

Appendix I

Trainer's toolkit

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Guidelines for a good presentation

The Training

The trainer is basically used to furnish information needed by a group to carry out task-relevant activities. They shall convey concepts and subject-matter details and stimulate critical thinking. The common characteristics of an effective, participant-centred trainer are the following:

1. They take the possible amount of information on a subject into account that can be absorbed and obtained at one time
2. The trainer is structured appropriately for the intended purpose
3. Employment of a variety of techniques to engage participants actively in the process of learning, e.g. use of overheads, slides, flipcharts

One idea at a time

Due to the fact that people have a limited capacity of short-term memory, the trainer has to bear in mind that the audience can only absorb a certain amount of information before they reach saturation. The following should therefore be considered:

1. Deliver information clearly to the audience, taking into consideration the complexity of the information and the ability of the audience to understand it
2. Focus on the key ideas and do not get carried away
3. Use repetition especially of the key points
4. Use cross-references to give an integral overview of the issue you are talking about, i.e. show the big picture

3-Part structure

By necessity, training or presentations have to be brief and to the point. The amount of information delivered is according to the proficiency of the audience. The structure consists of a provocative beginning, a convincing middle and a strong ending.

The provocative beginning

This creates interest and a desire to learn more about the subject matter under discussion. Most important for the trainer is to answer the inevitable question in the mind of every participant: "What's in for me if I learn this material?" This question can be answered with a brief review of the major objective of the issue, why learning is worthwhile and personally valuable, how learning will help them reach an important goal or overcome a major obstacle, and how the activities in which they engage will help them learn it. A provocative statement can be used to focus attention on the subject.

A convincing middle

It supports the central idea introduced in the beginning. This is the "meat" of the presentation. The most important aspect is to keep in mind the KISS principle "***Keep It Simple and Specific***". This means using words, phrases and examples that the participants are familiar with. Avoid ambiguous words, terms and statements that could reduce your credibility. Exclusive use of elite and technical language sometimes might be impressive, but one is not measured by how much s/he shows off, but how much gets across.

The use of examples, or representative instances of a situation can prove or clarify a general statement. To quote from reliable sources can further enhance the credibility of the trainer, the same with stating facts. Concentrate on the absolute necessary amount. Try to illustrate any data with the use of graphs instead of complex tables.

Strong ending

The closing of the trainer reinforces the key points and suggests how participants of the training might use the information obtained to improve their back-home performance. This point can be used to start a discussion, to ask questions, to present or start exercises, etc. The closing serves as a review, provides feedback on whether the key points have been assimilated, and acts as a transmission to the following activity.

Getting the people into the act

The trainer should ideally view his role not only as the information deliverer but also as a learning facilitator. Getting the message across is the main issue! Trainers are to allow and encourage participation even if the time is short and the material to be covered is a lot. Ways of getting people into the act include:

- ? Involve them in their own learning by letting them explain their expectations, e.g. *“The best thing that could happen for me as a result of my participation in this workshop is ...”*
- ? Have participants think of and discuss situations, which they know about or have experienced personally
- ? Ask the participants summarise the training or parts of it
- ? Have brief breaks
- ? Let participants explain and comment on the materials you use
- ? Use participant-involving activities such as brainstorming, question and answer sessions, role-playing, etc.

The handout

The handout has several functions:

1. To serve as notes for the participants
2. To present illustrations, e.g. graphs, tables, pictures
3. To outline exercises for the participants

A handout should be brief, present the most important material and distributed in-between the training or exercises. This will decrease the tendency of the trainees to focus on the handout rather than the training itself.

Summary

Successful training is carefully planned with three considerations in mind. First, it should be as brief as possible, focused on a few key ideas and structured to deliver information in “bite-sized” bits. Secondly, the training is carefully designed to include a provocative beginning, convincing middle and strong ending. Thirdly, training provides participants with the opportunity to get actively involved.

Visual aids

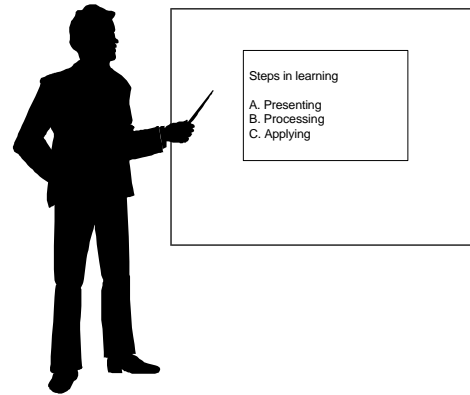
“One picture is worth a thousand words.” This famous saying illustrates the importance of visual aids. Properly used, they can illustrate effectiveness of training. Visual aids come in two varieties; projected and non-projected. Most common projected illustrations are films, videos, slides, computer graphics, and overhead transparencies. Non-projected are basically physical objects, pictures, posters, flip charts, maps, audiotapes and chalkboards.

Reasons for regular use of properly designed visual materials in training are:

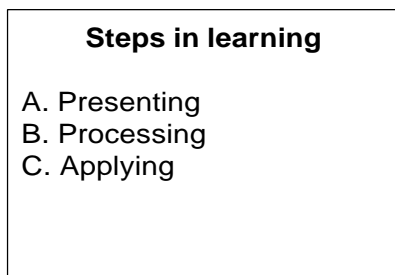
1. They attract and maintain the attention of the participants
2. Reinforce important ideas
3. Support ideas stated verbally
4. Increase information retention by the trainees
5. Help to avoid misunderstanding
6. Add realism
7. Ensure that the major points are covered

Overhead transparencies

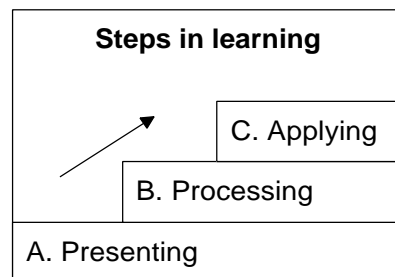
Overhead transparencies are probably the most common technique of the projected category. They can successfully amplify information presented orally if they are used correctly. This greatly depends on the use of professional looking transparencies, the set-up of the projection area and the integration of the presentation in the actual training. The greatest advantage of overheads is that they are relatively cheap.



- ? Points to keep in mind when preparing transparencies:
- ? Keep the words as simple as possible – short phrases work out better than long sentences
- ? Present only one idea per transparency
- ? Use bold simple typefaces
- ? Use cartoons, graphics and charts to illustrate ideas rather than depending on words alone
- ? Use “bullets” or numbers in series and avoid vertical lettering



The words are clear in this illustration, but there is no visual impact reinforcement



The words are the same, but now in steps and with an arrow, provide visual

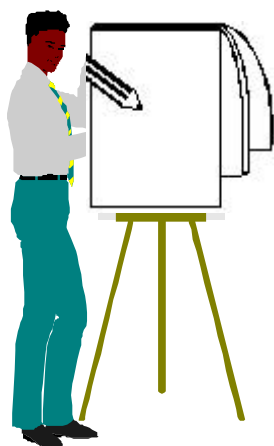
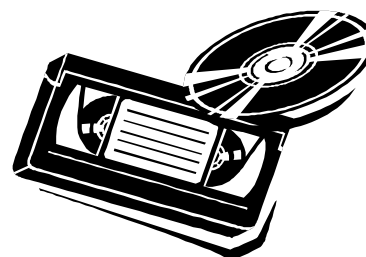
Slides

The use of slides, rather than pictures, is common and has some advantages. Slides can be shot easily and can be hired or borrowed from achieves or colleagues. When made during field trips, they can be used for exercises. They bring colour into a presentation.



Films and videos

Films and videos are a powerful medium for helping participants identify to people and situations similar to their own. If used properly, they can be valuable training tools. Films and videos can be used to complement key issues in the training. They however cannot substitute the training lectures.



Flip charts

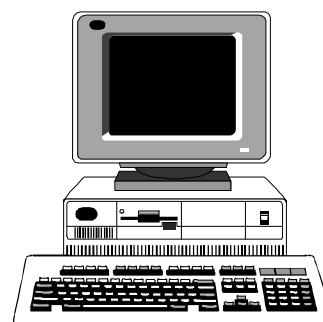
The flip chart is one of the most widely used tools in training for conveying information and ideas visually. It can be used to create visuals during the training or can be prepared in advance. However, it is only efficient in small groups of up to 30 participants. Several techniques can increase the effectiveness of the flip chart:

- ? Prepare some of the charts in advance and cover the points you want to present
- ? Print key sentences on the chart leaving blank spaces for use in entering words or phrases provided by the participants
- ? Use a variety of colours and graphic measures to attract the attention of the participants
- ? Apply the same hints as for overhead transparencies

Computer presentations

Modern computer technology enables trainers to design multi-media presentations. These can combine text, graphics, slides, photos and even video sequences. This could be very complex, tedious and expensive compared to other training aids.

To justify such presentations, expertise, a larger-than-usual audience, and sufficient funds have to be available. One must bear in mind that some computer presentations such as video clips cannot be easily passed on to the participants.



Summary

Visual aids enhance and accelerate the learning process. They can be easily integrated in training. The most commonly used visual aids are overhead projections, films, flip charts and the chalkboard. The best results are obtained if the trainer is capable of integrating them well in the facilitation and training process.

Guidelines for participatory methods

Learning is considered as a multi-staged process consisting of 3 steps of learning emphasis:

☞ **Presenting** ☞ **Processing** ☞ **Applying**

To achieve long-lasting effect, participatory methods, e.g. "action learning" have to be used as illustrated by this famous saying:

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

Among these participatory concepts and methods are some varieties of discussion, demonstrations, simulations, case studies, role-playing, etc.



Question and Answer

This method gives the trainer an opportunity to stimulate participant interest, to promote understanding, to get a feedback, and to encourage back-home application. Besides testing the comprehension, questions are useful in facilitating learning. They are the most versatile way of stimulating conversation and guiding communication.

Questions and answers can be applied at each of the following stages of the learning process:

1. At the presentation stage of learning, the questions are asked with the aim of generating information from the participants. Questions draw the participants' attention to the presentation and can be a starting point for reflection of information already conveyed.
2. At the processing stage, questions are directed at helping the participants understand and interpret the meaning of information or ideas presented to them.
3. At the application stage, questions asked are meant to help the participants think about and make use of new ideas and information on returning to their work or farming environments.

In order to ask the right questions at the right time, the trainer must keep the following in mind:

- ? Plan the questions and their purpose, i.e. do you want to obtain information or to gather options?
- ? Ask short and precise questions, which are easy to understand.
- ? Avoid questions that call for a YES or NO answer or where the answer is already implied.
- ? Make sure the question is generally understood otherwise rephrase it.

Answering the questions in the right way is equally important:

Acknowledge every question, verify the meaning of the question, e.g. "If I understand what you are asking, is this ..."

Answer the questions completely and accurately, asking whether there are still some unclear parts.

When asked a question, try and throw it back to the other participants to check if any one of them is able to answer it. This increases the participation level of the participants.

Try to make the answer short and precise. It should be straight to the point, avoiding use of stories.

Discussion

To achieve a sustainable knowledge, i.e. a back-home application of the skills learnt during the training, the trainer has to perform two main tasks:

1. Develop the participants' commitment to concepts and skills learnt
2. Maximise participants' retention of conveyed information presented

Involvement is the key to commitment as well as retention, so getting people into the act! The group discussion is very important to achieve this objective. Group discussion comes in three basic varieties:

1. **Guided discussion:** This is a trainer-centred activity and is designed to encourage the participants' to think about, relate to and internalise new ideas. Through a series of question, which build on each other, the trainer attempts to lead participants into a desired decision. To achieve this goal, a substantial amount of subject-matter expertise of the trainer is required.
2. **Structured discussion:** A trainer-designed, participant-centred activity, which enables the trainer to engage participants on group problem solving. The trainer acts more or else as a moderator, interpreter or coach. This increases the participants' mutual exploration, struggle and discovery leading towards truly own insights raising crucial self-confidence.
3. **Free discussion:** This type is trainer-facilitated and participant-centred activity, which leaves the main responsibilities to the participants. Like the structured discussion, it increases the participants' self-confidence and active involvement in the topic of discussion. The main focus lies on sharing information, testing out new ideas and building up on group unity and consensus. The risk is that this method may give most of the control to the participants. The trainer must therefore be very careful during free discussion.

Demonstration

This involves the participant watching what the trainer is illustrating. This could be in the use of visual aids or even the body language/gestures that the trainer is portraying to the participants. At advanced levels, it can be combined with coaching, where the participants perform a task while the trainer observes and coaches to correct any mistakes. The setting up of a demonstration basically consists of four elements:

1. Presenting the task, giving precise instructions. A good training manual with examples and exercises can substitute this.
2. Follow up the presentation, i.e. find out if everything presented has been absorbed properly.
3. The trainer presents the task (demonstrates) before asking the participants to perform the same task.
4. Participants repeat the task presented while the trainer actively coaches until the desired goal is achieved.

Like all other techniques, the success largely depends on the skills of the trainer, so be creative.

The case method

The method enables participants to draw their own conclusions from a set of facts that lead to decisions. It assumes group discussion and the cases used are sufficiently involving and detailed to produce a wide range of opinions.

Discourage participants from making snap judgements about people or behaviour

Discourage the search for the one and only "best answer"

Graphically illustrating different approaches to possible solutions of the case

Encourage the participants to lively discuss experiencing the broadening value of interaction

Emphasise the great value of practical thinking

This participant-centred method stimulates the participants to take a spirited role in analysing and discussing what the case is all about. Suitable questions or point of discussion should also be supplied.