Usage guidelines

DOING OTHER PEOPLE'S TRAINING PRESENTATIONS
- ## a guide for teachers in implementing a scheme

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Introduction

Often, experienced teachers in schools and colleges are asked to present training packs written by others. The assumption is that since they are experienced teachers, making training presentations to their colleagues will be easy. They often find that it is not. Usually, the material has been designed to be delivered using a model where one person within a school or college will make themselves responsible for familiarising themselves with Trainer's Notes, the Teachers' Guide and the rest of the support material provided. They will then be able to use the pack to make a presentation to the rest of their colleagues.

The disadvantage with this approach is that often the member of staff providing the training is likely to be only' 'one chapter ahead" of the rest of his or her colleagues. There is an argument that an expert lecturer, perhaps one from the original company providing the pack or from another school, will be thought to be able to provide more answers and more short cuts to the successful implementation and operation of the scheme. However, although they may be experts in one field, they will have little or no knowledge of the particular school in question. Their presentation will inevitably be general and unspecific. They will be unable to provide any specific examples of operation of the school in which they are lecturing. It is nearly always important the credibility of the scheme and its successful implementation and operation that the people who are training members of staff in the school understand properly what the school aims to get from the scheme itself.

For this reason schools will support the view that having someone who knows the school, but is inexperienced at delivering the material is better than someone who knows how to deliver training but doesn't know the context very well. These notes are intended to overcome some of the disadvantages of this approach by providing some suggestions for the trainer to be able to do the job properly.

Timetabling the Presentations - when in the year?

The decision on when to make the various presentations is a difficult one, and one which only the school can take. On the one hand staff need sufficient time to use the knowledge gained in the presentations to plan and perhaps pilot different approaches they have considered. On the other hand, if the presentations are done too early then considerations may be forgotten. A suggested timetable is below, which assumed that a school is implementing a scheme from the beginning of an academic year, but is should be remembered that this is only a suggestion and as with all things concerning the implementation method will vary from school to school. This example is for a school whose school year runs from September. Generally speaking the packs should be presented with a whole-staff introduction coming early enough for all staff to take on new ideas, then subsequent material being presented to the staff in time for them to plan their individual activities.

January	Introduction
February	Senior Managers' presentation
March	Specific input
April- June	Departmental and individual planning
July	Follow-up
September	Scheme starts
April	Follow-up

Small Group Sessions - Senior Managers, HoDs etc

It is likely that presenters will be asked to follow up their formal presentation with a series of small group sessions. Certainly this will be required by the senior management team of the school (or whoever it is that makes decisions on policy). It is absolutely vital that the senior management team understand what will be required by the school and all its staff by the implementation of the scheme and an early presentation to the senior management will help enormously in this.

Small group presentations may also be required for groups of heads of department (either by faculty or all the heads of department together) and may even be by the presenter to individual departments. However in considering whether to make a presentation to an individual department or not, remember that you may have an incomplete knowledge of the work of that department. It is likely that the presenter who worked with the whole staff may well not be the correct person to make the presentation to an individual department - the head of that department will understand far better what subject specialisms are required and what the nature of his or her department is.

How To Make A Presentation

This section assumes that you are an experienced teacher, but surprisingly few experienced teachers have also had the experience of making presentations to groups of colleagues. It can be quite a daunting task the first time, when friends suddenly appear to be much less supportive sitting in front of you than they did in the staff room yesterday!

Equipment

Check your equipment very carefully before you start. This is especially true if you are not used to dealing with some of it in your normal teaching. Make sure the overhead/data projector works and is in focus, and that you have the whiteboard or flip charts that you may wish to use, to hand. Make sure also that you have the correct pens and that they work. If you have asked a technician or other member of staff to set up the equipment for you, check it. Take no-one's word that it has been done for you. Check that your version of Powerpoint

works on the equipment supplied (this is especially important if you are using an external venue).

Preparation

Make sure that you have all the correct documentation with you. You will need your set of Presenter's Notes, the overhead projection transparencies or Powerpoint, example material and supplementary material to refer to, and so on. All these things should be immediately to hand so that you don't have to search for them during your presentation. Apart from looking unprofessional, this can be quite disconcerting for you since, when you are under pressure, even something which would normally be instantly obvious will be difficult to find. Think carefully about what you will need - things like the school handbook might well be quite useful, also have a pad and pen ready to that you can write down things to be checked out later - it is unlikely that you will know all the answers to the questions of your audience but you can always ask someone later on so long as you remember what it is you have to ask. Writing things down also gives you valuable thinking time.

During the Presentation

Try to be relaxed at all times - presenting is not an ordeal, it is you helping you colleagues out. Explain what you are trying to do, and how, at the beginning of the presentation.

Make sure that you begin and end at the published times. It you intend to take an hour take an hour and no more. If you intend to take an hour and a half, stick to that time as well. If you intend to start at 9.30, start 9.30 even if that means that you are fighting against people coming in late for the first 5 minutes or so. You will find that the presenters' notes include a certain amount of "redundancy" at the beginning of the presentation to allow for this. It will be a fair criticism of you as a presenter if you don't stick to your time properly.

Keep track of the schedule as you go through so that you don't have to miss out important parts or rush towards the end. The timings of the presentations are reasonably accurate and allow a certain amount of time for questions. They will not, however, allow for a protracted

discussion on a minor point.

Try to look confident at all times. The secret to this is in being well prepared and in the knowledge that often there is no correct answer to a question that is given to you. Admitting this will help - there will be different answers to the same question in the same school.

Try to avoid being sidetracked. However, there are sometimes instances where you could depart from the programme if you find that it is not working.

At all costs avoid loosing your dignity, keep cool even if you are provoked.

Don't try to comment on difficult interjections. Don't ignore them but don't allow them to divert you. If you receive general criticisms ask for concrete examples and take it from there. You can always try to remind them that you are there to help and indeed you are one of them

It is also worth trying to defree situations with humour if you can, but don't use sarcasm - this never works. Often the group itself will try to get awkward members back into line. Nobody really appreciates someone moaning at the back of the room.

Arranging the room

Often presenters will be left with little option of how the room should be arranged - it will be done for them. Much also depends on personal preference - some presenters will prefer their audience to be in rows, others will prefer a more informal semi-circular arrangement.

The most important point to consider is whether the audience are able to see the people and equipment that they need to see and will they be able to work effectively. Consider the following questions:

Can they all see you?

If the audience is large, this can be a problem, especially in older rooms where pillars can block a clear view. If the room is not tiered, can those at the back see past all the heads?

Can they hear you?

This is usually only a problem with long narrow rooms, but do consider outside noises especially when it is hot and windows need to be open. Will the school bell ring at an inopportune moment? If you are doing a large presentation (ie 100 or more people) will you need a sound system? You might think the answer is no, but large rooms often have air conditioning running, and this can make hearing you surprisingly difficult. Have you used PA before? If not, practice – the skills are different since you need to stand still!

Can they all see the screen?

Not only is this a problem of the audience seeing past solid objects, there can be a problem of light striking the screen and making what is on it invisible. Check the blinds of the room, if it has them. Consider whether the sun will move round and fall onto the screen later on.

If you are writing on the screen, can the audience read what you have done?

If you are running a discussion session, can they see each other?

Again, usually only a problem in a minority of rooms. Libraries are particularly poor at providing easy vision across from person to person.

Are they comfortable?

An uncomfortable audience will not bother to listen to you. Chairs need to be comfortable enough for the length of the presentation. Make certain that there are enough - people sitting on tables or standing at the back of the room is not satisfactory .

Can they write?

If you are going to ask your audience to write something, will they be able to? It takes a surprising amount of elbow room to write comfortably - try it.

Workshop sessions are another story. It is usually preferable to have a series of smaller workshop rooms for people to go to than try to reorganise the main room.

Consider these things before you start and try to solve the problems before they occur.