





You identified relational learning as the prominent outcome of participating in the Denali Discussion Forum, followed by normative and cognitive learning (Figure 2). However, this was not necessarily consistent across the three groups. Members of Group A and Group B largely indicated that your perspective of others grew or changed as a result of participation in the discussion forum (relational learning). On the other hand, members of group C identified learning more evenly across all three dimensions.

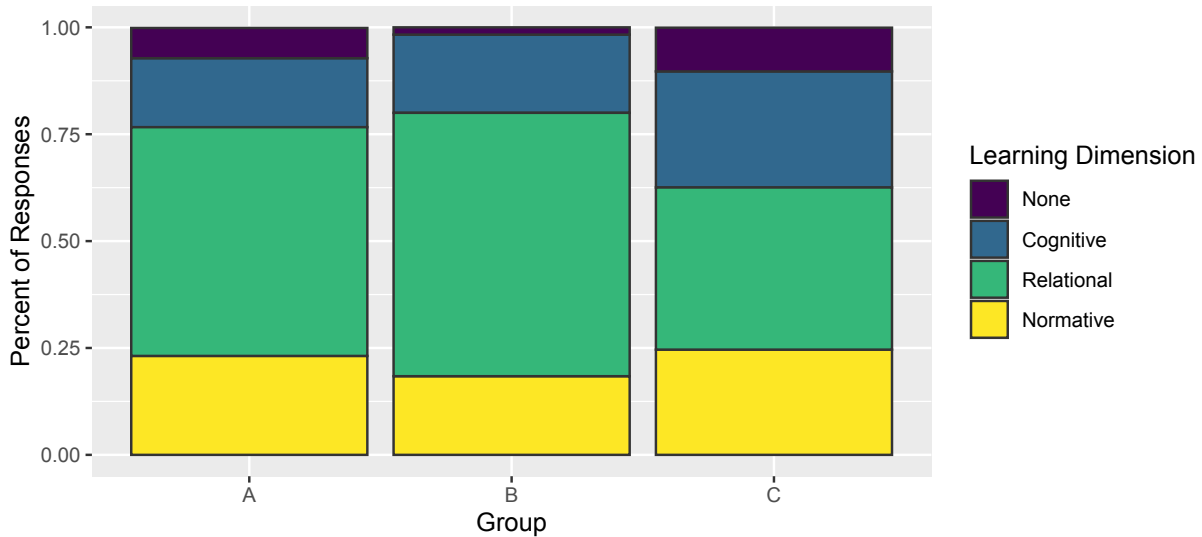


Figure 2. Percentage of responses across the three discussion groups that indicated cognitive, relational, or normative dimensions of social learning occurred as a result of participation in the Denali Discussion Forum.

**Cognitive learning** What – if anything – have you gained a better understanding of through the Denali Discussion Forum?

Cognitive learning, which encompasses knowledge and awareness of facts or experiences, was the least common learning dimension mentioned in your Week 4 responses. This might be unsurprising given that the forum was composed of residents who live in a specific geographic region, with you all being deeply familiar with the Denali landscape in different ways as local experts. Those of you who did indicate that your knowledge increased, mentioned planning and regulations undertaken by neighboring communities, trail designation, as well as the processes and scope of public land management in the region.

**Relational learning** How did other people play a role in your learning process and what do you hope they learned in turn?

Almost 90% of you reported that learning occurred in regard to your perspective of diverse viewpoints or your relationships with other participants. As a result, relational learning was one of the largest benefits of participation, at least within this study! Many of you were happy to find out that you shared more in common with other residents—especially those from different communities or professional circles—than you would have originally assumed. It was interesting to also hear you consider the potential effects of relational learning, such as feeling empowered and more connected to the entirety of the community throughout the Denali region:



*Hearing about shared values for the area in which we choose to live was empowering, creating shared experiences and goals. I feel more connected to my greater Denali region because I heard voices from Nenana to Talkeetna instead of just my little neighborhood around mile 230 and the Park entrance.*

Although you were heartened by this common ground, you also pointed out that the range in perspectives may be “messier” than you previously had considered:

*I have gained a better understanding of the variety of details people are concerned about regarding public land management in the region. Conceptually, I have always tended to group such opinions into a few discrete categories; i.e., ‘development priority,’ ‘preservation priority,’ or ‘balanced rehabilitation priority.’ Through our interactions I have come to discover that as usual, the real world is a bit more complicated than what my abstract reductionist tendencies might mislead me into believing.*

One of you also pointed out that through learning about the within-group variation in perspectives further highlighted the “daunting” challenge of public land management to equitably incorporate the range of stakeholder interests. Some of you were concerned that the lack of agreement, even from people “on the same side” may present an issue in enacting change in land management. As a result, these discussions on relational learning also connected to you contemplating the role of shared values and points of alignment in public land management, and how to do so while also creating a respectful space that encourages the many and different values for the Denali landscape.

**Normative learning** How did your expectations for public land management change after engaging in the discussions?

The understanding and expectations for public land management varied across the Week 4 responses. Some of you—especially those who have been actively participating in civic engagement activities—stated that your expectations for public land management had not necessarily changed as a result of the discussion. Instead, the discussion fortified your perspective that changing the public land management framework was slow, but it is a worthwhile goal to try and achieve. In contrast, some of you who have not been as engaged in land management efforts previously pointed out that the Denali Discussion Forum provided the opportunity to expand your understanding of public land management in the region, shaping your expectations on how management may improve:

*The biggest change in my perception of public land management was in its scope. I had never considered that land management could effect so many things that I didn’t see or interact with. I never really had cause to sit down and think about it...I believe that decision makers should be making much more of an effort to engage... and understand the values of the people.*

Additionally, some of you pointed out that the Discussion Forum had sparked and further solidified your passion to be engaged in decision-making to try and affect change for the region. One particular area of interest was to push decision-makers to amplify the voices and traditional knowledge of Indigenous people, as well as to increase inclusion and equity in public land management. These normative learning experiences largely came from a discussion in the previous weeks that critiqued the use of “untouched wilderness” in management strategies.



## Lack of Learning and Potential Improvements

A small minority of participants indicated that you did not think that you had learned anything new from in the Denali Discussion Forum. Interestingly, these same individuals also mentioned gaining a better understanding of other viewpoints or relationship building amongst community members. This is noteworthy because discussion forums may contrast traditional learning environments (e.g., sitting down in a classroom). For example, one of you compared the differences between cognitive and relational learning dimensions, as well as identified ways that discussion forums may be used to enact change in the region:

*Rather than learning or teaching, I felt we were getting to know each other. To me it seems that we have a lot in common with each other, and the broad topics brought that out. I think for a discussion forum like this to be really meaningful, it would have to go on for quite a long time and eventually get into specific issues.*

You all were very helpful in providing thoughtful feedback on how the discussion forums and group deliberation may be successfully applied to support public land management in the Denali region. Many of you agreed that the four-week timeline was not quite long enough for the discussion forum to get into the “meat” of many issues. However, you also suggested that within shorter time periods, discussion forums could be used as a space to learn more about a particular topic or to understand other community member’s perspectives prior to a public comment period. Some of you also pointed out that the forum would have benefited from a wider range of participants beyond residents, to include local to regional decision-makers or people from other areas of the state. Finally, you were excited to continue engaging in discussions with people whose viewpoints differ from your own and pointed out that this might not have fully happened in the discussion forum due to “self-selection” of those who chose to participate. As one of you aptly stated, an online discussion forum about public land management may be “too much like planning” for some residents to want to engage.

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### Continuing the Conversation

Our research team appreciates all of the points that you have raised in thinking about approaches to improve inclusive conservation in the Denali region. We look forward to talking more about the results of the Denali Discussion Forum and continuing the conversation during the wrap-up Webinar on April 8<sup>th</sup>! If you have any questions or points that you would like to discuss during the wrap-up Webinar, please let the research team know and we can incorporate these into the meeting agenda. You can email your questions to Riley Andrade at [riley.m.andrade@gmail.com](mailto:riley.m.andrade@gmail.com). Thank you so much again for your continued participation and thoughtful feedback during the Denali Discussion Forum.