ABE Presenter Handbook

Developed by the 2008 ABE Summer Institute Program Planning Committee

with sections adapted from "The Training Process" by the Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota.

BEFORE THE SESSION

Tips for Planning Your Presentation

Setting objectives:
What will my audience leave with?

- Start planning for your presentation by identifying your objective(s); what information or skills do you want the participants to leave with?
- What presentation format and activities will help you achieve those objectives?
- People generally want to walk away from the session with something they can use (materials, new ideas, etc.) in their program/classroom the next day.
- Consider including time during your session for participants to practice the new skill or start planning how they will use their new knowledge when they get back to work.

BEFORE THE SESSION

Tips for Planning Your Presentation

Be prepared!

- Create an agenda for the session and plan how much time you will spend on each section.
- Decide ahead of time which sections or activities you can leave out if time gets tight.
- Prepare and practice for training delivery.
- Practice using A/V equipment so that you are comfortable with it.
- Have a contingency plan when using any type of technology.
- If using video or audio, cue it to the portion to be used and have it ready.

BEFORE THE SESSION

Tips for Planning Your Presentation

Suggestions for multiple presenters:

- Develop a clear agenda for the session and make decisions about which sections each person will cover and exactly how much time they will have.

  DO THIS DURING THE PLANNING STAGE, NOT RIGHT BEFORE THE SESSION STARTS.

Handouts:

- Provide clear handouts.
- Make sure to proofread your handouts; have someone else look at them as well.
- Provide your email and/or phone contact information, depending on which is the best way to contact you.
- Put any materials you refer to in a reference section in the handout.
- Always make more handouts than you think you'll need.

BEFORE THE SESSION

Tips for Planning Your Presentation

Guidelines for using PowerPoint (and overhead transparencies):

- Use italics and underlining sparingly.
- Use “sans serif” fonts (Garamond, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica) for slides.
- Use “serif” fonts (Times, Times New Roman, Palatino) for handouts.
- Do not use script fonts for slides or handouts.
- Use 24-28 pt. font size for body text (minimum is 18 point).
- Use 36-44 pt. font size for title text.

BEFORE THE SESSION

Tips for Planning Your Presentation

Guidelines for using PowerPoint (and overhead transparencies) continued:

- Keep it simple and uncluttered - LESS IS MORE.
- Use no more than 6 bullets and 6 words per bullet.
- Use Sentence Case (capitals and lower case).
- Use graphics to enhance your message, but not to annoy or distract your audience.
- Only use animation or sound if it is relevant to the topic.
- If you intend to use your laptop and LCD projector, carry a backup disk of your presentation in addition to a copy on your desktop.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

Getting started:

– At the beginning of the session, announce your name and the title of the presentation.
– Clarify the objectives of session and intended audience. “This is what we’re going to cover…” “This is what we’re NOT going to cover…”
– Don’t ask “What do you want to learn in this session?” if you don’t plan to address the issues mentioned.
– Don’t take time to do large group introductions. Instead, you can have participants BRIEFLY introduce themselves to the partner or small group that they’ll be working with in the session. Or you can also do a quick survey of your audience by asking them to raise their hands. (i.e. “Who is an instructor? A manager? etc.”)
– Don’t take time for icebreakers if the session is short – unless they directly relate to the topic.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

Getting and staying on track:

- Start on time.
- Manage your time wisely. If you have the tendency to lose track of time, enlist a colleague in the audience to help you out. Give them your agenda, and ask them to give you a signal when you are running over the allotted time for each activity.
- Respect your co-presenters and your audience by ending your section(s) on time.
- Don’t start (and rush through) a new activity in the last few minutes of the session. What the audience does not know about, they will not miss.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

How to handle questions:

Always include time for Q & A. Options include:

- Take questions after each logical “chunk” of information in your session:
  - plan this question time into your agenda
  - limit question time to X minutes and let the audience know how much time is allotted for questions
  - give a warning: “We need to move on. I’m going to take one more question.”
- Allot a set number of minutes at the end of the presentation for Q & A. Give participants an index card to record their questions on throughout the session.
- Create a parking lot for questions that aren’t directly related to the topic at hand. Record these questions as they come up and answer as many as you can at the end of the presentation.
- Take questions throughout, but only take a set number of questions at a time.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

How to handle questions:

The approach you use will depend on the material you are presenting and the objectives of the session. If your primary goals are to facilitate resource-sharing among participants, you will probably want to take questions throughout. If there is a predetermined amount of material that you must cover in the session for participants to be able to use it effectively, you may want to use a more structured approach or limit questions.

What if I don't know the answer?

- Be honest! It's better to admit that you don't know the answer than to give incorrect information.
- Ask the group – one of your participants may know the answer or where to go to find it.
- Suggest resources where the answer might be found.
- Offer to try to find the answer and make a plan to follow-up either by email or phone.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

How to handle talkers, monopolizers, and derailers:

- If someone asks a question that is completely off-topic or is monopolizing the session, tell them that you need to move on, but that you'd be happy to talk to them more after the session.
- Acknowledge their frustration or concern, but tell them you need to move on and will talk to them after the session.
- "Let's hear from someone on this side of the room/from this group/who we haven't heard from yet."
- "We have a lot of material to get through today (or "we are running out of time") so we're going to need to move on."
- Stand close to sideline talkers.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

Use training methods appropriately:

- Keep a balance of content presentation and audience participation.
- Use a variety of training methods to stimulate interest, arouse curiosity, and promote understanding and retention.
- Use lecture method to transmit a large amount of information in a short period of time.
- Use individual assessment tools to promote reflections.
- Use games and other group activities to promote teamwork and to stimulate enthusiasm.
- Use role-plays or skill practices to provide learners the opportunity to practice new skills in a safe environment.
- Use discussion to engage your audience and encourage participation.
- Remember that all learners have different comfort levels with each training method. Therefore, encourage participation, but do not demand it – tell participants to participate to the level that they feel comfortable.

DURING THE SESSION

Tips for Delivering Your Presentation

Partner and small group activities:
This format will add variety to your presentation and give participants the opportunity to network and share their expertise. Follow these tips to use participant interaction effectively

- Always give pairs/groups a clear task. It helps to have this written down on a handout or on the board.
- Tell pairs/groups how much time they will have to complete the task.
- Move throughout the room and monitor pairs/group work – answer questions, check in on progress, make notes on issues to bring back to the large group.
- As soon as half of the pairs/groups seem to be winding down, start drawing the activity to a close.
- Give pairs/groups a 2-minute warning so that they can wrap up their work.

AFTER THE SESSION

Tips for Wrapping Up and Evaluating Your Presentation

- Be sure to end on time. Participants need to get to the next session and the next presenter will need to set up in your room. Ask people to take conversations into the hall.
- Make sure you save a couple of minutes at the end for evaluations and encourage participants to complete them.
- When reviewing the evaluations of your session, use the feedback to make improvements for next time but try not to take the comments personally. Remember – everyone has a different learning style, different backgrounds and experiences, and different interests. You won’t be able to offer everyone exactly what they need or want!

Credits

Thank you to the team that helped develop this handbook

Marn Frank, Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota

Cathy Grady, Minnesota Literacy Council

Bella Hanson, Consultant

Brad Hasskamp, Minnesota Literacy Council & Professional Issues Committee Chair, Literacy Minnesota

Claudia Kinville, Literacy Minnesota

Lori Leininger, Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program & PANDA Coordinator

Astrid Liden, Minnesota Department of Education

Rachel Orzoff, Minnesota Department of Corrections

Nima Salehi, Minnesota Literacy Council

Pat Thomas, Southwest ABE