

Teaching Aids for Workshop Presenters

FAIC Professional Development Programs

Think LEARNING, not Teaching

It is easy to fall into the “teaching” trap. Presenters often feel the need to present or explain the entire topic to an “audience.” However, if you think about key learning experiences in your past, you’ll probably realize that there are very few academic lectures that you really remember and can draw upon today. More likely, the learning experiences that had the most impact on your life were more “hands-on” events (and perhaps even mistakes). Think about your topic from the learner’s point of view – what do they really need to internalize? What can be put on a handout for later reference? If you can plant three concepts into their brains, what would those be? Here are two resources for reflection. The first deals with principles of adult learning. The second offers some tips for successful use of PowerPoint.

Seven Principles for Good Practice in Workshop Instruction

Drawn from Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda Gamson, *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education: Faculty Inventory*. Racine, Wisconsin: The Johnson Foundation, 1987. Also see their “Applying the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* Vol. 47 (1991), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; or summary article at <http://www.buy.edu/fc/pages/tchlrnpages/7princip.html>

1. Good practice encourages student-faculty contact.

Are there ways you can increase contact with the participants beyond the brief time frame of the workshop? Possibilities include:

- Mailing (or e-mailing) information to registrants before-hand
- Providing readings, web links, or other resources which can be used before or after the workshop
- Inviting e-mail or telephone contact with students following the workshop
- Assigning “homework” to be submitted to you following the workshop

2. Good practice encourages cooperation among students.

Are there ways you can encourage team efforts and sharing of ideas and reactions?

Perhaps try:

- Discussion of a particular issue in small groups
- Identification of most urgent needs by the group
- Posing problems or case studies for discussion by entire group or small groups
- Hands-on simulations or exercises that require group interaction

3. Good practice encourages active learning.

Can you turn part of a lecture into an active exercise? If you allow participants to talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, or apply it to their daily lives, they will learn and remember what they have learned. Some ideas:

Discussions (as above)

Paper and pencil exercises

Encourage interactive note taking – stop periodically and ask people to write down what they’ve learned so far (1-3 items) and what they still have questions about or hope to learn next.

Hands-on practice (by all or a few representatives)

4. *Good practice gives prompt feedback.*

Stop periodically and ask for review from participants. Are they following you? Formal examinations are probably not appropriate, but don’t be afraid to give a brief, oral “pop quiz,” with immediate feedback. If participants work on a problem or case-study, be sure to offer feedback on each effort right away, if possible.

5. *Good practice emphasizes time on task.*

Do participants need to continue practice beyond the workshop? If so, give clear guidelines on how much time to expect to devote to practice, further reading, etc., and encourage them to devote that time to the task.

6. *Good practice communicates high expectations.*

Expect more and you will get it.

Demonstrate high expectations of yourself (as seen in preparation, materials provided, etc.) and you will communicate this to participants

7. *Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.*

There are many roads to learning, and many skills and abilities. Although time is short, try to give an opportunity for participants to share their particular skills and ways of seeing your topic. Also, try to vary the way to give information – some people learn best visually, some need to hear and see to understand, and most of us learn best by doing. If it is necessary to show 50 slides, can you break up the presentation into smaller units, with group activities or other learning opportunities to keep the attention of those who are not as visually attuned?

One last word: use a lecture format only as a last resort! Adults want to be in control of their learning and usually have much to contribute, so involving them in the learning process will lead to a better result for you and your audience.

Top Eight Rules for Creating a PowerPoint Presentation

(courtesy of Blue Sky Broadcast: www.blueskybroadcast.com)

1. Remember that *you* are the presenter, not PowerPoint. Use your slides to emphasize a point, keep yourself on track, and illustrate a point with a graphic or photo. Don't read the slides.
2. Don't make your audience read the slides either. Keep text to a minimum (6-8 lines per slide, no more than 30 words per slide). The bullet points should be headlines, not news articles. Write in sentence fragments using key words, and keep your font size 24 or bigger.
3. Make sure your presentation is easy on the eyes. Stay away from weird colors and busy backgrounds. Use easy-to-read fonts such as Arial and Times New Roman for the bulk of your text, and, if you have to use a funky font, use it sparingly.
4. Never include anything that makes you announce, "I don't know if everyone can read this, but...." Make sure they can read it before you begin. Print out all your slides on standard paper, and drop them to the floor. The slides are probably readable if you can read them while you're standing. If you do feel the need to present more detailed information, provide it as a handout rather than on a slide.
5. Leave out the sound effects and background music, unless it's related to the content being presented. If you haven't made arrangements with the conference coordinator before your presentation, your audience members might not be able to hear your sound effects anyway. The same goes for animated graphics and imbedded movie files.
6. Sure you can make the words boomerang onto the slide, but you don't have to. Stick with simple animations if you use them at all. Remember that some of your audience may have learning disabilities such as dyslexia, and swirling words can be a tough challenge.
7. Proofread, proofread, proofread. You'd hate to discover that you misspelled your institution's name during your presentation in front of 40 colleagues, with your boss in the front row.
8. Practice, practice, practice. The more times you go through the presentation, the less you'll have to rely on the slides for cues and the smoother your presentation will be. PowerPoint software allows you to make notes on each slide, and you can print out the notes versions if you need help with pronunciations or remembering what comes next.

If this doesn't inspire you, check out <http://norvig.com/Gettysburg/> for an illuminating example of how PowerPoint can kill a presentation (Abraham Lincoln gives the Gettysburg Address on PowerPoint).

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