SURVEY OF MCLL MODERATOR ENGAGEMENT

Report to the MCLL Council

Abstract: In December 2019, Council requested that the Planning Committee create and administer a survey of moderators to inquire about their engagement in the MCLL community in the service of retaining and recruiting moderators. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the high-priority burden the pandemic put on various committees, the survey was delayed until late in the Fall 2020 term. This document reports on the survey results and includes, in appendices, the survey questions as well as the detailed results including all comments received by respondents.

Submitted by the Planning Committee
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moderating remotely, via Zoom. Findings show some strong trends in spite of often quite varied responses, as described in the next sections.

As the survey findings have implications for more than one MCLL committee, this report is submitted to Council for its review and discussion in anticipation that Council will then provide direction to the relevant committees regarding follow-up actions.

2. Result highlights

Findings include information about how active the respondents have been as moderators, the types of Study Groups (SG) they offer, how they experience moderating remote SGs via Zoom, how they experience moderating in general, and what they would recommend to encourage other members to moderate.

‹ About half the respondents were female, half male; about 66% were between 65 and 84 years of age.

‹ 81% of respondents have been moderating from two years to more than five years.

‹ 60% moderate from one to three times a year.

‹ Of the most frequent types of SGs offered by the respondents, "moderator participant presentation group" and "moderator presentation group" both ranked at approximately 20% each.

‹ About 30% of respondents have expertise in the humanities, followed by social sciences and business/commerce.

‹ Regarding moderating online, about 33% of respondents feel competent using Zoom, and another 16% recommend more Zoom training and support. Respondents reported receiving technical help and support from their Curriculum Committee liaison person as the most frequent types of support received; 38% reported linking with their liaison. Of those moderators who have discontinued, seven have done so because of the online format; at least one-third reported needing no encouragement to continue moderating.

‹ Most respondents participate in MCLL by attending SGs and/or workshops; nearly a third serve or have served on Committees and/or Council.

‹ To recruit new moderators, respondents recommended, direct recruiting, promoting co-moderating as an option, and offering more technical (Zoom) training and support.

3. About the survey and how it was administered

The survey link was sent on November 19, 2020 to all 188 members on the moderator list maintained by the Curriculum Committee. This includes members who have moderated at least one Study Group in the past five years. Members were allowed approximately two weeks to respond, until December 4, with a reminder sent after one week. In total, 42 surveys were completed, a response rate of 22%, which is considered an average rate in social science research.

Survey questions were designed to capture basic information about the moderators (age, gender), how active the respondents have been as moderators, the types of Study Groups (SG) they offer,

how they experience moderating remote SGs via Zoom, and their recommendations for recruiting other members to moderate. The survey has 19 questions, as follows:

- ‹ Six single-choice questions; the results are reported in a simple breakdown of how many respondents selected each option for the question.

- ‹ Nine questions elicit comment-type answers. Responses to these have been grouped into categories that identify patterns.

- ‹ Three questions that require a short text response. Responses to these have been grouped into categories as well.

4. Detailed results

Results were reported by means of a query of the Lime[1] survey tool; both complete results and results that included all incomplete attempts (categorized as "Not completed or Not displayed").[2] This report addresses the 42 complete results only.

The results query returned quantitative results for all multiple-choice questions and listed all the comments and short-text responses for each question of that type. All comments and text responses were analyzed to identify commonalities among responses as follows: four "teams" of two people each (three members of the Planning Committee and one member of the Moderator Subcommittee divided the comment-type questions among the four teams. The two people on each team independently reviewed and grouped the comments. The two independently-achieved groupings were then compared and harmonized for each comment response, resulting in robust categories for analysis.

4.1. Characteristics of the respondents

A few multiple-choice questions capture some basic information, such as age and gender, plus information about how active the respondents have been as moderators and the types of Study Groups (SG) they offer. Other questions capture how they experience moderating remotely, via Zoom.

4.1.1. Length of service

Of the 42 respondents to Question 1, nearly 81% have been moderating from two years to more than five years: nearly 43% for more than five years and 38% for two to five years. Three

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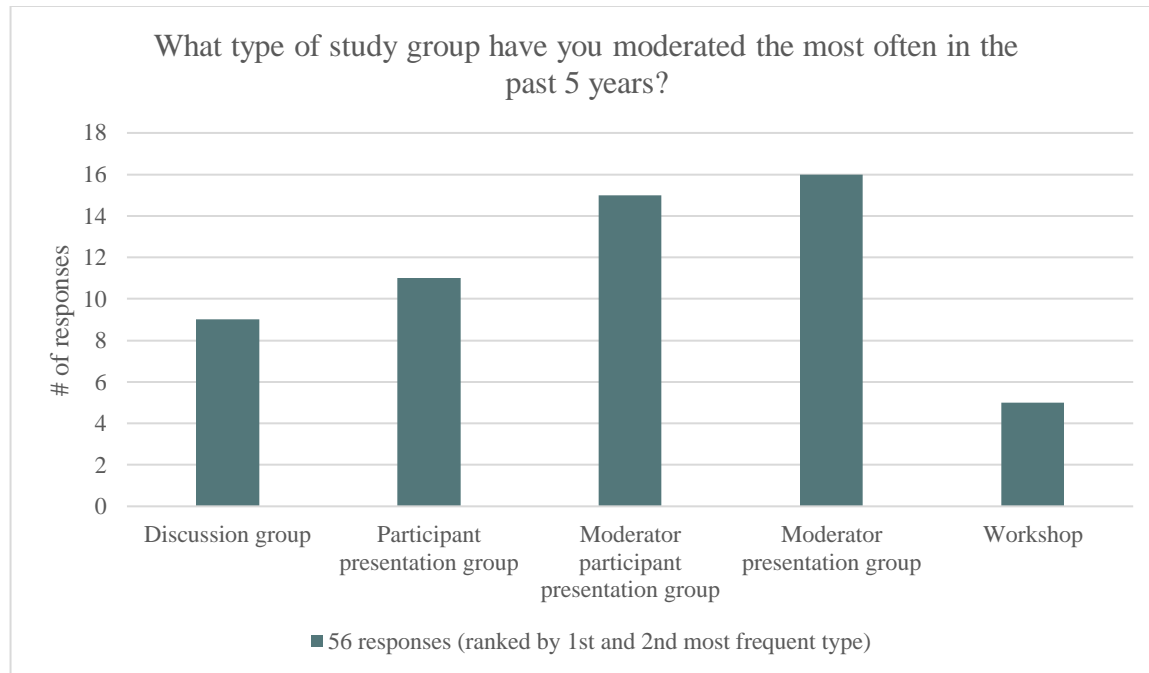[1] For more information about the Lime survey tool, see https://www.limesurvey.org/.

[2] 84 total attempts were recorded for the survey; however, 42 of these were discarded as "not completed" or "not displayed." Incomplete responses are caused when a respondent opens and closes a survey page or exits the survey and does not save or submit the results. We cannot know the proportion of incomplete responses due to multiple individuals opening and closing the survey once or to a single person opening and closing the survey more than once. This report is based on the 42 completed/submitted surveys.

respondents selected "No answer," which is the Lime tool mandatory default option in this question type.

4.1.2.

4.1.1. Type of Study Group

Question 3 asked respondents to rank both their first and second most frequent type of SG. A total of 56 responses were received. Both "**moderator participant presentation** group" and "**moderator presentation group**" received the highest rankings.

What type of study group have you moderated the most often in the past 5 years?

Study group type	# of responses
Discussion group	9
Participant presentation group	11
Moderator participant presentation group	15
Moderator presentation group	16
Workshop	5

■ 56 responses (ranked by 1st and 2nd most frequent type)

4.1.2. Expertise and interest

Question 16 sought to characterize the expertise of our moderators. In retrospect, this question should have been asked as two, about areas of interest as well as expertise, as some, if not many, members moderate SGs in whose topic they have no particular expertise but have genuine interest.[3] The 36 responses were grouped as follows:

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[3] One positive aspect of MCLL is that people who worked all their lives in a certain field, become interested in something completely different when they retire, and may offer lectures or study groups in that field. Also, we are told that one does not need to be an expert on a topic in order to moderate a SG on it - moderators and

Six respondents chose OTHER, but

o

Difficult to take attendance online (*Note: The Zoom host can/should do this*)	1
In the past attendance was sometimes taken	3
In the past attendance was taken regularly	2
By visual verification	1
Haven't done Zoom classes	1

Attending lectures	1
Dinner parties at my home (for class)	

Question 19 addressed what MCLL could do to recruit members. Again, there were 27 responses, and of these, 12 recommended more advertising, including publicizing by word of mouth. Related to this were several one-of responses suggesting expanding our geographic scope, networking with other community groups, recruiting McGill faculty, recruiting homebound seniors for online activities, and making MCLL multi-generational.

5. Next steps

Moderators are key to the mission and functioning of MCLL. Because the survey findings have different implications for different MCLL committees, this report is submitted to Council for review and discussion so that Council can then distribute it to the relevant committees and give direction regarding recommendations and follow-up activities.

6. Appendix 1: Survey questions

1. When did you first start moderating at MCLL? Choose one of the following answers:

   o This semester
   o Over the past calendar year from September 2019 to August 2020
   o In the past 2-5 years
   o More than 5 years ago
   o No answer
   back to report text

2. How often have you been moderating over the past 5 years? Choose one of the following answers:

   o Three times a year
   o Two times a year
   o One time a year
   o Three or four times in the past 5 years
   o Two to three times in the last five years
   o One time in the past 5 years No answer
   back to report text

3. What type of study group have you moderated the most often in the past 5 years? Rank your first and second most frequent type of study group. Check all that apply:

   o Discussion group
   o Participant presentation group
   o Moderator participant presentation group
   o Moderator presentation group
   o Workshop
   back to report text

4. What type of support have you received as a moderator from MCLL? back to report text

5. How has the switch to an online platform at MCLL affected your willingness or your ability to be a moderator? back to report text

6. Did you know that MCLL has added Zoom training and zoom technical support to help moderators during their online study groups? Choose one of the following answers:

   o Yes
   o No
   o No answer
   back to report text

7. What type of support and encouragement would you additionally like to receive from MCLL to support you as a moderator at MCLL, especially in light of the move to an online platform? back to report text

8. Have you linked with your Curriculum Committee liaison for support as a moderator? Choose one of the following answers

   o Yes
   o No
   o No answer
   back to report text

9. If yes, was the Curriculum Committee liaison support person helpful? back to report text

10. Have you been able to record attendance in your MCLL study group on a regular basis? If NO or SOMETIMES, please explain in the comments box. Choose one of the following answers:

    o Yes
    o No: please enter your comment here
    o Sometimes: please enter your comment here
    o No answer
    back to report text

11. Excluding moderating how else have you participated in the MCLL community. Choose as many answers as apply. If you choose OTHER, please provide details in the comments box. Check all that apply.

    o Office support or other administrative duties
    o Attending study groups
    o Attending workshops
    o Participating in MCLL Council or committees
    o Other: please enter your comment here
    back to report text

12. If you are no longer moderating, why have you decided to discontinue? back to report text

13. What could be done by MCLL to encourage you to continue moderating? back to report text

14. What is your gender? Choose one of the following answers:

    o Male
    o Female
    o Prefer not to answer
    o No answer
    back to report text

15. What is your age? Choose one of the following answers:

    o Under 44
    o 45 to 54
    o 55 to 64
    o 65 to 74
    o 75 to 84
    o 85 to 90 90+
    o No answer

16. Which of the following best describes your area of expertise? If you check OTHER, please identify your area of expertise in the text box below. Choose one of the following answers

- o Social sciences
- o Math and Sciences
- o Engineering
  Business / Commerce
- o Humanities
- o Other: please enter your comment here
- o No answer

17. Other than moderating, would you be willing to offer your expertise to MCLL and in what capacity?

18. What do you think MCLL should do to encourage new moderators?

19. What do you think MCLL should do to encourage new members?