

Cristine' s Tips for Trainers*

Facilitation Tips

- DO have an agenda. You should usually list the objectives as well.
- DO NOT use paired interview/introductions if there are more than 10 participants. It takes too long. If there are more than 30 participants, do not do introductions at all. Instead, ask people to stand up or raise their hand to reflect the roles they may play or other characteristics you may want to know about (i.e. "Stand up if you are a teacher". "Stand up if you came farther than 2 hours for this training". "Stand up if you are here with someone else from your department, etc.)
- DO provide a rationale and explanation for each activity as the activity starts, rather than just starting by giving instructions.
- DO set time limits for participants who have trouble staying focused or are overly talkative at the expense of other participants. To do this, you can gently remind them of the goals of the activity, or let them know when you would be available during the break or after the session to talk about their issues individually.
- DO give people a time limit for the individual or group activity on which they will be working. And don't end groups abruptly; give people and groups a 2-minute warning for coming back together.
- DO devise a plan for keeping to the allotted time (e.g., having one of the participants be a time keeper, keeping a clock or watch easily visible at all times).
- DO participate in any of the activities, when feasible, as a participant yourself, especially during journal writing activities. You should write as well, silently.
- DO move on, if the participants get the main point. Don't belabor it.
- DO trust that the participants will get the main idea. Give them a chance to say it themselves. For example, instead of saying, "Let me make the distinction ...", ask "What 's the distinction ...?" and let them answer. If they don't seem to be moving in that direction, try to think of open-ended questions which will help them think. Then, if they still have not identified it, you can summarize.

**Adapted from: Cristine's Tips for Trainers, Training for Non-Formal Education*

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- 🎬 DO NOT ask ..anything else?" when you are trying to elicit ideas from a group. It seems to have a connotation that says to the participants, "I really want to move on to the next thing." Instead, ask "Other comments? Suggestions? Questions?" and be sure to wait long enough for participants to think and respond.
- 🎬 DO NOT "fish" for an answer that you have that you are just dying for them to get. And don't lead with yes/no questions until they're in your ballpark. Think of open-ended questions that really get to the heart of the issue.
- 🎬 DO NOT be afraid of silence. Participants need time to reflect without a lot going on, and silence helps keep the pace of training calm. When you ask a question, count at least to five, silently, or even ten, before asking a follow-up question.
- 🎬 DO have an evaluation at the end of the workshop or training (unless you run overtime). Try not to be defensive when constructive criticism is given; just listen and acknowledge.
- 🎬 DO NOT get defensive if a participant suggests another activity in lieu of one you have assigned the group. Instead, try the following responses:
 - Restate the suggestion so you're sure you know what the complaint, concern or alternative is.
 - Ask if other participants agree.
 - If you don't get a response, state both alternatives, make sure that everyone understands the difference, and then ask participants to vote on them.
 - If there is no clear consensus or majority among the group, go with your original activity, and thank the person for making the suggestion, saying that you would like to try that next time you do the training.
- 🎬 DO make sure that anyone who will be role playing a learner in a training demonstration is adequately prepared and oriented. It is important that an adult learner is never portrayed in a patronizing or condescending way.

Newsprint Tips

- 🎬 DO prepare newsprints ahead of time for presenting the agenda, objectives or major points of training activities. This saves time and shows the participants that you cared enough about their time to come prepared.
- 🎬 DO be creative in making up newsprints; use different colors and designs rather than just listing items. However, be careful not to get too complicated; the main advantage of newsprints is that they are easy to read by a large group.
- DO use print (rather than cursive writing) on newsprint and use your best penmanship, whether the newsprint is pre-prepared or used in the session. Newsprints are not only pointless but irritating if people can't read them.
- 🎬 DO use large letters when writing, and remind participants who record small group tasks to write large as well. If it can't be read from the back of the room, it will only distract from your message.
- 🎬 DO use black, dark blue or red pens when writing; stay away from green, yellow, orange and light blue, as they are harder to read from far away. Instead, use these light colors to highlight or underline words.
- 🎬 DO lay out masking tape strips before the training starts, in a place where you can get to them easily. Nothing wastes time like struggling to find the end of the roll of tape while training is going on.
- 🎬 DO write on newsprint exactly what the participants say during brainstorming and feedbacks. If it's too long to write exactly, ask them to paraphrase.
- 🎬 DO use newsprint sparingly. It's appropriate for writing things out beforehand and for recording brainstormed ideas during training IF those ideas will be used or referred to later in training. DO NOT record a discussion just because the participants are talking. Remember that writing participants' thoughts can be inhibiting to them, so there has to be a good reason for doing so. The general rule of practice is: DON'T write anything down on newsprint unless you are specifically going to be using it as part of the training; i.e., to launch the next activity or to have a list to refer to for further discussion.
- It's better not to number brainstormed ideas. It seems to give priority to some over others, when brainstorming is a time for all ideas to have equal weight

Handout Tips

- DO use handouts as summary sheets for presentations or facts given during the training, or as directional sheets for individual or small group tasks. DO remind participants when there are summary handout sheets for an activity before the activity begins, so they can make the choice of taking notes or not.
- DO allow participants a chance to individually skim over the handouts without interruption for a few moments before discussing. When half the group starts private conversations with each other, it's time to bring attention back to the whole group.
- DO bring more handouts than you think you will need. Someone always wants a copy for a friend, or there will be more people at the training than you expect.
- ¡ DO order your handouts in piles before the training starts, in roughly the order that you will be giving them out. You don't want to waste time looking through your briefcase for the handouts during training. And DO put titles on all your handouts so that you won't need to scan the sheet to know what to give out when.
- ¡ DO use differently-colored handouts (if you can) for small group work where each group gets a different text (such as different case studies for each small group). This is also useful when you have a lot of handouts and want to hand them all out ahead of time but refer to them separately during training ("Now look at the pink sheet"). DO remember that some participants may be color blind, so always say the title of the sheet as well.
- ¡ DO consider giving out folders at the beginning of the training with all the handouts already included, in order, if you have a lot of handouts.
- ¡ DO limit the number of points or items that you put on a handout if you will be using that handout during the session. DO NOT hand out a very dense or multiple-page handout and expect participants to take it all in while the activity is going on.
- ¡ DO NOT hand something out for participants to read and then continue to talk while they are reading it (this goes for newsprint, overheads, and PowerPoint slides as well). People can only do one thing at a time: listen or read, but not both. Give participants a few moments of silence to absorb the handout before you move on to discuss it.
- DO NOT hand out a complicated or lengthy handout and then read it aloud during the training. This is a waste of time and usually frustrating for participants. (NOTE: the exception to this may be when you feel that there are participants with low-literacy skills, in which case your handouts should be short and readable).
- DO consider the literacy level of your participants when making handouts.

- DO hand out reference or resource sheets (like articles or extensive notes you may have pre-prepared on your lecture) at the END of the training.
- DO make sure that the handout is readable (i.e., not too light from photocopying) and that it is stapled together properly. If the original copy does not allow for better photocopies, mention that to participants so they won't think you were just careless.
- DO distribute handouts person-to-person at the end of the training, rather than passing them around, especially if there are many separate handouts. Someone always gets confused or misses a copy.

Co-training Tips

- DO decide well beforehand who is going to facilitate which activities.
- DO bring the handouts for your own activities, unless you have a VERY high level of trust in your co-trainer. That way, you will never be caught without the handouts you need to use. The same goes for newsprint that you would use in your own activities: prepare and bring it yourself.
- DO slip a note to (rather than tug on the sleeve of) a co-facilitator that is going on too long.
- DO have a discussion with your co-trainer before the training where you agree about whether and how you will contribute while your co-trainer is facilitating. In other words, do you feel comfortable having your co-trainer interject a point you have forgotten, or would you prefer them to add that to the end of your activity?
- When giving feedback to other trainers, based on your observation of their facilitation, always let the trainer have a chance to say first how s/he felt it went and what they would improve. Nine times out of 10, as trainers we already know what didn't go well before anyone tells us. When you do give feedback, try to phrase it in terms of what you think the participants got out of it instead of how the facilitator performed. It's much easier to think about how to make a workshop better than to be anxious about how to make yourself (as a facilitator) better.