

Training Strategies for Adult Learners

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Basics of Adult Learning

Basic principles of adult learning

- If you want participation, start in participatory mode
- If you want participation, let everyone get used to speaking
- If you want participation, establish a safe, non-threatening environment

“Good training” vs. “bad training”

- In your experience, what has made for a positive training experience?
- In your experience, what has turned you off or interfered with your learning?

These two questions were asked of thousands of adult learners in many countries and professions - the responses were surprisingly similar.

“Good training” vs. “bad training”

Examples of what makes great training	Examples of what makes poor training
<input type="checkbox"/> It responded to my needs	<input type="checkbox"/> It was far too removed from my job or interests
<input type="checkbox"/> I could see how it applied to me	<input type="checkbox"/> I couldn't see how I could use the material
<input type="checkbox"/> I was drawn in quickly	<input type="checkbox"/> I soon was in information overload
<input type="checkbox"/> There was a lot of participation	<input type="checkbox"/> There was hardly any discussion
<input type="checkbox"/> I could relate to the examples	<input type="checkbox"/> There was not enough practice
<input type="checkbox"/> It applied to my job	<input type="checkbox"/> I was a passive listener most of the time

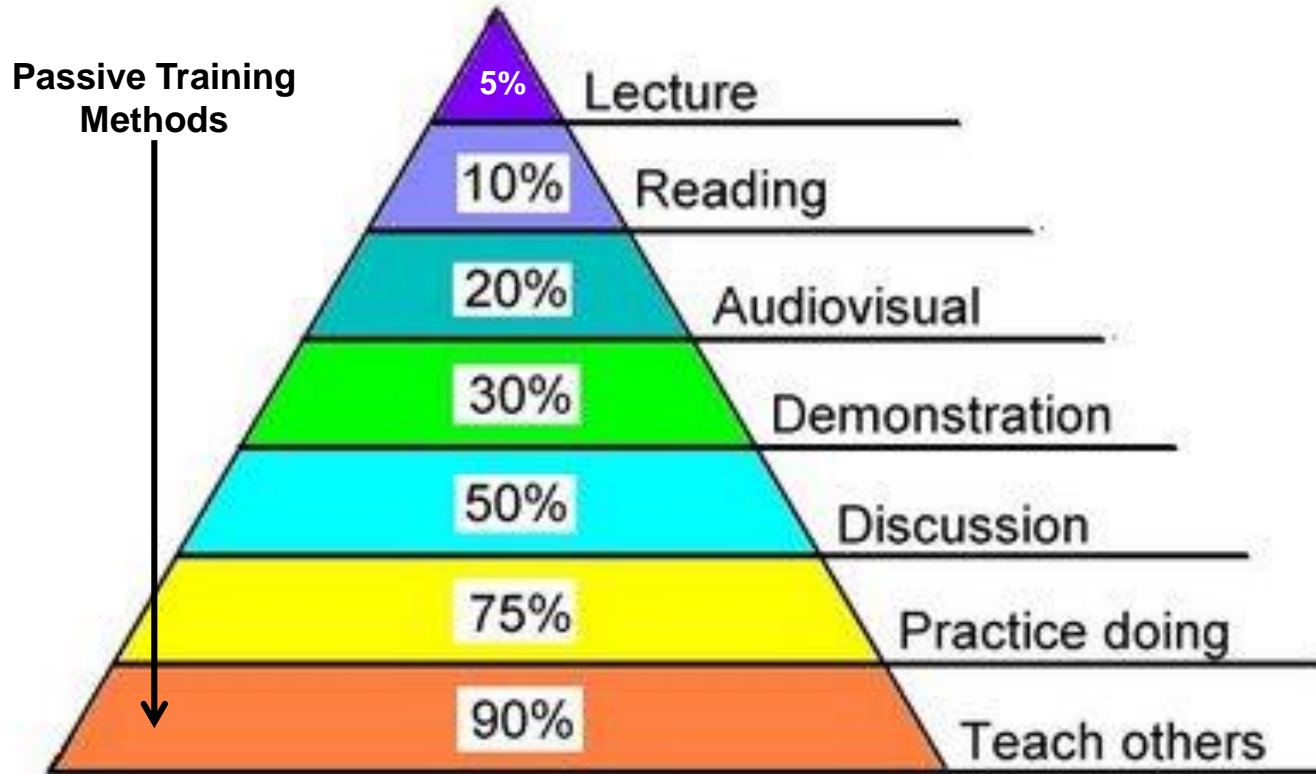
Do children and adults learn in different ways?

How might these differences impact training design?

Children vs. adult learners

Child	Adult	Training design impact
Unaware of their own needs	Self-directed learner	Show relevance Meet learner needs
Learns for distant needs	Learns for immediate needs	Only teach relevant skills Show relevance up front
Learns from instructor	Learns from instructor and others	Build on learner experiences Include participatory activities
Willing to try and fail	Fears failure	Create a safe environment Use group activities Don't use "trap" questions

The Learning Pyramid: Average content retention rates (24h)



Source: National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine, 2002

Principles of Participatory Training

7 Laws of Effective Training

1. The Law of Action
2. The Law of Discovery
3. The Law of Building
4. The Law of Relevance
5. The Law of Repetition
6. The Law of Sharing
7. The Law of Fun

Principle #1- The Law of Action

We learn better by doing
than by listening and watching

∞ Therefore... ∞

Use participation and small group
exercises

Principle #2 - The Law of Discovery

We understand better what we discover ourselves.

∞ Therefore... ∞

Questions before answers, exploratory exercises

Principle #3 - The Law of Building

We gain new knowledge
by building on old.

∞ Therefore... ∞

Refer to agenda, recap, begin sessions
with probing questions

Principle #4 - The Law of Relevance

We remember best what is relevant.

We pay greater attention when we see the benefit.

∞ Therefore... ∞

Highlight benefits (“what’s in this for me?”),
use practical job-related examples

Principle #5 - The Law of Repetition

Repetition improves recall

∞ Therefore... ∞

Summarize, use frequent recaps and reviews, deliver the same message in many ways

Principle #6 - The Law of Sharing

We learn better when we can
compare, discuss and share ideas
with others

∞ Therefore... ∞

Open discussions, Q&A, small group
activities

Principle #7 - The Law of Fun

We learn best when we are willing to try and to take risks.

We takes risks more when we are comfortable and relaxed.

∞ Therefore... ∞

Create an enjoyable, non-threatening atmosphere
Have Fun!

Developing Training Content

The Music Lesson

- On Monday you hear a song on the radio. You like it.
- On Tuesday you hear it again. You like it.
- On Wednesday you hear it again. You sing along.
- On Friday you see the CD in a shop. You buy it.

The Music Lesson

- On Monday you hear a song on the radio. You like it.
- On Tuesday you hear a different new song. You like it, too.
- On Wednesday you hear another different new song. You like it, too.

What do you think happens on
Friday?

On Friday you don't buy anything.
You can't remember any of the songs.



Increasing the amount of information
does not increase learning.



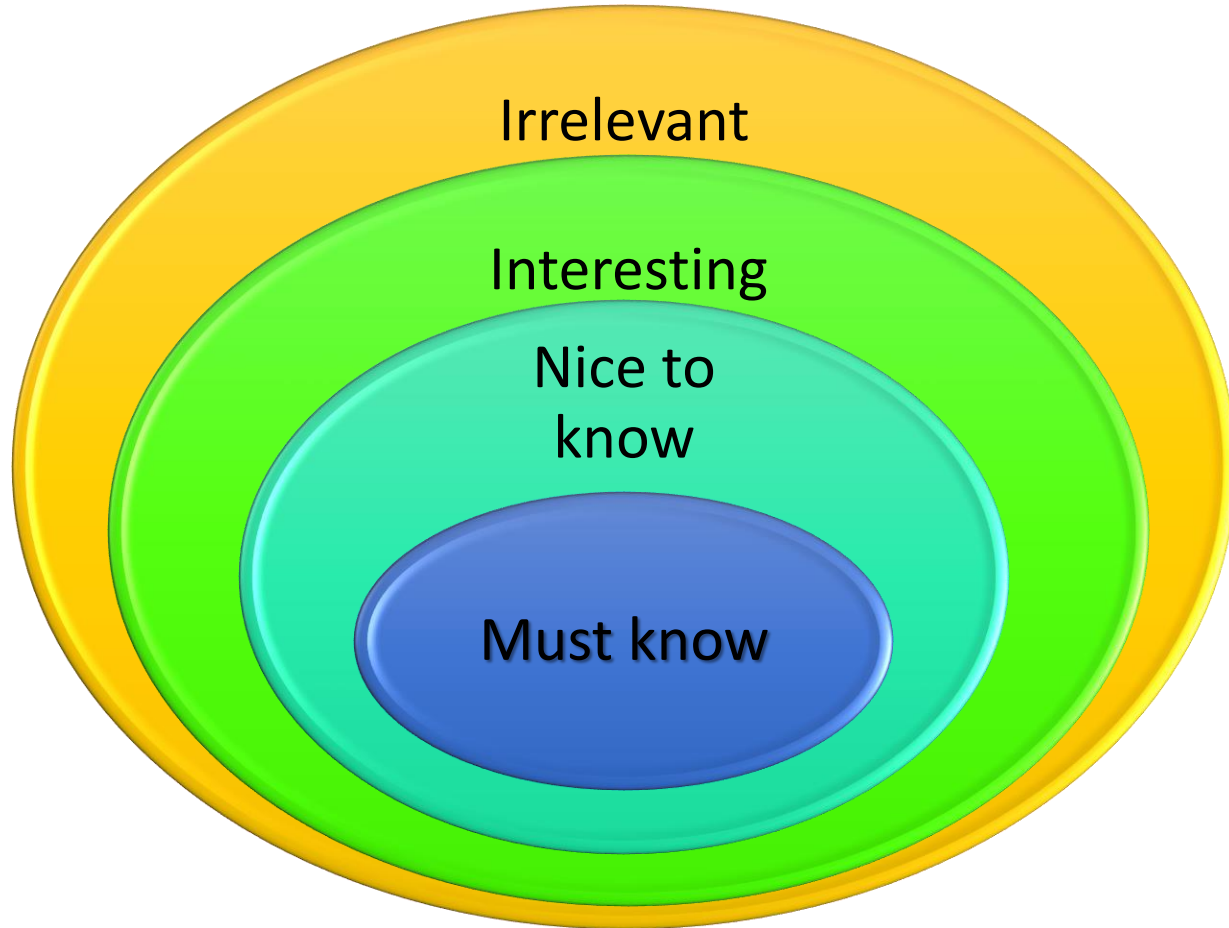
If you want learners to remember the
essentials...
present only the essentials.

We learn by repetition.



Present the essentials.

Then repeat them again and again
and again.



Irrelevant

Interesting

Nice to
know

Must know

Maintaining Engagement

The trainer is ultimately responsible for ensuring that participants pay attention and stay focused!

The Truth about Attention

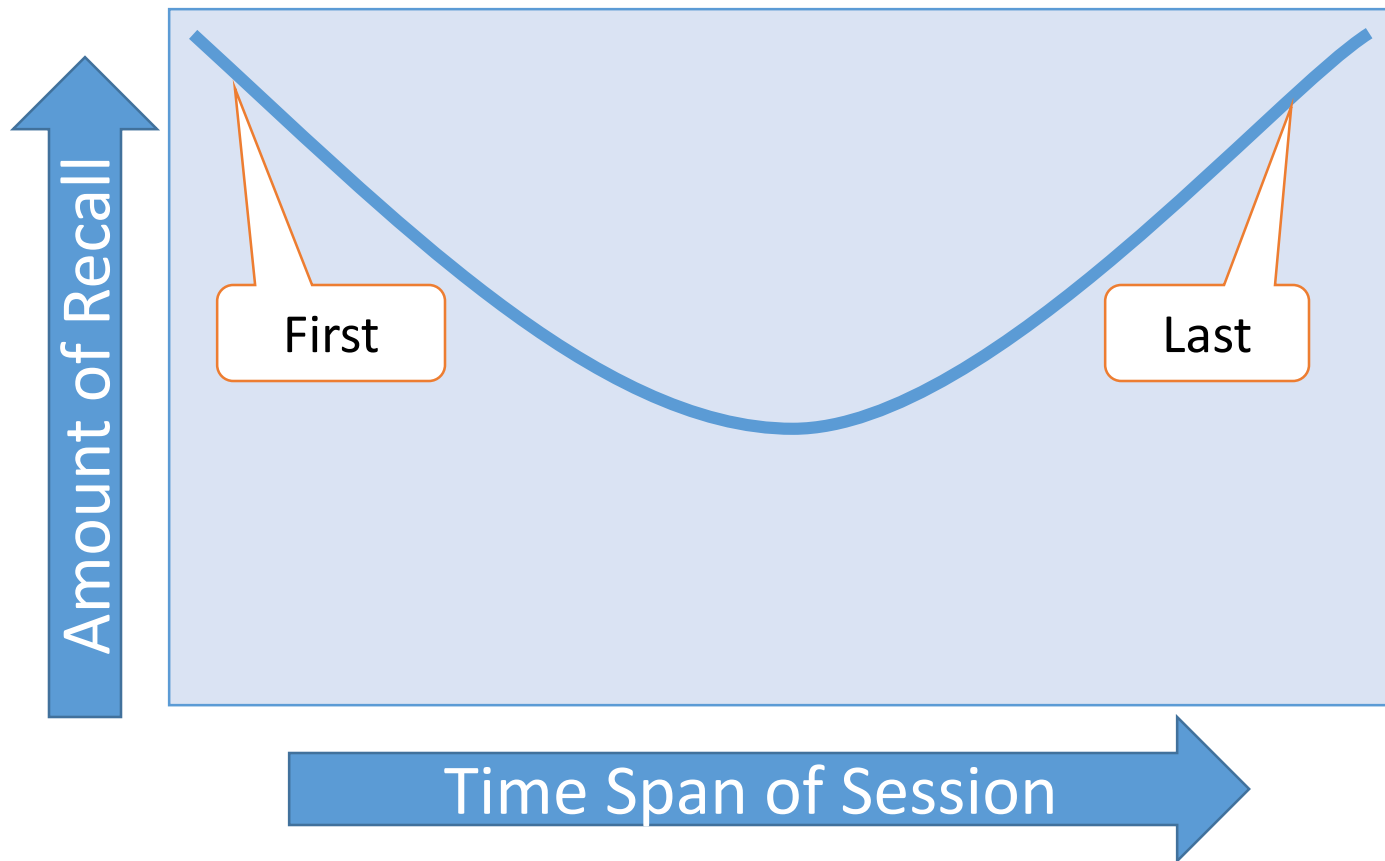
- We can only learn and remember what we notice.
- No attention = no learning!
- Therefore, use techniques to maintain learner attention and focus

How can we maintain attention and focus?

Maintaining attention

- We can only pay attention to one thing at a time.
- Attention has a time limit.
- Attention is greatest at the beginning and at the end.
- Attention increases when something unusual happens.

Learning without variation



Techniques to maintain attention

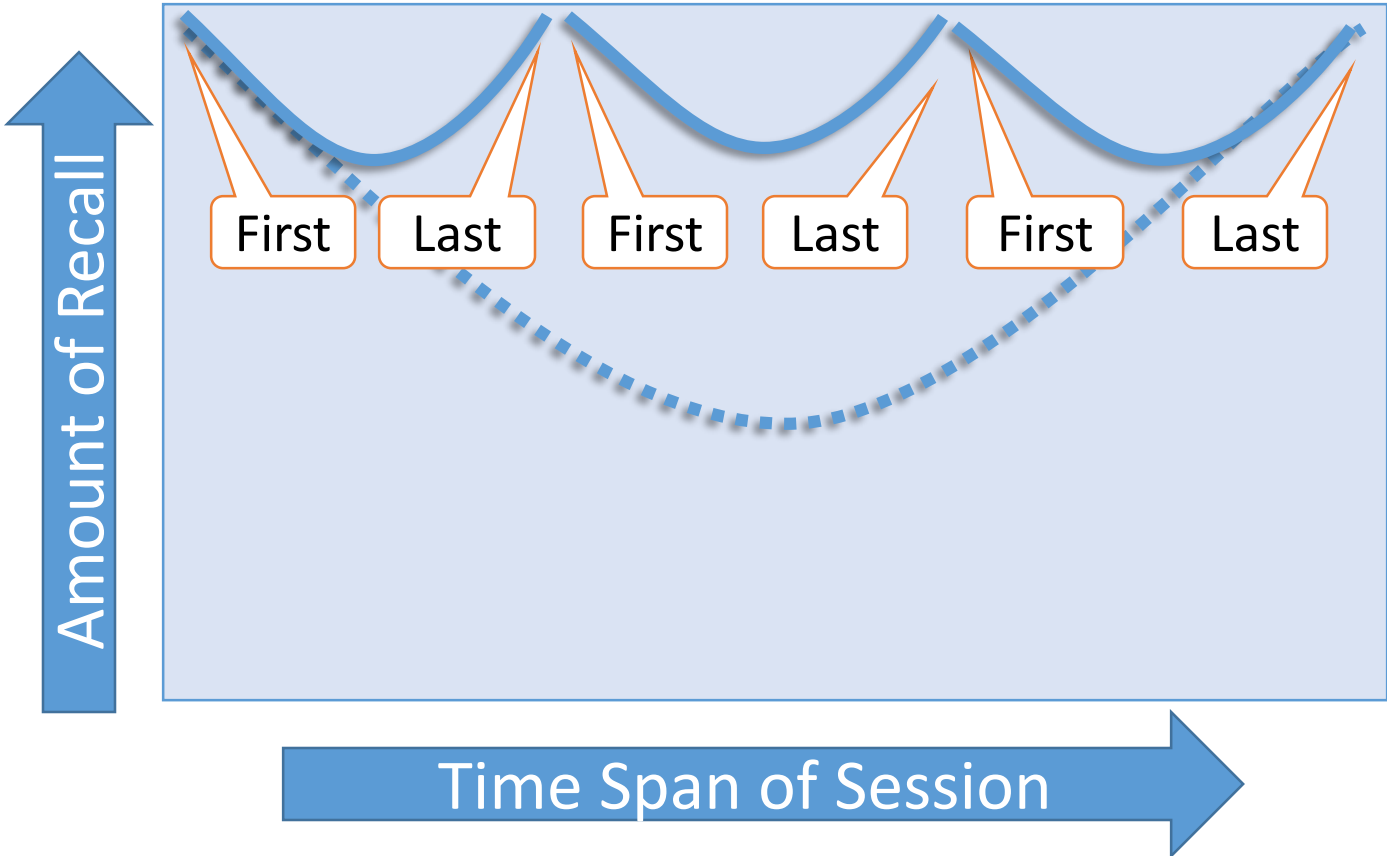
1. Breaks in session flow

- Variety
- Transitions
- Coffee Breaks

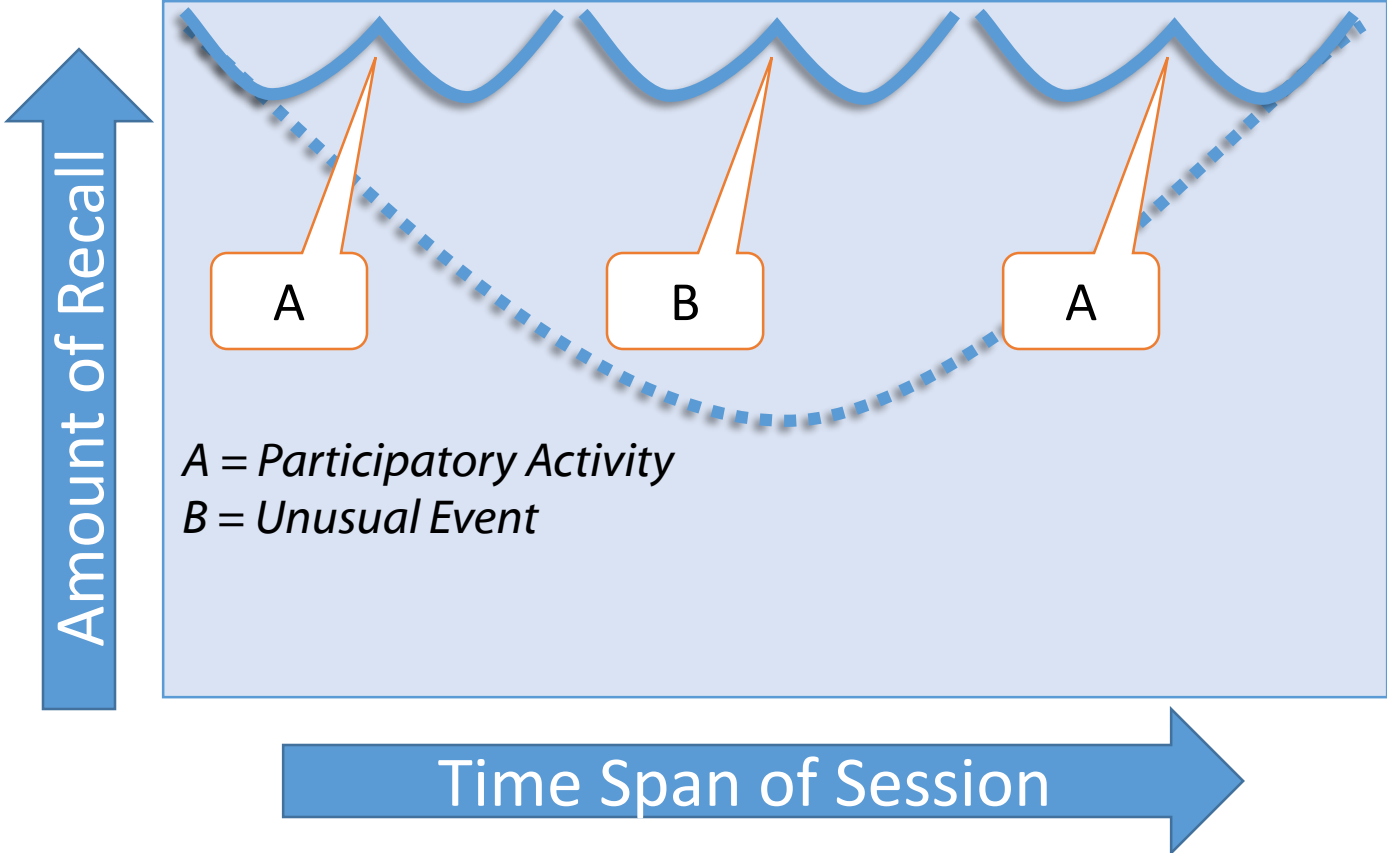
2. Activity design

- Participation
- Focus/relevance/interest
- Unusual image

Variation – breaks in session flow



Variation – adjusting activity design



Powerpoint for Participatory Training

This is a very bad slide

This is a very bad slide. Why? Because it says exactly what I am saying at the same time I am saying it. So you don't know what to do: read this slide or listen to me.

And since you can't do both, you will probably read the slide and ignore me. But I forgive you. Also this slide has too many words and long sentences that are difficult to read quickly.

This is also a bad slide

- This is also a bad slide because the bullet points are all too long and are all complete sentences.
- Again, it says the same thing I am saying, so it competes with me, the presenter, instead of helping me.
- When you think about it, who even needs a presenter when you have a slide like this?

A typical presentation slide

- My 1st GREAT idea
 - Blah, blah, blah
 - Blah, blah, blah
- My 2nd FANTASTIC Idea
 - Something interesting
 - Something interesting
- My next GOOD Idea
 - Blah, blah, blah
 - Blah, blah, blah
- Another Idea
 - Something interesting
 - Something interesting
- BE SURE TO READ THIS
 - A good point here
 - Another good point
- Another GREAT Idea
 - Blah, blah, blah
 - Blah, blah, blah
- Hope you remember THIS
 - Something interesting
 - Something interesting
- My last THOUGHT
 - More blah, blah, blah
 - My last blah, blah, blah

What does a good slide look like?

This!

This is a good slide.

Why?

Bad PowerPoint

- Competes with trainer
- Distracts attention
- Creates boredom
- Creates passivity

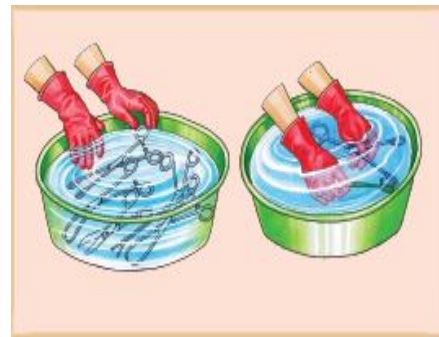
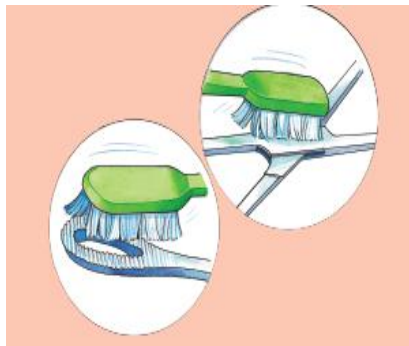
Good PowerPoint

- Supports trainer
- Focuses attention
- Stimulates interest
- Stimulates participation

Before...

Cleaning the instruments

- Clean thoroughly with Soap and Brush in running water
- Clean the Tooth and Joint area of instruments carefully with Brush
- If there is no running water, can use two buckets.



After...

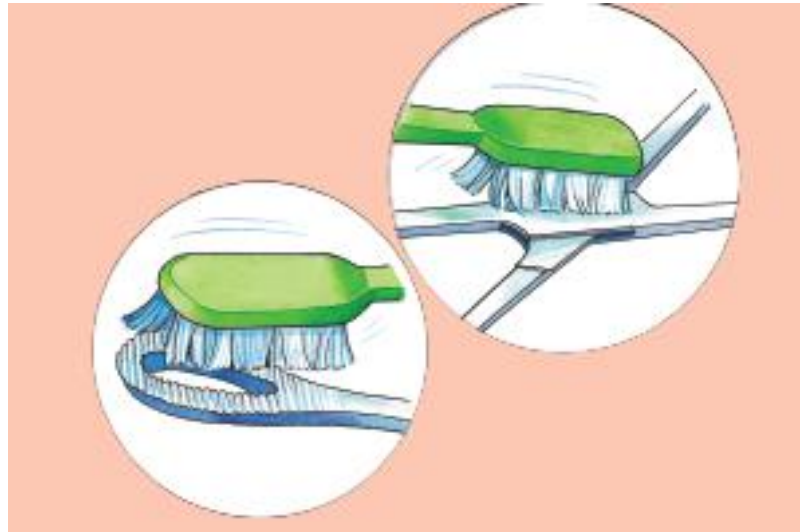
Cleaning the instruments

- Clean thoroughly with **Soap** and **Brush** in running water



Cleaning the instruments

- Clean **Tooth** and **Joint** area of instruments carefully with **Brush**



Cleaning the instruments

- If there is no running water, can use two buckets.



Converting a presentation from “teaching” to “training”

1. Simplify:

Replace full sentences with words/phrases

2. Divide:

Break up complex slides, 1 idea per slide

3. Add Interaction:

Questions, examples, pictures...

Guide the learning process

1. Break up complex slides into a series of simple slides
2. Mix 1-way “presentation” slides with interactive slides
3. Include examples
4. Use appropriate images

Slide design tips

- One idea per slide
- 3 to 4 bullet points per slide
- 1 line per bullet point
- A word or phrase – not a full sentence

Slide design tips

- Use consistent:
 - Fonts
 - Colors
 - Transitions
 - Backgrounds
 - etc.
- Use bold, italic and color ONLY for **emphasis**

- This point is in Times New Roman Font
- This point uses a different, clearer font

- This point is difficult to read because it is a full sentence and uses 2 lines
- Short phrase – easy to read

- **Style elements** USED inconsistently, *arbitrarily*
- Style elements used correctly for **EMPHASIS**

A nice slide

- Consistent style (font, color, size, etc.)
- Short Phrases
- Simple transition and animation
- Only four simple points well spaced