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Training Tips



- Arrive early and greet students so that you are in control of conversations when the instruction session begins. This also lets students know that you are approachable.
- Maintain a calm, positive, helpful attitude when interacting with your audience.
- When teaching in an electronic classroom, ask students to turn off their computer monitors while you are lecturing or demonstrating a particular resource.
- Be flexible. Have a back-up plan ready in case the technology fails.
- Allow time for questions, comments and class discussion.
- Treat all questions seriously and let students know that there are no 'dumb' questions.
- Never allow latecomers to disrupt your class. Ask them to see you at a session break to get information they missed.
- When unable to complete your entire presentation due to unexpected circumstances, encourage students to contact you at a later time.
- Maintain a respectful atmosphere. If students become disruptive (i.e., talking to each other, doing homework, etc.), invite them to be a part of the program asking them to assist you in some way or to answer a question if possible.
- Use a variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged while you're teaching.
- Ask questions and encourage participation.
- Show your enthusiasm and interest in your students' learning and your teaching.
- Be organized and outline the class objectives.
- Be a good listener and observer; move around the room if possible.

Library Instruction Teaching Tips



Classroom Management

American Library Association
Library Instruction Round Table
Research Committee



Technology

Technology crises are inevitable in modern library instruction. If you encounter a noticeable glitch, apologize for the technical difficulty ONCE and move on. Avoid dwelling on the issue. Attendees may be unaware of the technical difficulty. If that is the case, just quietly proceed with your Plan B.

- Create slides of relevant screens that can function as backups to live presentations.
- Create overhead transparencies and/or paper printouts of relevant screens to back-up presentation software (i.e. PowerPoint)
- If you are without a back-up, talk about concepts rather than the specifics of the screens they can't see.
- If you are traveling, consider saving your electronic presentation in a variety of formats.
- Create backup overhead transparencies of your slides, and switch to an overhead projector if PowerPoint won't work.
- Carry chalk and dry erase markers with you in case software and/or training computer does not work.

Acknowledge and Move On!

Avoid dwelling on a negative classroom situation.

Remember:

Your audience will forgive most situations if you are sincere and maintain a positive attitude.

Audience

Audiences can represent some unique challenges. Remember to stay safe, stay calm, and stay in charge. Here are some additional tips:

Reluctant Learners

- Clearly explain the course goals and timeline to let the students know what's in it for them.
- Determine audience expectations through questions and discuss how the class will meet their expectations.
- If expectations will not be met and attendance is optional, let the class know you won't be offended if they choose to leave. If the class is required, explain how it fits into the goals of the class requiring it.
- Face their unhappiness head on. Acknowledge it and enlist their help in making the session better.

The Heckler

- If possible, ignore hecklers. Their behavior will likely be discouraged by others.
- For persistent hecklers, make eye contact with them or move towards them to let them know you are aware of them.
- Avoid shaming a heckler, it may silence them, but you will lose your credibility with the rest of the class.

Sleepers

- Make sure that the facilities are conducive to staying awake. Good lighting and air conditioning are useful. Avoid ambient noise; it can be lulling.
- Introduce variety. Try to mix in discussions with lectures, hands-on searching, writing exercises, and question & answer periods.
- Change the environment. If the room is darkened to see screens, turn on the lights while you make a point.
- Take breaks.

Instructor & Facilities

Even with good preparation we will all face moments of crisis while teaching. If something truly catastrophic happens, you'll discover that your audience is supportive, and they really want to see you succeed.

Nerves

- Write out what you are going to say ahead of time so you can concentrate on reading your notes as you speak.
- Practice your presentation in advance with another person.
- Give yourself a moment to focus on a task before you resume your presentation. Try taking a drink, picking up a piece of chalk, or clearing your throat.

Mental block

- Prepare an outline of your presentation that you can refer to in such moments.
- Pause, take a deep breath and give yourself a moment to collect your thoughts.
- Repeat your last point, it may help you move on to the next
- Try honesty. Smile, admit that you've forgotten what you were going to say, and check your notes.

Facilities

- Know all relevant emergency numbers and location of emergency exits.
- Treat all alarms as the real thing.
- Carry a spare flashlight in case you lose power. This is also useful when you need to search for out-of-the-way outlets for equipment.

Expect the Unexpected

Be Flexible

Maintain a Sense of Humor