2: The Journal Club (approx. 1 hr)**

* The expectation is that this second session is just for listening to student presentations.
* Where possible, position seats/desks as informally as possible. As you welcome students into the room, emphasise the supportive but informal nature of the session. The idea is to encourage students and help them to develop confidence in their communication skills. The idea is that Journal Club is informal - and hence not assessed, but you can say that if anyone wants informal (brief) feedback, you will provide it at the end of the whole workshop, in confidence.
* Agree a running order with the group. Ask each speaker if they need anything before they begin – and remind them that they will be on a time limit, and that you will signal when they are approaching the end.
* Try to identify one positive thing each speaker does and perhaps one thing for improvement (e.g. I felt that you spoke clearly and at the right pace; try to look at your audience a little more). Make a note of this – but only share with the student if asked for feedback at the end.
* After each speaker, lead a short round of applause and think of a short and very simple question relating to their talk – but note that students do not have to open up to questions from the wider audience – although they can if they want to.
* At the end of the session, thank all speakers for their contributions. Remind students that the session was not formally assessed, but that if anyone wants feedback, you have brief comments that you can share with each individual.
* It would be great if you could offer students an opportunity to provide some brief feedback about aspects such as whether they enjoyed the experience, particular challenges experienced and whether / how participation was beneficial.

Thank you! Enjoy SiSe Journal Club!

Any queries – or to share student thoughts / your own observations - please contact [k.j.new@open.ac.uk](mailto:k.j.new@open.ac.uk)