

Effective Instruction For Diverse Audiences

Unit 5

A six-part curriculum designed to assist Extension professionals in planning and implementing more effective programs to reach diverse audiences

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Unit 5

Effective Instruction for Diverse Audiences

An Overview

In order to work effectively with diverse, multi-need audiences, we prepare by learning about diversity, program planning, and marketing. These foundational skills prepare us to relate effectively with our valued clients/participants. This unit focuses on those skills (teaching, instruction) that will help you be more effective when you come face-to-face with clients.

Lesson 1 is about connecting smart. It teaches vital skills for working directly with people, whether your client is a young person who is discouraged, a mother who is overwhelmed by parenting, or a man who wants to learn how to better provide for his family. The skills in this lesson help you build bridges to the people you serve, especially at those times when they are stressed, discouraged, angry, or confused. If you learn and apply the skills described in this lesson, you will be more effective with people. If you master the skills, you can become a very effective agent for change.

Lesson 2 in this unit is about effective teaching. Most of us teach without thinking much about the parts of our instruction. In this lesson, you will learn how to balance the parts of your teaching to be more effective: how to be aware of the balance between what you present and what you draw out of your students, and how to balance clear statements of principles with examples that help your students apply the principles in their own lives. There is no simple formula for great teaching, but this lesson points you to the right questions to ask as you develop lessons, whether for one-on-one mentoring or group teaching.

Unit 5

Effective Instruction for Diverse Audiences

Facilitator's Guide to Lesson 1

Lesson Title: Connecting Smart: Building Bridges to the People You Serve

Goal: To make better connections with diverse populations.

Objectives: By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Consciously consider ways to connect with their audience as they design their instruction (whether oral or written)
- Deliberately honor participants' perceptions and statements with supportive responses
- Structure an active understanding response

Materials Needed

A writing board and markers

One copy of Attachment 5.1 for each participant

Time Needed: Approximately 1 to 1½ hours (depending on time taken with the exercise)

Background

Facilitator Note: This information will provide you with a background to the teaching unit. Be sure that you understand it before you attempt to teach this unit.

Especially when we are trying to help people deal with sensitive issues, we need to start with a relationship of trust. It is not effective to lecture or command people. The issue of trust is particularly important when our clients or participants feel vulnerable. For example, clients who are mandated by the courts to take a parenting class may feel resentful and untrusting. Parents



who have had encounters with family services may see teachers or home visitors as spies. How do we build strong relationships with people?

Haim Ginott (as described in Orgel, 1980) has developed a very powerful method for parent education. The same principles for connecting with people apply whether we are teaching nutrition, resources management, youth development, or any other subject. The same principles also apply when connecting with diverse audiences. Ginott suggested that there are four steps in the process. While this unit will deal primarily with the first point (recitation), you may find all four points very useful.

1. Recitation

In this first stage, the participants are encouraged to talk about their challenging experiences. This allows them to discover that all people have problems. It also allows the educator to model attention, understanding, and acceptance. Many participants have never had someone sensitively listen to them before. It is important for them to feel heard and understood.

Such sensitive listening may not be easy for the educator. It does not come easily to any of us. The educator must listen carefully, resist the temptation to correct or preach, and be skillful in remaining supportive and encouraging: “Wow. That must have been very difficult.” “You probably wondered what to do.” “Yes. That can be very challenging!” These are examples of sensitive listening.

The objective at this stage of a discussion is not to teach new skills to the participants, but to allow them to talk about their challenges while feeling valued and understood. This skill is especially important when participants have many challenges or are forced (mandate) to participate in an education program.

When an educator is supportive and encouraging, participants can embrace their unique strengths and feel safe enough to explore strategies to address their challenges. Sometimes participants lack confidence in their skills and worry that they make many mistakes. The effective educator recognizes, values and encourages each participant’s desires, even as their skills are still

emerging. This is particularly true for limited resource individuals who may have low-skills and/or low self-concepts.

2. Sensitization

This second stage of education can begin when participants feel accepted, valued, and safe, which may take 30 minutes, a whole session, or many weeks or months. In the second stage, the educator turns the attention of the participants to understanding the feelings of others. “How do you think your daughter felt in that situation?” “Why might that have been especially difficult for your son?”

In resource management, we may help the participants understand the needs of creditors. In youth development, we help young people understand the needs of their peers. In nutrition education, we help people understand the needs of their own bodies. The parent educator help parents understand their children’s feelings by asking them how they might have felt in similar situations. Participants may come to better understand others feelings when they relate them to their own experiences.

Everyone has struggles and disappointments. One of the challenges of relationships is applying our own human struggles to understanding how others feel. While we will never completely understand how an experience feels for others, we can appreciate how real the pain (or joy or confusion) is.

Learning is often made more difficult when educators react to their participant’s behavior without taking time to understand. Under such circumstances the participant is likely to become angry and resistant. When the participant feels understood, the participant and educator can work together more effectively.

3. Learning of concepts

Participants can learn principles and practices that will help them be more effective in the subject area the educator teaches. Unit 2 provided specific strategies for developing lessons (education) based on the learning preferences found to be prevalent in different ethnic groups. Ginott focuses more generally on learning and more specifically on learning in parent education programs.

For example, “Take time to understand what your child feels” is a rule that can help parents listen. The educator may have a series of information to present or rules to suggest. He or she can involve the group by asking them to apply the rules to other situations in their homes, on their jobs, etc. The educator should even invite participants to develop their own rules as they examine their dilemmas in their own lives.

Through these discussions, participants may learn to analyze and improve their own behavior.

4. Teaching and practice of better skills

In this final stage of Ginott’s process, participants learn how to use their new skills and get practice in applying the principles. Participants in the class can present dilemmas they face. Class members may get practice by responding to those dilemmas and others presented by the educator. They may also get practice by developing ways to deal with situations in their own lives.

A wise educator will not try to be the source of all answers, but will ask participants for their ideas. For every situation, there are many ways of responding. It is good for class members to hear many different ideas for dealing with a specific problem. If participant skills are thought of as tools in a toolbox, then it is important for participants to have many different tools and to know how to use them well. Each of us has different tools and different skills in using them. We may learn from each other. As we learned in Unit 4, every individual has skills and assets. It is important for the educator to identify and maximize those skills, particularly when working with diverse audiences (as discussed in Unit 4).

It is also important for participants to learn how to evaluate their various options. For each idea that is suggested, you can invite participants to consider two critical questions: “Would that work for me and my situation? Does it show respect for all those involved?”

The main objective of Ginott’s four-step process in parenting is to provide parents with the personal experience of a warm, caring environment in which they can learn effective, respectful discipline strategies. Then they will be prepared to go home and create a warm, caring

environment in which their children can learn more strong and humane ways of acting. In a way, the parenting educator is a parent to the parents. In that role, the parenting educator can be a model of a good parent.

These vital principles can help you connect with your clients regardless of the subject. They can help you get past differences and defensiveness and establish relationships based on trust.

Sometimes there will be participants in a class who are very angry or hostile. An angry participant provides an educator a great opportunity to model effective ways to deal with anger. "I can see that you feel very strongly about this." "This must be very upsetting for you." Words of compassion can be very soothing.

There are extreme cases when class members or clients feel so angry or stressed that they are not able to participate effectively with others. These people may benefit from individual counseling. Rather than acting as an individual therapist in this setting, educators are encouraged to provide appropriate referrals to trained professionals.

Facilitating the Lesson

1. Welcome the group and introduce yourself and the session. Describe how the lesson will be carried out (interactively), and share the objectives. Then, ask participants to introduce themselves by stating their names and some other information of interest (e.g., their organization, the type of program they work with, etc.). If you have taught this group before, you can alter the introduction to be more appropriate.
2. After the welcome and/or introductions, begin the lesson with the interest approach. Instructions are provided. Please read the content and instructions prior to the training so that you will be familiar with how to carry out the activity.
3. There is information on each topic below, as well as questions that you can pose to the participants as you move through the lesson. These questions will serve to stimulate discussion and even more interaction. "Address the Class" sections focus your attention on important points that should be made. "Facilitator Notes" throughout the curriculum provide important instructions or additional strategies for enhancing the lesson. There are also

attachments/handouts included that you will need to distribute per the instructions. Use the PowerPoint transparencies to guide you through the each topic within the lesson.

4. Once you have covered all of the topics for this lesson, carry out the application exercise. Instructions are included. Again, please read the content and instructions prior to the training so that you will be familiar with how to carry out the activity.
5. If time permits, you can close the lesson with a summary of the major points.
6. Thank participants for their time and for sharing and working together. If you are continuing on with another unit on a different day, you should reiterate the important details of the next training and encourage them to participate.

Lesson 1

Interest Approach

After welcoming students, taking care of business, and making appropriate introductions, begin the class by standing at a writing board (chalkboard, white board, or flip chart) and asking: When you are a student, does it make a difference whether you feel understood and valued by the teacher? Is a cold and impersonal teacher just as effective with you as a warm and caring one?

Facilitator Note: There are likely to be many different responses. Welcome all answers. If participants are slow to comment, you might prompt them: “I bet you can think of some teachers who were very understanding and some who didn’t seem to care.” Look at the students and see if you can spot someone who appears ready to comment. Invite that response. Once students start commenting and you welcome the ideas, there are likely to be many responses. You may want to allow about 5 minutes for this discussion--whatever time it takes to get many good ideas and give those who want to take part a chance to comment. There are likely to be comments about really enjoying teachers who are compassionate and understanding and who take a personal interest in their students. Congratulate the students on their answers.

Ask the class: “Do you think it makes a difference for your students or clients when they feel that you care about them and are interested in their lives?”

(People will probably respond by saying that yes, people really appreciate kindness and understanding.)

Address the class: Today we are going to talk about effective ways of connecting with people. Let's think about the many different people you teach and serve. What are some of the ways that some of them are different from you?

Facilitator Note: There are many areas of difference (In Unit 1, we learned about the different dimensions of diversity)! People may speak different languages and come from different parts of the country or from different countries. They may participate in different religions, have different personalities, have different educations, have different family structures, live in different housing, eat differently, etc. Emphasize the point that there are MANY ways to be different! Welcome all answers.

Ask the class: *Can our differences cause problems for us?*

Facilitator Note: Many ideas might be shared by class members. Emphasize that differences can cause us to misunderstand each other. Misunderstanding can lead to judging each other. Judging can lead to resentment and conflict.

Address the class: I would like to share with you a very effective way to connect with people across our differences. Is anyone here interested in being an effective teacher or leader? (Hopefully all will agree that we want to be effective.)

The first step is to give your students a chance to talk about their experiences. You might ask them something like, "Is parenting hard or easy?" or "What are the challenges you might face when trying to eat more healthily?" or "Do you think it is hard to manage money?" The main reason you ask these questions is so that you can show a genuine interest in them and their ideas. When you ask a question, do people appreciate your listening to them and trying to understand them?

Facilitator Note: People love to have others show an interest in them. There is hardly a better way of doing that than to listen carefully to what someone else says.

There is a tool we can use to make our listening very effective. Some people call it active understanding. It happens when someone tries to understand what we are feeling by putting themselves in our shoes, noticing our feelings, and expressing their understanding of us in words. Most of us are never trained to do this. Most of us have received very little understanding from others.

Ask the class: Can you think of a time when someone has done this for you--when someone really seemed to comprehend what you were feeling and expressed it just right so that you knew they understood you? How did it feel?

Facilitator Note: Take 5 to 10 minutes for participants to share their experiences of being understood.

Address the class: Here is a key to effectiveness in working with people. When you use active understanding with people who share their experiences with you, you will find that people enjoy talking with you, trust you more, and are more interested in your ideas. This is much harder than you might expect. When someone tells us about painful feelings, we often give advice or try to comfort. This often makes people feel pushed, rather than understood. It is far more effective to try to understand them. For example, if a parent tells you about being angry with a child who disobeys, what are some of the common ways we might respond that do NOT show understanding?

There are many ways we might react that don't truly show understanding. If we really want to connect with the parent who made that statement, we will work hard to show understanding. First, we will try to see through the other person's eyes. When we try to see through the parent's eyes, what might the child's disobedience look like to us? Why might this be especially upsetting to the parent?

There are many reasons that the parent might be upset. We really cannot fully know what the parent feels and why. But when we try to understand, we build a bridge of connection. The second rule is to notice signs of the other person's feelings. What can we learn from observing the other person's feelings?

(Encourage all answers. For instance, we might notice that the parent seems very tired, or agitated, or confused, or worried, etc.)

Distribute Attachment 5.1

When we pay attention to how the parent is feeling, we get clues that can help us to be more understanding. Next, we can demonstrate our understanding and caring by trying to describe the other person's experience. Take a look at the examples on your handout.

Ask the Class: *Can you think of other things you might say?* Of course, our words should be based on what we saw when we tried to see through the parent's eyes. There are many answers, just as there are many different ways that people might feel. *What are some of the things we might say to show understanding?*

Facilitator Note: Encourage all answers. Remind participants to avoid giving advice, but to simply try to describe what the person is feeling.

Address the class: On your attachment (5.1), you will see two other situations. As you read, try to picture someone you know who has been in a similar situation. Then go through the three-step process in order to provide understanding words. Write down your ideas.

Facilitator Note: Give class members time to come up with their ideas. This may take 10 to 20 minutes. They may benefit from working with a partner. Circulate among participants and help as needed.

Ask the class: *What are some of the understanding responses you came up with for the other two situations on your attachment?*

Facilitator Note: Invite participants to share. Evaluate ideas based on the three rules on the handout. Since we do not know the details of the situations described, we do not know the perfect answer, but we can work toward finding some solutions that show understanding, compassion, and caring.

Application

Address the class: There are two things that can help us become more effective at showing understanding. We can notice the understanding, compassionate things that people say to us, and learn from them. We can also keep experimenting. When we are trying to help someone who has strong feelings about something, we probably will not be able to come up with a compassionate statement immediately. But if we keep working at it, we are likely to find better and better ways of expressing our concern.

Ask the class: Do you have any questions?

Conclusion

Address the class: If you keep working at expressing active understanding, you are likely to become much more effective in working with people, especially when they have strong feelings. Try thinking of a friend or family member who expresses strong feelings about a situation or problem. Maybe you have responded to that person's strong feelings in the past with advice or commands. If so, the person was probably not appreciative. Think of an active understanding response you could try next time you talk with that person. Write your idea on the bottom of the worksheet. Working to be understanding with your friends and family can provide great practice for working with your clients.

Unit 5: Effective Instruction for Diverse Audiences

Facilitator's Guide to Lesson 2

Lesson Title: Teaching Smart: Designing Your Instruction to Be Effective with Diverse Audiences

Goal: To design effective instructions for diverse populations.



Objectives: By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Consciously consider the balance between telling and asking as they design their instruction (whether oral or written)
- Deliberately design the balance between principles and examples as they design their instruction (whether oral or written)
- Invite program attendees to contribute relevant information on their own culture.

Materials Needed

A writing board and markers

One copy of Attachment 5.2 for each participant

Time Needed: Approximately 1 ½ hours (depending on time taken with the exercise)

Background

David Merrill is a designer of instruction who has identified four chief elements in any teaching experience:

- The teacher tells a principle, rule, or idea (Merrill calls this an Expository Generality). It may even take the form of a motto or slogan. It is simply some statement of truth.
- The teacher gives an example of the principle. The example may be a story (an Expository Instance). Stories are not only interesting, they can help us figure out how to apply the principle to our lives.

- The teacher invites class members to express the principle in their own words (Inquisitory Generality). When participants put the principle in their own words, they are more likely to understand and remember the principle.
- The teacher invites class members to provide examples from their experience (an Inquisitory Instance) (Merrill, 1983). The participants' own stories help translate the principle into their own culture and experience.

Of course there are other elements to teaching, but most of the important elements can be grouped into one of these four categories.

One way to think about these four categories is to realize that they combine two kinds of teacher activity (telling and asking) with two different kinds of content (general principles and specific examples). Wise and balanced use of Merrill's four categories allows teachers not only to clearly explain ideas, but also to involve the learners in extending and applying the principles that are taught. Depending on the subject matter, the audience, and the objectives of the instruction, the four elements of instruction can be used in different orders and in different proportions.

Facilitating the Lesson

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5. If time permits, you can close the lesson with a summary of the major points.
6. Thank participants for their time and for sharing and working together. If you are continuing on with another unit on a different day, you should reiterate the important details of the next training and encourage them to participate.

Lesson 2

Interest Approach

After welcoming students, taking care of business, and making appropriate introductions, begin the class by standing at a writing board (chalkboard or white board). Begin by saying: We have all sat through lessons that were boring and ineffective. We have also been in classes that were interesting and engaging.

***Ask the class:** What are some of the common characteristics of the classes you have gotten the most from and enjoyed the most?*

Facilitator Note: There are likely to be many different responses. Welcome all answers. If participants are slow to comment, you might prompt them as follows: “I bet you can think of some class that you especially enjoyed.” Look at the students and see if you can spot someone who appears ready to comment. Invite that response. Once students start commenting and you welcome the ideas, there are likely to be many responses. Write a key word from each answer on the board. You may want to allow 5 to 15 minutes for this discussion--whatever time it takes to get many good ideas and give those who want to take part a chance to comment. Among the answers there are likely to be comments about appreciating clarity, the use of stories and examples, teachers who show respect for students, and classes where there is a lot of student participation. Congratulate the students on their excellent answers.

Ask the class: Do you prefer to be a teacher who bores students or one who informs and inspires?

Facilitator Note: You can expect most to prefer informing and inspiring. If someone says they like to bore students, you can joke with them: “Well, be sure not to use the ideas we will talk about today!”

Address the class: Today we are going to talk about ways to design your lessons to make them more interesting and effective.

Facilitator Note: Discussion of each point may take 5 to 10 minutes. Be sure to treat all answers with respect.

Address the class: The best teaching draws on the ideas and experiences of both the teacher and the students. The teacher is supposed to be an expert on the subject matter. What is it that the students bring to the learning experience?

Facilitator Note: Participants may observe that people are the experts on their own lives. They know how to apply any idea to their own lives and families. They know how to adapt principles to their culture and situation. Even students who know very little about the subject matter being studied are experts in their own experience!

Address the class: *The best teaching draws on the ideas and experiences of BOTH the teacher and the students. Effective teaching cannot happen unless the students are fully engaged. What can a teacher do to increase the productive involvement of students?*

Facilitator Note: Many ideas may be given by class members. As they are given, list a key word from each on the board. Discuss or ask for clarification as appropriate.

Ask the class: With so much knowledge coming from students, why do we need teachers?

Facilitator Note: Effective teachers not only facilitate the smooth operation of the class, they contribute knowledge and preparation on the subject matter.

***Address the class:** The most effective teaching brings the teacher and the students into a partnership. The teacher brings experience and leadership to the learning process, while class members bring their life experiences and knowledge of their culture. As discussed in Unit 2, an effective teacher will learn to better understand the students and their worlds. Effective students will learn new ideas to apply to their lives. Since everyone in this class is a teacher, let's list some of the things we can do to build these learning partnerships. Write down any ideas that you would like to remember and apply to your teaching.*

Facilitator Note: List class members' ideas on the board. Encourage them to write down those that will help them.

***Address the class:** Let's talk about another principle for making our teaching more effective. The best lessons commonly contain both clear statements of principles and stories that show how to apply those principles. Let me give you an example. Perhaps I want to teach the general principle that children develop best when they have people who love them in their lives.*

***Address the class:** For example, I could talk about babies in orphanages who failed to thrive even though they were well-fed because no one took a personal, loving interest in them. (For more about this example, see R. Spitz (1965). *The first year of life*. New York: International Press.)*

*Or I might tell of a specific person I know who has grown into a wonderful person because of the love and support he or she received. The stories can be long or short, dramatic or funny. **Ask the Class:** Why do stories and experiences help us learn?*

Facilitator Note: You should choose principles that are appropriate for your subject matter and that is a clear statement of truth. It is more likely to be understood and remembered if you share stories that illustrate the principle. We can relate to real-world examples. Stories help us see how the principle works in real life. Also, we learned in Unit 2 that storytelling is important in some

diverse ethnic groups. Unit 3 discussed how a narrative can be an effective marketing strategy in some cultures. There may be many excellent answers.

***Address the class:** As a teacher, I hope I can provide a clear statement of the principle, and I hope to have practical and memorable stories prepared to help illustrate the principle. But maybe you can see what is still missing. Even after I have shared the principle and the examples, I still need class members to translate the lesson to their own lives. For that reason, I would then invite them to think of their own way to express the principle and their own examples to illustrate the principle. Now we have the four key elements of effective teaching: a clear statement of the principle by the teacher, engaging real-life examples to illustrate the principle, class members' own expressions of the principle, and class members' own stories.*

Distribute Attachment 5.2.

Application

***Address the class:** Will each of you fill in the worksheet with a subject that you often teach? Fill in all four areas with simple statements or questions on a subject that is familiar to you.*

Examples are provided on the attachment (5.2).

Facilitator Note: As students work on their worksheet, provide guidance and support. You may invite other class members to help anyone who gets stuck, or you may invite class members to work in small groups to design lessons in their areas of interest. For example, one group may be interested in working on a lesson on couple relationships while another group works on a lesson on saving for retirement.

Conclusion

Facilitator Note: When students have finished designing their own lessons, ask:

Do you think that the four elements we have talked about (a clear statement of a principle, good stories or examples from the teacher, the student's own expressions of the principle, and student sharing of stories) are often a part of those classes you get the most from and enjoy the most?

Allow the class to discuss this, and encourage them to try using the four elements in their teaching.

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EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Attachments

Attachment 5.1: Using Active Understanding to Connect with People

Attachment 5.2: The Four Elements of Teaching

Attachment 5.1

Using Active Understanding to Connect with People

Try to see through the other person's eyes.

What might that situation mean to him or her? Why might the situation be even harder for him or her than it would be for me?

Notice signs of the other person's feelings.

What feelings do you notice? Stress? Tiredness? Anger? Frustration? Fear?

Show your understanding and caring by trying to describe their experience.

Try to express what you think that person may be feeling.

Examples

A parent tells you about being angry with a child who disobeys.

- That must be hard when you try so hard to be a good parent.
- No wonder you feel that way.
- Your idea for an active understanding statement:

One of your clients tells you about being fired from a job and being worried about providing for the family.

- That is a very scary situation.
- I can see why you are worried. You really want to take good care of your family.
- Your idea for an active understanding statement:

A class member complains that he simply can't lose weight.

- You must be discouraged after trying so hard.
- I wonder if you are tired of trying when nothing seems to work.
- Your idea for an active understanding statement:

Think of an emotional situation you often have with a friend or family member. Design several active understanding statements you might use next time you are in a similar situation.

The Four Elements of Teaching

The teacher makes a clear statement of a principle.

(“Children develop best when they have people who love them in their lives.” “People are more likely to be healthy when they eat five servings of fruits or vegetables every day.” “People who make a realistic spending plan are more likely to manage their money effectively.”)

Your clear statement of principle:

The teacher provides specific examples.

(“Abraham Lincoln grew up in poverty but he had a mother who loved him dearly.” “My neighbor recently started eating more vegetables and feels much better.” “I have a friend who was getting deeper and deeper into debt until he sat down with a counselor at a consumer credit counseling service and made a spending plan.”)

Your specific example to illustrate your principle (above):

The teacher invites students to come up with their own way of expressing the principle.

(“What have you learned about the importance of love for growing children?” “How would you express a motto about eating more fruits and vegetables?” “What advice would you give yourself about having a spending plan?”)

Your way of asking students how they would express the principle:

The teacher invites students to provide examples that illustrate the principle.

(“Can you provide an example where love helped a person turn out well?” “Can you tell about someone who has started eating more fruits and vegetables?” “Has a spending plan helped you or someone you know?”)Your way of inviting students to provide supporting stories or examples: