

Course Rep Learning

Sustainable Support for Course Reps in the Further Education System

Tutor Survival Guide

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Introduction

This Tutor Survival Guide aims to help you make effective use of this Further Education Class Representatives learning and development course. The guide aims to cover three key areas:

- 1) Delivering a Training Session
- 2) Room Guidance
- 3) Policy Drivers

1. Delivering a training session

People's anxieties about public speaking often arise from a combination of interrelated factors. For instance, starting a speech knowing that you haven't prepared adequately might lead you to show signs of nervousness either verbally or non-verbally. Research shows that only about 30% of what an audience takes in from a speaker is to do with the content or subject of the presentation. Seventy per cent is based on how you present yourself; your non-verbal communication (body language) and verbal communication (voice tone, speed and pace of delivery).

For any presentation you need to be thoroughly prepared and aware of the signals you are giving off. These will either inspire interest, enthusiasm and confidence in your subject and you as a speaker, or they will have the opposite effect!

Preparation

This is possibly the most important thing you can do. Thorough preparation will allow you to be more relaxed about speaking in public and help you to avoid showing signs of nervousness and lack of confidence.

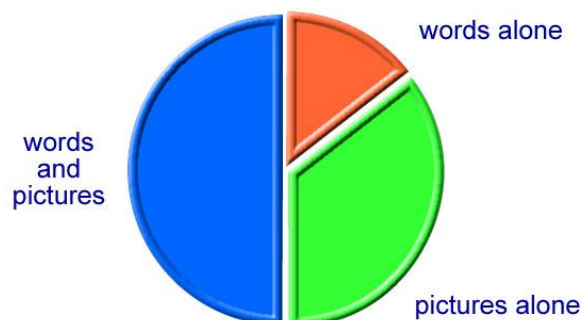
You should be aware of the type and size of audience you will be speaking to, their current knowledge and awareness of the subject of the presentation and their attitude to the subject. This will enable you to pitch the content and session towards that particular audience.

Also, make sure you know what the venue is like – it is always a good idea to visit the room the day before the meeting if possible to pick up any potential snags. Examples of issues to consider:

- Is the room a sensible size for the likely audience?
- What will the layout of the room be like?
- How formal/informal will the presentation be (i.e. a lecture or an informal discussion)?
- Will you be using computers or digital projectors and are they compatible with your system?

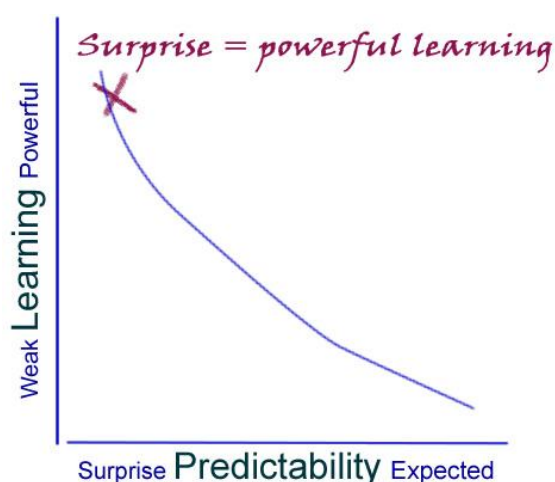
Delivery - General Points

- Aim to be bold and convincing, not self-apologetic in approaching the audience.
- Start slowly, this will establish your vocal clarity with the audience (try to remain calm, as nervousness often speeds up delivery and makes your voice unclear).
- Don't read what you want to say word-for-word. It is much better to learn the first few lines and have key words to prompt your memory for the rest. This allows you to sound more natural and relaxed.
- Position yourself to involve the audience - stand upright, face the audience, smile and establish eye contact.
- Use appropriate visuals where possible. Avoid over-familiar clipart images which can make a presentation look cheap. Use Google to search for images or look in any of the online photolibraries. Many of these allow the use of images for personal work like presentations without a fee but do abide by copyright restrictions where they are stated.



This chart shows the relative impact of the different presentation methods.

- Maintain interest with variety and surprise. This can be particularly important if your session is after lunch or late in the afternoon in a warm room!



Posture and body language

- If you are standing up, stand in a relaxed position, legs straight and slightly apart, shoulders back and head up. Face the audience. This makes you appear relaxed and confident.
- Don't hunch your shoulders, hide behind a flip chart, stand on one leg and wind the other leg around the first. Don't move around too much. This will make you seem nervous and distract the audience from what you are saying.
- If you are sitting, again sit up straight, relax, shoulders back and head up. Face the audience.
- Crossing your arms or legs can suggest defensiveness. Sitting too casually or turning away from the audience suggests a lack of interest on your part. If you are working with a very small group, don't lean forward too much as you will make the group feel intimidated and uncomfortable. Always be aware of other people's space and don't intrude into it.
- Use effective hand movements that help to stress the valuable and important ideas. Don't use your hands as comforters, either by fiddling with a pen or paper clip, or by stroking your head or hair. These actions are distracting and a sign of nervousness.
- Smile at appropriate moments, particularly before you begin to speak.

Using your voice

The way you use your voice, as opposed to what you say, also gives out messages. When you are nervous you become tense, which constricts the diaphragm, which in turn constricts your breathing and your voice becomes high pitched, squeaky, fast and breathless.

- Relax your body.
- Stand or sit comfortably.
- Breathe deeply.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Don't mumble.
- Don't cover your mouth with your hand.

Try to vary the tone of your voice. Don't drone. Alter the tone, speed, volume, pitch and use pauses to emphasise points, encourage enthusiasm or gain attention.

Eye contact

Ideally, if you are speaking to a large audience, you should keep your head up, look towards the middle of the audience and from side the side.

With a small group, make eye contact with individuals for a couple of seconds at a time.

- Don't stare - this can be intimidating and make people feel embarrassed and uncomfortable.
- Don't spend too much time looking at your notes or at a flip chart/OHP screen. Have your notes in front of you, don't turn away from the audience to look at them.
- Don't be distracted by people walking in and out or by something happening outside the window, the audience will follow your gaze.
- Don't glance around quickly, it suggests nerves and suspicion.

Answering Questions

- Prepare answers to anticipated questions.
- If you have a large audience, repeat questions and aim your reply to the whole audience.
- If you don't know the answer, don't worry. In this situation you can either offer a partial answer to the audience, offer the question to them and ask them for an answer (both these methods may encourage a discussion), or simply state that you don't know.
- When answering, and presenting generally, be in control. Don't allow interruptions to distract you.

The right attitude

Be positive! Before you speak, look at the group and tell yourself everything will run smoothly. Don't allow any negative thoughts or phrases to enter your head. Think positively. This will help dispel nerves and help to make the experience a positive one:

Use these statements to maintain a positive attitude:

- I am happy to be here.
- I am happy to see the people in the group.
- I am interested in the opinions and thoughts of the group.
- I am in full control of the situation.

2. Room guidance

In order to maximise the effectiveness of this course, we advise the following when it comes to selecting and setting up your training room,

- Lots of open space for activities
- Room for a semi circle of chairs
- Break out areas for group work
- Facilities for computer presentation (laptop, projector)
- Air conditioning
- Tables aren't a necessity
- Provide water for the delegates to aid concentration
- Sound proofed walls
- Signs to guide delegates to the room and a 'Meeting in progress' sign to keep others out while you are working.

3. Policy drivers

Further Education & Training Act 2007

The Further Education and Training Act 2007 outlines the need for colleges to consult over 'major changes to the learning environment' with its learners. This means colleges should include learners in the planning stage for anything that would impact on learners in the college environment including new builds, department closures, catering contracts etc

Foster Report: Review of the future role of FE Colleges

Sir Andrew Foster was invited by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and Chair of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to carry out an independent review of the future role of FE colleges in November 2004. Sir Andrew published his report, *Realising the potential*, in November 2005. In it he highlighted 'the learner imperative' outlining the need for 'colleges to systematically listen to learners'.

The review proposed that colleges should be required to collect learners' views as a key way of improving the college provision. Foster also recommended that the funder should also listen to students systematically, through the setting up of Learner Panels at a local and national level. The National Learner Panel was subsequently set up in January 2007, with a selection of learners from across the regions and different training providers.

Framework for Excellence

The Framework for Excellence is a new all-inclusive and radical approach to managing performance across the learning and skills sector. One of the key indicators will be 'learner responsiveness', which will detail how an institution interacts with its students through its Learner Involvement Strategy. A Learner Involvement Strategy may include structures like a students union, a student forum and, indeed, this training session.

Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. Children and young people will have far more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively. Every Child Matters require organisations' dealing with young people to set up mechanisms to engage them in the operation of their own environment.

This has led to the setting up of youth councils. These are linked to local authority provision across the country and provide a forum for youth to express views on their local community. Links between learners inside colleges and these forums give students the ability to raise issues other than the purely academic, for example travel to college, library provision and Connexions.