

Tips and Hints for Presenters

Points to remember when working with adults:

1. Take care of physical needs of the participants first. The room temperature should be comfortable. Seating should be arranged so everyone can see and hear. Participants should be provided writing surfaces. Audiovisual equipment should be in place. Give clear directions to rest rooms and water fountains. Explain length of session(s), when breaks are planned, and that it is okay to leave the room if necessary.
2. Have materials organized before you start. Explain at the beginning what will be covered during the session.
3. During the presentation, address any problem points that have been brought to your attention.
4. Create a positive atmosphere. Be friendly; don't talk down to the audience.
5. Use a variety of learning techniques, such as role playing, brainstorming, and so forth.

Basic Principles Influencing Adult Learning

Adults have less time available to be engaged in learning due to their many responsibilities. The time they spend in training sessions must be viewed as a worthwhile investment. They do not view themselves as learners; they are parents, spouses, and breadwinners. Adults work mostly in repetitive, non-learning situations. Therefore, sometimes the excitement for expanding their knowledge and creating new ideas must be nurtured. You can maximize your training time by making the most of the natural abilities of the participants. There are five basic principles that influence adult learning:

1. Keep them active. Adults have a low tolerance for sitting and listening. After making a major point, ask participants to express how it relates to their everyday world.
2. Practice and show examples that will help the participants apply the new information. This could be done through role playing or practicing.
3. Get feedback, reinforcing the positive and redirecting the negative. Since learning is an act of changing, give feedback to the participants on how they're doing.
4. Help participants understand the meaning of new knowledge or skills. Explain the information related to the examples, and encourage and answer questions.
5. Relate your presentation to experiences both in and outside of PTA. The materials presented to adults must be intended for direct and immediate application in order to keep their interest. Begin with ideas and concepts familiar to participants as a first step to the new idea you plan to present.

Before you present the material, ask the person who scheduled the meeting:

1. What is the group like? Who are they? Why are they here?
2. Are there particular problems you should address?
3. How many will attend the meeting?
4. What are the facilities like? What equipment will be available?

Presentation Techniques

Adults learn in a variety of ways. *Lecture* is perhaps the least effective method, but it is the one we most employ. Varying your presentation techniques can make learning enjoyable for both the listener and the presenter. Following are some easy to use presentation methods that will be familiar to you.

Ice Breaker

An ice breaker can be used to create a friendly atmosphere among the participants. It is effective both with groups in which participants do not know one another well, and those with participants who have worked together as a team. One suggested activity that uses group involvement is to have small groups think about an answer to a question such as, "What are the qualities of an effective leader?"

Expectations

Ask the participants what they expect to learn during the presentation. This will help you learn what their needs are, and it can serve as a guide to what to emphasize as you go through the course.

Group Discussion

If there are fewer than 18 people attending the presentation, you can use group discussion. If there are more participants, *buzz groups* will be more effective. If you use group discussion, it is important to keep the discussion on track and emphasize that everyone is to take part.

Buzz Groups

A buzz group is dividing a large audience into groups of six to ten persons to get wide participation, quickly, on a very limited subject. The groups form small circles, with everyone being given a chance to express an opinion on the subject.

Whip

A whip is a process where you move around the room quickly to give everyone a chance to give their thoughts or feelings about a topic. It is done without comments, and people can pass if they don't wish to add anything to the discussion.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the free-flowing and uninhibited sharing and listing of ideas by a group without evaluation or consideration of practicality. The purpose is to generate from the group

as many creative ideas as possible about a specific topic. “Small groups are established, and each group should have access to newsprint or a whiteboard. Any idea generated is okay. Ideas don’t have to be logical or practical; creativity is what is important. All ideas are recorded.

Mini-Lecture

The purpose of the mini-lecture is to deliver a lot of technical information in a short period of time, usually in ten minutes or less.

Role Playing

Role playing is an impromptu dramatization of a problem or situation, followed by discussion. Members usually volunteer to play a given role. Sometimes a brief script of the role is handed to each person so the person can ad lib and make the presentation very informal.

Handouts

Handouts can be prepared to allow the participants to have information that relates to the discussion. Distribute the handouts after the presentation if you do not want people to read as you are presenting information. If participants need to follow along as you make the presentation, you may hand out the materials before you begin each section. It will save time to distribute all materials before the presentation begins.

Visual Aides

The use of visual aides will make your presentation more interesting.

Posters are easy to make. They give participants something to look at during the presentation and reinforce the information they are hearing.

PowerPoint presentations or transparencies are used on a projector. Information that would appear on a poster could be placed on a transparency, and is much easier to handle and to carry to the presentation site.

Movies/slides can be used during a presentation, if equipment is available.

Flip charts can be purchased from most educational supply stores. Markers that do not bleed should be used for these charts. They are useful for recording ideas from the group in brainstorming sessions.

Newsprint can be used with buzz groups, brainstorming, and group discussion. Sheets can be taped or tacked to the walls for easy access by recorders.

~ From *Leadership Skills Manual*, National PTA (out-of-print)