# Leading a discussion session at a Cloud Control Workshop

The discussion sessions are most often aimed to either spread knowledge about an area of interest to the participants (where the leader is already rather knowledgeable) or to jointly elaborate on some research problem in order to better understand or make progress towards solving the problem. But of course, discussion topics are not restricted to these two characters.

When selecting a topic and preparing the session, strive to identify questions that lead to discussions rather than can simply be looked up in literature. Strive to see the discussion itself as part of the goal. It is of course not necessary to maintain a discussion along the route that you planned, but it is good to have a plan in case discussion dies out or totally diverge into something else (which may not be what the participants anticipated).

Also, strive to get the group to be as engaged as possible. Sometimes a discussion session is more of a question-driven lecture, but when not, the goal should be to have the group talking and the leader directing them.

A discussion topic leader is expected to:
- Provide a title and a 50-100 words abstract, enough to catch the interest of the participants.
- Start by asking people not to engage in emails and other laptop activities, as explicitly passive participants reduce energy in the room.
- Introduce the topic. This may range from explaining the area in one minute to giving a short (say 10-minutes presentation)
- Prepare and present a few questions to be discussed regarding the topic.
- To chair the discussion and make sure the group makes progress and make sure that the group talks and not only listens (if possible).
- To save the results for history, you may also write an "abstract-style" summary of the discussion short after the session (but just brief, say 150 – 250 words).