

Tips for Trainers

A Service of the Library's Instructor's College

- ❖ **Davidsen's first rule of technology teaching:** If you make expensive color paper/ acetate copies of your presentation, all of your technology will work in harmony.
- ❖ **Davidsen's second rule of technology teaching:** If you make no copies of your presentation, the technology gods laugh in your face and make even the simplest cable connection unachievable.

General Tips

- **State Your Goals!** This insures that everyone knows what they're there for. You'd be surprised at some people's misconceptions of what they are there to learn. Offer them the chance to leave if it's not what they thought!
- **Don't Panic.** Remember, they don't know exactly what you're going to teach, so if you miss a little something, they won't know unless you panic about it. Be aware that mistakes will happen; it's how you handle them that counts.
- **Be Prepared,** as the Boy Scouts say. Instructors are much more effective when they have prepared a plan and are focused on the material they are presenting. Participants appreciate well-organized lectures. **Being prepared** also helps you anticipate possible questions, difficult concepts that may need additional examples, and points in a presentation or lecture which may "demand" a change of content delivery or pause.
- **Bring Handouts!** Even if you think it's easy, it's not for the participants or they wouldn't be attending the workshop. You want them to be able to use the resource after they leave the workshop, and most people want some sort of handout to take with them. At the same time, if your handout only provides information about the product and not the practical, "how to" it information, it won't be as useful to the participant.
- **Strike a Balance** between the attention being focused on you and the attention being focused on something else (the screen, whiteboard, etc.). At the same time, make sure you make eye contact with your participants, especially those who seem to be drifting away.
- **Be Engaging!** Make your audience want to listen to you by being an effective public speaker.
- **Breathe!!** You need time to catch your breath, and the participants need time to comprehend what you're saying -- when you ask them if they're with you or if there are any questions, give them a minute to answer you! Check in with your audience and make sure they're following you, especially if you can't see their monitors.

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- **Evaluate Your Session.** Feedback is very helpful, particularly if it is a new session or you are a new instructor. Be aware that there's always going to be some negative comments - you can't please everyone all of the time.

Technology Tips

- **Know the Facility.** If possible, get to know the facility in which you're teaching and arrive early enough to do a test run of your presentation, bookmark URLs, etc. Depending on your environment, you may need to make some last minute adjustments to your presentation.
- **Know Your Resources!** If you are using technology to teach an electronic resource, be sure you know both the resource that you are teaching and the program with which you are teaching (PowerPoint, Netscape, etc. as well as the actual electronic resource).
- **Practice!** Go through all the steps of your demonstration, and have "canned" searches as back ups. Remember, you're trying to make specific points, so you need to make sure you use examples that will illustrate what you're after -- you can't always depend on the audiences suggestions to do that!
- **Stay Calm!** If the technology fails, call for the technician (if available), and then relax -- at this point it's out of your hands for a few minutes. If you need to stall, take this downtime to see if your students were really following along instead of browsing the web or checking their email. (Don't worry. The tech. **will** be able to fix it. **Eventually**. Keep stalling. At this point, you're probably kicking yourself for not following Davidsen's first rule.)
- **Watch Your Timing!** This not only refers to what you do during your session, but really what time it is -- if the West Coast is just waking up and getting online, chances are that national databases will be slower.
- **Use Floaters.** If possible, have at least one extra person in the room to walk around and help people. Floaters need to be anticipating problems, watching people who seem to be having trouble, not just watching the presentation and waiting for hands to raise.
- **Use a "Hands On, Hand Off" policy in your workshops:** Participant's hands on, and floaters'/ instructor's hands off. Unless there's a technology problem that you need to handle, let the participant do it for him/herself, with you talking them through it.
- **Avoid Saying "Click Here".** If they are looking at their own monitors or at the handout, they didn't see where "here" is, and will be lost. Tell them what menu and item it is, or what button you've hit. Repeat yourself. Say it again.

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- **Avoid Saying "It's Easy/Simple"** -- If they thought it was easy or simple, they wouldn't be in the workshop in the first place. If they are faculty members, they're probably a little uncomfortable being there in the first place, and you don't want to increase their discomfort.
- **Equipment Will Fail!** Be prepared for the database you want to access to be unavailable, and have an alternative method for presenting your information available. Refer to Davidsen's Rules of Technology Teaching above.

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Using the Exploratory

- **Instructor's Station** -- This is your "command station", if you will. From here you can control the lights, the receiver (turn it on if you need sound for your workshop, and test the volume setting before you start), and the computer that projects for the room.
- **Lighting** -- Switches are located on the short wall by the instructor's station. During workshops, we suggest all the florescent lights off, and the spotlights dimmed to half.
- **Dual Platform Environment** -- The Exploratory has Mac G3s with PC cards inside them, so they run both platforms. Generally we suggest that you let participants use the platform to which they are accustomed, unless the product you're showing only exists on either the Mac or the PC.
- **Flipping Between Platforms** -- Because of our dual platform environment, you may need to switch back and forth between the two platforms. If you are on the Mac, click in the OrangeMicro Window and it will bounce you over to the PC. If you are on the PC, push the Apple key and "D" on your keyboard, and you will go to the Mac side.
- **Using Disks** -- If you've brought a presentation with you on a floppy or zip disk, we recommend that you copy it to the hard drive of whichever platform you're using. You need to be on the appropriate platform **BEFORE** you put in the disk. If you are on the PC side, to eject the floppy push the Apple key and "E". To eject a zip disk, double click on My Computer, right mouse click on the zip, and choose "Eject". On the Mac side, just throw the floppy or zip icon into the trash.
- **Projector** -- You need to turn on the projector on the floor first, then push the red button on the top of the projector to turn it on.
- **If Apple Talk Goes Down** -- If you lose your connection during your presentation, sometimes you need to shut down the PC and Apple Talk will come back on. You may need to completely reboot the Mac as well, however. In either case, contact an Exploratory consultant, and he/she will take care of it for you.