Planning and Delivering a Presentation: Memory Triggers and Tips

**Introduction**

R – Relate  
O – Objectives and Overview  
A – Assess  
R – Rationale  

**Body**

V – Visuals  
O – Organization  
I – Interaction  
C – Collaboration  
E – Enthusiasm  

**Closing**

E – Encourage  
A – Assess  
R – Review  

**Explanation of Above Terms**

**Introduction**

R – Relate  

Refers to establishing a link between you and the learner. If you are a guest speaker, share something with the students that shows a connection to them.

O – Overview and Objectives  

Providing students with a content overview is one way of helping them place the content in a previewed context. The overview can simply be a list of bulleted topics in the same sequence they are to be discussed.

Most good presentations are based on a set of clearly written learning objectives (sometimes called behavioral objectives). If you are using PowerPoint, you can place the learning objectives on a slide. Realistically, an interactive presentation of 50 minutes only gives you time to address 3 to 5 objectives. This is course depends on the nature and complexity of the objectives and the content they represent. Here are examples.

Students will be able to:

1. Define and compare the terms, inferential statistics and descriptive statistics.

2. Given examples of inferential statistics and descriptive statistics in a medical journal article, correctly identify them.

Please note that the objectives are written in terms of what the student is to accomplish as a result of being present for your presentation and that a learning objective has a verb or phrase (e.g. define and compare) describing a measurable way to determine if the objective is achieved.
Assess refers to the teacher’s efforts to determine what the students already may know about the information or alternatively how they might feel about the information. For example the presenter might say, “How many of you have had a statistics course in which you learned about “sampling from a population.” Another example might be, “How many of you have a systematic strategy for reading and evaluating the articles you read in the medical literature?” Several hands go up in response to this question and you might ask, “Could someone who raised his/her hand tell me some of the strategies you use?”

Rationale refers to giving the students a reason the content is relevant to them. Medical students are more motivated to learn the content when they feel the content has clinical relevance.

Visuals should be designed to help make the content clear and memorable. Most everyone now uses PowerPoint. The most frequent misuse of PowerPoint is “too much information on a slide.” A slide should contain no more than 6 words across and 6 lines down (the 6X6 rule). Additionally, handouts of PowerPoint slides are frequently too small to be read if 6 slides are placed on a page. If the slides are placed on a handout they should be readable. The second most frequent misuse of PowerPoint is “too many slides.” If interaction between presenter and students is to occur – and interaction should occur - a good rule of thumb is to have no more than 20 slides. Of course this number is subjective and depends on the nature of the content and how the slides are designed but going in with 40 to 50 slides will insure that you will be rushed and that you will not have time to interact with the learners. Remember – Your joy as a teacher is not to cover the content but instead to uncover the content.

Organization

It probably goes without saying that a presentation should be organized. The trick is to organize the content in a recognizable sequence and to make that organization apparent to the learners. As described above, your organization can be revealed when you give the students an overview.

Interaction

Interaction refers to interaction with the students. Questions are usually the strategy used to interact with the students. If you are a guest presenter it is sometimes difficult to get students to respond to questions because they may not know you and they are not sure how you will respond to incorrect answers. This is why the R for Relate in the introduction is important. A good technique to try when asking questions is “wait-time.” Wait-time is a 3 to 5 second period of silence by the teacher after he/she asks a question. This gives the students time to think and to respond. So ask a question and if someone immediately doesn’t answer do not answer the question yourself or rephrase it. Just wait. Someone will break the silence and give an answer.

Collaboration

Collaboration refers to creating a collaborative and friendly classroom environment. You are a collaborative teacher when you believe that in addition to providing information to the learners, they can also provide information to you. It is a philosophy and way of thinking about teaching and learning that is best capture in the following passage from the Talmud. Much I have learned from my teachers, more from my colleagues, most from my students.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm of the teacher is frequently cited in educational research as a teacher characteristic/behavior that positively influences learning. So the message is – “display enthusiasm.” Enthusiastic teachers are characterized by good voice inflection, emphasis with use of hands, active body movement, eye contact, facial gestures, etc. For some of us who are more naturally introverted showing enthusiasm takes more energy and effort than our more extroverted colleagues. We can do it but we have to try harder.
Closing

E – Encourage

Encourage refers to giving students encouragement relative to using and remembering the information presented/discussed. For example, the teaching might say, “If you will use the information we have learned today as soon as possible you will better understand and retain it, so I encourage you to read a journal article within the next two days and apply the criteria we discussed to determine its value.

A – Assess

Assess refers to asking students to self-assess relative to their accomplishment of the learning objectives. One strategy for doing this is to display the learning objectives with a rating scale to help the students self-assess and at the same time ask the students if there remain any questions. The display of the learning objectives and rating scale might look as follows. You could also make this a handout they completed and turned in to you.

| Please indicate the degree to which you now have a command of the following learning objectives as a result of today’s presentation/discussion using the following scale. Circle the appropriate category following each statement. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SD = Strongly Disagree | D = Disagree | N = Neutral | A = Agree | SA = Strongly Agree |

1. I can Define and compare the terms, inferential statistics and descriptive statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Given examples of inferential statistics and descriptive statistics in a medical journal article, I can correctly identify them.

| SD | D | N | A | SA |

Another simple technique is to show the students the objectives and ask them to write down two to three things they learned from the presentation/discussion that relates to the learning objectives.

R = Review

Review refers to recapping the content or “summarizing.” You could do this by showing the objectives and review the content simultaneously. As you show the objectives you might say, “To review quickly, we have learned that descriptive statistics describe ……..” We also learned that the three main criteria or questions to use when determining the value of an article are: 1) Were the subjects randomly assigned to treatment groups, 2) Did …………”

Use the EAR sequence in reverse; meaning review (summarize) the content, then have the students assess their knowledge relative to the learning objectives and then finally give encouragement.