California
Water
Environment
Association

Speaker *focus*

14 Presentation Techniques that Encourage Maximum Learning, Participation and Memory Retention

1. Body Voting
This simple activity is great as an ice-breaker or intro to a subject. It helps the presenter and attendees quickly gauge the experience or knowledge level of a group. Body voting is simply the process of asking the audience to take an action based on a series of questions. Example: Have everyone stand. Then ask the following questions: If you've been in this industry for more than one year, stay standing. Those that haven't please take a seat. If you've been in this industry for more than five years, stay standing. Those that haven't please sit. Repeat the process until only a few are standing. Use this process with industry or content specific questions. Why use this over audience response systems? Because people need the chance to move around, especially if they've been sitting for several hours at a conference. You also don't have to incur the costs of ARS or projection for this type of activity.

2. Case Studies
Case studies are written accounts of real or fictitious situations or problems. Some case studies are left unsolved so that participants can analyze job-related situations and arrive at their own conclusions. They are designed to develop critical thinking and decision making skills. They are not intended to be prescriptive or to prove a point. Case studies may be from two to ten pages in length. For small groups, ask participants to discuss possible solutions and outcomes. Or provide a list of questions to help facilitate a conversation.

3. Critical Incidents
Similar in design to case studies, critical incidents are much shorter, usually a paragraph in length.

4. Fishbowls
Fishbowl activities have garnered a lot of attention since Samuel Smith's use of it at EventCamp 2010 **(http://www.ready2spark.com/2010/02/event-camp-2010-learnings-from-outside-the-fishbowl.html).** One variation of Smith's procedure is forming a circle within a circle. The inner circle discusses an issue while the outer circle listens and takes notes on group dynamics, process or content. After a set time, the outer circle shares their observations. Then the groups switch and the process is repeated.

5. Human Spectagram
The presenter starts by making a statement. Attendees then stand along one wall where one corner represents strongly agree and the opposite corner represents strongly disagree. Attendees are asked to stand along the wall where they rate their level of agreement with the statement. Some may choose to stand in the middle. Some may stand closer to one corner. The presenter can pose a variety of statements with different variables to see how the majority of the audience feels about specific issues.

6. Jigsaw Grouping Brainstorming
The attendees are divided into separate groups each with a pre-established topic, facilitator and flip chart. The participants brainstorm the topic of their group while someone keeps notes on a flip chart. After a prearranged time, members of the group separate and go to other tables where that table's topic is discussed and the flip chart shared. The facilitator at each table helps start the brainstorming where the previous group ended. At the end, all charts are shared with the attendees.

21st Learning Principles

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14 Presentation Techniques that Encourage Maximum Learning, Participation and Memory Retention (cont'd)

7. Lecturette
Short ten to fifteen minute lectures spoken or distributed via handouts that frame a conversation, situation or theory. Lecturettes are intended to establish some common language between presenters and attendees about a model, principle or process. They are a perfect fit before an activity or to segue into a different topic.

8. Mind Maps (sometimes referred to Mind Webs)
Often used to help individuals and groups to think globally and creatively, mind maps help attendees analyze, classify, evaluate, generate, list, structure and visualize important ideas. Attendees draw diagrams representing words, ideas, issues, tasks, etc., around a central idea.

9. Open Space Session
Modeled on author Harrison Owen's Open Space Technology (http://www.openspaceworld.org/), open space is an umbrella term describing a variety of meeting formats where participants define the agenda with a rigorous process. All attendees contribute to the scope of the session, the agenda, the groupings and the topics. Often used as problem solving tool or peer-engagement process.

10. Pair-Squared
Attendees are asked to form a pair, turn to a neighbor on their right or left and discuss a specific issue, question or topic. Each attendee is given a specific time period to speak while the other attendee listens. Then roles change and the process is repeated. After both attendees have played listener and talker, they find another pair. Then attendee A tells the other pair what attendee B said while the three listen. Then attendee B tells the other pair what attendee A stated while the three listen. The process repeats for the other pair.

11. Peer -To-Peer Round Table Discussions
A structured system to provide peer engagement around specific topics. Attendees enter a room and each table has an established topic and facilitator. The facilitator follows a set of instructions to allow each table participant to help guide frame the discussion on three important ideas.

12. Role Plays
Role plays allow participants to create manageable versions of situations in which they can practice new behaviors and try on new forms of communication. Participants can make and correct mistakes in a safe environment while preparing them to be more effective in real world situations.

13. Structured Note Taking
Structure note taking is providing some type of graphical representation that frames the lecture, discussion or reading. Some presenters intentionally omit important words or phrases from handouts to allow attendee to write them in the spaces provided. For most people, learning and retention trumps going green and omitting handouts, especially structured note taking. To stay environmental-friendly, close the recycling loop and used recycled paper.

14. World Cafe Model
The World Cafe (http://www.theworldcafe.com/) is a conversational process about questions and issues that matter. Using a specific method of integrated design principles to guide conversations for business and social issues. Conversations build and link with each other as participants move from group to group creating a collaborative, cross-pollinated approach to problem solving.

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