HOW TO MAKE A PRESENTATION

by Mads Heising

Make presentations that respect the following rules:

Rule 1

The presenter is the presentation. The powerPoint or online graphic - is a visual aid. If you use the presentations as your script, *you* are not needed - the learners can read it themselves and will most likely be annoyed with your performance and stop paying attention.

Rule 2

Presentations should not present facts in the form of text. Text should only be introduced as headlines or bullet points, not as sentences. If you want learners to read something – let them do it by themselves, in advance. One acceptable exception from this rule is, if a text is an object in the training, rather than being the content - fx examining the wording of a rule, to elaborate on implications.

Rule 3

Presentations are a graphic aid. Use pictures or illustrations to support your message. If using text, use it only to create structure and make the learner able to navigate in your presentation by using colors and font sizes to emphasize the points you are making, essentially turning the text into a graphic.

Rule 4

When using graphics, make sure your presentation contains "a style". That is; some convention that aids the learner in navigating in your message. If you constantly change font type/size/color, you signal incoherence. If you, on the other hand, use capital letters for headlines and bold letters for bullet points, it is easier to identify your logic and your message becomes clearer.

Rule 5

One slide should only contain one topic. When changing the topic, change the slide. If a topic is presented over several slides, make a visual indication that a slide change is not changing the topic.

Rule 6

Don't make your presentation for the average parti-cipant. Make your presentation for the dumbest participant you can imagine. Not because that person will be there, but because no person will give you 100% of their attention 100% of the time.

Rule 7

These limitations apply to your presentation, no mat-ter how interesting you may be. The less you adhere to the rules, the less the learner will pick up.

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GET LEARNERS TO TAKE PART

by Mads Heising

This is the skill of making the learner be an active part in the training offered, rather than just a listener. It is far the most effective method to achieve learning for adult persons, since the learner is the only one who knows what he or she needs to understand.

If they don't like you they will not learn.

If you present people with a learning activity they are not liking - they will not learn.

These statements most people can relate to. If you feel antipathy for the person trying to tell you something, you will tend not to believe what the person is saying or simply not to listen to the message.

The same is true about trying to learn through an activity that you feel is unpleasant, such as being cold, hungry or wet or if you are psychologically in an vulnerable position, such as beeing naked or scared.

The following rules for interacting with learners are a continuation of these two principles, though less dramatic, nonetheless practical advice, that will increase the outcome of your learning activities:

Rule 1

Arrange your presentation so that it presents the topic by a method and make the method evident. Eg. What, Why, and How methodology, will give the learner the impression that you have given thought to your topic and it becomes interesting.

This will establish you as the trainer and give the learner faith in your training. If the learner does not believe that the trainer is able to facilitate the learning, the learner will not be an active partner in the process.

We know this to be true, by observing disgruntled kids, parents, or partners, when they are listening to your feeble excuses.

Rule 2

Arrange your training to consist of facts leading to conclusions – learners will remember a causality much easier than individual facts and your presentation will appear to have tailored progression.

Rule 3

It is easier for the learner to engage in your training if they are able to see what you are aiming for. Unless you are actually presenting arbitrary data, there is always at least one logic to be found in any topic.

Once a learner discovers that you offer a logic, they will be increasingly motivated to take part in your training.

Rule 4

You are seldom very entertaining. Generally, people will stop paying attention to you after 15 minutes.

Therefore, for traditional classroom training, break up presentations by giving learners tasks such as quest-ionnaires or fact-finding missions, every 15 minutes.

Rule 5

When skill training, you should ensure that learners are having a positive experience. When we experi-ence failure, we have a natural tendency to conclude that the method is wrong and the exposure is censored from long term storage. This is why we need coaching.

Break up monotonous sessions by introducing repe-tition with an increasing independence demand.

Make sure that the learner is adequately challenged. Make sure that the learner is not challenged beyond capability. Make sure that the learner has the correct understanding of what performance level is reached. Most people are unhappy with their intermediate results and some genuine cheering will lift their spirits.

Rule 6

Arrange your training so as conclusions are made by learners in answer to your questions. This will give the learner the opportunity to review the facts you have presented and be an active partner in the training process.

The more you apply this method, the longer period of focus you may expect from the learner (beyond the 15 minutes limit). This method is sometimes referred to as "aided discovery".

Rule 7

Provided that the learner honors any agreement regarding seeking knowledge or practicing skill inde-pendently, substandard performance is never the fault of the learner, but always due to poor learning management.

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THE WORK OF OTHERS

by Mads Heising

When following a class on quantum mechanics on YouTube (Geeks lesson), the concept of complex numbers and methods to manipulate those arithmetically is a prerequisite.

This means that learners need to be proficient in dealing with complex numbers in order to under-stand the presentation on quantum mechanics.

However, nobody has the required proficiency in complex numbers and are thus not able to focus on the message conveyed, but distracted from it, despite the good intention. In recognition of this, as part of the Quantum Mechanics course, a brief repetition of complex numbers is included.

The theory of complex numbers is not as difficult as one should think but it requires some basic arith-metic proficiency to follow the repetition.

When executing a course in complex numbers, the learning manager then shows a multitude of ways complex numbers can be manipulated to form arithmetic rules and in doing so, draws upon many rules from arithmetic learned in grade school. This means that learners must be proficient in arithmetic in order to understand complex numbers.

However nobody remembers those rules and the understanding of complex numbers, subsequently, quantum mechanics is now impeded by the lack of proficiency in arithmetic learned in grade school.

This is not the fault of the learner, but rather poor learning management. Rather than making a brief recap on complex numbers, the learning manager should ensure adequate proficiency, before proce-eding with the course.

The Analysis

Back in grade school, you were taught the rules of arithmetics but why are you not remembering them? Most likely because of the method used to make you learn them.

I was presented with them by the teacher explaining them on the blackboard to a class of 25 students. Since it was a class of 25 learners, the teacher did not care to ensure that each student was understanding the explanation.

Instead, we were presented with a lot of problems to solve, which was designed to record our understanding rather than support it and used to give us the opportunity for repetition.

You may say that some kids were dumb and did not understand math, but you may also say that the learning manager did not facilitate the individual learners' needs and did not create the foundation for future learning.

Maybe you are actually proficient in arithmetic and maybe your grade school teacher was actually en-suring your foundation or you are a bright person, but this is a very common situation in learning.

The Problem

We know that learning requires leading and repe-tition. Regarding arithmetic, the teacher would lead the class in presenting an explanation in the classroom. Repetition would then ensue by solving a series of routine arithmetic problems - assuming that everyone understood the explanation.

Those who did not understand the explanation were instead offered to ask for help solving the problems used for repetition. So the learner has now become the troubleshooter of the inadequacy in the leadership of the learning manager, a task for which the learner is often ill-suited.

The Take-away

This is not managed learning and the reason that teachers are leaving large portions of their classes behind is either that they are not imagining the amount of trivial repetition required to have someone learn, or that they are not able to allocate the necessary resources for it - the time.

What you consider to be self-evident may not at all be self-evident for the learner and you must, therefore, introduce trivial repetition whenever a critical piece of knowledge is presented or a critical correlation of compound knowledge is shown.

This will not only ensure that you get through to the learner but the repetition will also signal to the learner that something important is being handled.

You may set up prerequisites for your course but consider if you can accept to allow learners to participate though they are not honoring your pre-requisites?

There is no way around that you must ensure that each learner has understood your message.

This is your task as a leader - not theirs!

You can leave the repetition to the learner, but then you cannot build on it until the learner has had the time to put in the work and you must also supply direction with the *how to* work, to ensure that it is executed correctly.

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E-LEARNING

by Mads Heising

Most eLearning you find on the internet consists of scripted powerpoint presentations. But is this really any different from class room training?

In some ways the common examples of "internet learning" have even lower learning quality than classroom training, comparable to a lecturer that does not take questions.

What virtually every internet-learning I have come across are missing is that the presentation, just as in a classroom setting, is not the central part of learning but merely a resource in the learning activity.

If you present someone with a book do not claim that they have learned anything - even though they might have read the book. The book is also only a resource in a learning activity.

There is more to learning than presenting facts. Only when the learner are able to reproduce the facts (or result) have learning been taking place.

To migrate your internet learning into elearning, you should include more than knowledge resources - it needs learning activities.

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