

## ***How to Teach a Skill***

The two conditions of teaching are that (1) no one can teach more than he knows; and (2) no one can teach faster than the scholar can learn. (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

There are five basic steps in teaching a Scouting skill:

### **1. Preparation**

The first step in teaching a skill is to obtain the necessary equipment and supplies in sufficient quantity so the skill can be demonstrated, taught, and practiced. For demonstration and teaching purposes, simulated or makeshift equipment is never adequate.

### **2. Explanation**

The explanation serves two purposes: (1) to introduce the subject by giving some background about its usefulness and application; and (2) to describe the subject in detail, giving enough technical information to be complete without creating confusion.

The explanation should create a desire to become proficient in the skill. Unusual facts or illustrations arouse interest and create an appreciation of the value of learning the skill.

### **3. Demonstration**

This is the “showing” process. It is the first step in actual teaching. The demonstration should be done so well and simply that the student will have confidence in his own ability to achieve success. Demonstration of a skill is not an opportunity for the trainer to show his proficiency; it should be used primarily to show the steps in acquiring the skill.

### **4. Practice**

Hearing and seeing aren't enough. The learning process begins to finalize itself when students have the opportunity to try to do the skill themselves under the guidance of trainers. The coach-and-pupil method works well at this point. Nothing can beat the “learn by doing” method.

### **5. Teaching**

People often learn best those things they teach to others. Whenever possible, each student should have the opportunity to demonstrate and practice teaching others. Occasionally a summary of review and examination are desirable. The extent to which they are used depends on the type of skill and how well the student has learned.

## **Time Balance in Teaching a Skill**

No one can learn a skill except by doing it; therefore, most of the time must be spent in practice. The proper time balance is:

Explanation (hearing)	10% of the time
Demonstration (seeing)	25% of the time
Practice (doing)	65% of the time

## **Tips on Coaching a Skill**

1. Be able to perform the skill well yourself.
2. Review your own experience in learning it, and work out a series of steps for teaching it.
3. Keep instruction personal by working with individual or small group and letting them teach others.
4. Size up your audience as to abilities and personality traits that affect their learning the skill.
5. If learner is not familiar with skill, go slowly. Insist on accuracy first, then speed (if speed is a factor).
6. Don't interfere when learners try to do it on their own. Don't interrupt their efforts unless they bog down or go off on the wrong track.
7. Let them make mistakes if this will help them learn, but point out mistakes tactfully.
8. Never make corrections sarcastically or for the benefit of any onlookers.
9. Encourage the learners by making remarks on their progress, pointing out the completion of each step and remarking on the steps they have done well.
10. Urge them to practice and to teach someone else.

## ***How Visuals Can Tell Your Story***

One of the most effective ways to get your message across can be through the use of exhibits, display boards, posters, and charts. Learning can occur as unit leaders visualize means of doing projects, formulating new ideas, and planning programs that once seemed beyond their capability.

The following points can be used as guidelines for getting your message across during your lessons:

### **Make sure your visual has a purpose.**

A visual with no purpose is like a shotgun shot into the air and not aimed at anything. Before the visual is constructed, its target or purpose must be crystal clear if it is to hit the desired mark.

### **Limit your visual to one central idea.**

This type of visual is an illustrated headline, not an entire feature-length story. Most of us find it difficult not to use all of the inviting space at our disposal. It seems “wasteful” to devote a whole visual to only one idea. But too many ideas spoil a visual. Look at the windows of a department store to see how effective a single idea can be when it is skillfully handled in a display.

### **Place your visual where it will be seen.**

This should be obvious, but notice how many visuals are tucked away in corners of schools, meeting places, and offices. Locate your visual in the flow of heavy traffic, but not where the traffic is so congested that nobody can see anything at all. Survey potential site for traffic flow before deciding where to place visual.

### **A visual is seen, not read.**

Of course, some visuals are read, but the overwhelming majorities are scanned. Be sure your message can be understood and absorbed at a glance. Unless your visual message is crisp, clear, and uncluttered, it may be lost.

### **Make your labels short and simple.**

Use brief, concise words instead of long abstract ones. Don't say, “This is the method to be used in extinguishing a conflagration,” when you could simply title it “How to Put Out a Fire.”

### **Labels should be uniform and legible.**

Do not use six kinds of lettering styles or five sizes of cards. Remember that clear typewriting, even small, is easier to read than poor handwriting or lettering. Some 3” x 5” cards are useful for minor captions, and one large label may serve to tie the display elements together. Labels should include the heading, text or description, and the source.

### **Motion attracts attention.**

Flags and streamers, standard means of attracting people to your visual, can be put into motion by concealed electric fans. Motion can be overdone, however. If too many elements move, motion will become a commonplace element and lose its drawing power.

### **Be sure your visual is well lighted.**

We often exhibit materials in poorly lighted hallways, or use inadequately lighted cases. You can highlight your visual with a concealed gooseneck lamp. But the most important consideration here is contrast so that your visual will stand out. Using stage gelatin in front of a spotlight easily produces colored light. Automatic devices for turning color on and off are easily obtainable.

### **Color may add interest and attractiveness.**

Undoubtedly, you will want color in your visual—a one-color visual is almost a rarity. The use of color must be thoughtfully planned and the colors carefully selected.

### **Sound and various mechanisms and attractiveness.**

Music or speech can be supplied by means of record players or tape recorders. People like to participate, to touch objects, to turn them around and examine them. You can give people cranks to turn, electric buttons to press, levers to operate, little doors to open, even peepholes to awaken their curiosity—all through simply mechanisms. (Simple pulleys turned by a crank can open and close doors!)

In looking at the factors that make up a successful visual, the most important thing to remember is this:

### **Nothing can compel a person to look at a visual—except the visual itself.**

If it lacks the power to attract people, it might as well not be there, regardless of the effort and cost to produce it.

## ***How To Give a Demonstration***

There is a difference between using a skill or method and demonstrating it so others can learn. A few suggestions are outlined here.

### **Prepare for the demonstration.**

1. Plan in advance the steps you will use in giving the demonstration.
2. For a long demonstration, make a written outline of these steps.
3. Collect and prepare the necessary materials or equipment.
4. Practice the demonstration from beginning to end until you can do it smoothly and with ease.
5. Plan to appear as natural as possible, even if you can't perform the skill exactly as you would in use.
6. Size up your audience to determine their present knowledge and decide how much detail you will need to give them.

### **Give the demonstration.**

1. Briefly tell your audience the major points to watch for during the demonstration.
2. Adjust the speed of your demonstration to the difficulty in learning the various steps.
3. Watch for the participants' reactions. Pace the action to your audience.
4. If necessary, repeat any difficult or important steps, either as you go along, or after all steps are completed to assure that everyone understands.
5. If you warn against the wrong way by showing it, always demonstrate the right way both before and after you show the wrong way.

### **Summarize the demonstration.**

1. Briefly review the important steps in order. Use a chalkboard or poster as a visual aid in summary.
2. Give the participants a chance to ask questions, or better still, give them a chance to practice while you coach.

## ***Presenting the Subject***

These are some tips to help you make your presentations more interesting, worthwhile, and fun for both you and your audience.

- 1) **Prepare** your presentation.
  - a) Size up your audience, considering what they probably know and want to learn about the subject, and how quickly they will learn.
  - b) Write down the purpose of the presentation (or review the learning objectives) and decide on the ideas that should be covered.
  - c) Research the subject, taking brief notes.
  - d) Talk with others who know the subject and make notes of their ideas.
  - e) Outline your presentation, including only the most important points—usually the fewer the better—and put them in a logical order.
- 2) **Practice** your presentation.
  - a) Rehearse your presentation until you have it well in mind. Some people like to use a tape recorder so they can hear themselves.
  - b) Write down the time allotted for each major point. This will help you stay within the time limits.
  - c) Put your outline in final form so that it will not be cluttered with discarded ideas.
  - d) Try to be ready for extemporaneous speaking, with an occasional look at your outline. Do not memorize or read it word for word.
  - e) When you are well prepared, you will feel more at ease during the presentation. Also, it helps to take a few deep breaths before you begin.
- 3) **Personalize** your presentation.
  - a) Let each person feel you are talking to him or her. Look at the audience as individuals, not as a group. If you are nervous, find a friendly face in the audience and direct your remarks to that person for the first few minutes.
  - b) Watch the group's reaction as you go along. Stay close to their interests.
  - c) Use thought-provoking questions. This will help stimulate everyone's thinking. It will also help you get feedback from the audience, which will tell you whether or not they understand what you are saying.
- 4) **Illustrate** your presentation.
  - a) Use a chalkboard or flip chart to list your main points, or draw diagrams or sketches while you talk. Visual aids help make your presentation more interesting and reinforce the learning process. Not only do the participants *hear*, but they *see* as well.
  - b) Balance what you say with what you show. Don't let the visual aid become so elaborate that it is distracting.
  - c) Show the equipment and materials needed to do what you are talking about.
  - d) Show literature resources on the subject.
  - e) Illustrate your important points with human-interest stories, preferably something that actually happened. True stories are excellent—and they don't have to be funny. When interest is waning, an amusing story usually helps.
- 5) **Pace** yourself.
  - a) Stay within the time limit.
  - b) Stay on the subject. Don't get sidetracked.
- 6) **Clinch** your presentation.
  - a) Summarize the subject by restating its main idea or problem, its importance, and the major points you have made.
  - b) Give your listeners a chance to ask questions, either during the presentation or at the end.

## ***Leading a Discussion***

A group discussion is a planned conversation between three or more people (not more than ten) on a selected topic, with a trained discussion leader. The purpose is to express opinions and gain information on the topic and learn from the other group members. Group discussion can be used to:

- Share ideas and broaden viewpoints.
- Stimulate interest in problems.
- Help participants express their ideas.
- Identify and explore a problem.
- Create an informal atmosphere.
- Get opinions from persons who hesitate to speak.

## **Ground Rules for a Discussion**

1. Be an active part of the group.
2. Work to solve common problems.
3. Discuss the topic completely, but do not argue.
4. Contribute ideas related to the subject.
5. Ask questions to clarify ideas.
6. Be clear and brief—no speeches.
7. Listen and learn.
8. Write down good ideas.

## **Preparing for the Discussion**

1. Preferable seating arrangement is a circle, semi-circle, “U,” or hollow square so that each person in the group can see every other person.
2. Make the room as comfortable as possible. Check the ventilation and lighting.
3. Have paper and pencil ready to record main points.
4. Start discussion on time. Close on time.
5. Encourage informality and good humor. Permit friendly disagreement, but on the point under discussion, not between personalities.

## **Leading the Discussion**

1. Help the group feel at ease. See that everyone knows everybody else.
2. Give everyone a chance to talk. Let the person talking remain seated. More people will participate, and those talking will feel more at ease.
3. Be careful of the person who tries to monopolize the discussion. Interrupt the “speechmaker” tactfully and lead the discussion to another person.
4. Call on individuals who seem ready to talk, rather than going around the circle.
5. Direct, rather than dominate, the discussion by easing yourself into the background when the group gets into the swing of it.
6. Keep the discussion general so that it is of interest to all present.
7. Keep the discussion on track. If it gets sidetracked, bring it back to the main subject by suggesting there are some more important points which need to be covered in the limited time.
8. If you feel that an important point is being neglected, mention it.
9. Summarize periodically. Stop occasionally to review the points that have been made.
10. Stick to the time limit. If there doesn’t seem to be sufficient time to cover the subject, mention this in your training session evaluation, and take action to correct this before the next session.
11. Keep spirits high. Encourage ease and informality. Let everyone have a good time. Don’t let the discussion drag or get boring.

12. Quickly summarize the conclusions in such a way that everyone will realize the important facts brought out in the discussion.

**Points to Remember:**

- Prepare for the discussion.
- Get the group to feel at ease.
- Give everyone a chance to talk.
- Keep the group on the track.
- Summarize periodically.

## ***How to Use Charts and Posters***

Charts and posters are used to:

- Attract and hold attention.
- Develop an idea.
- Present information to small groups.
- Highlight key points.
- Review and preview.
- Add variety to discussion.
- Speed up learning.
- Increase retention.

### **How to Make a Flip Chart**

- 1) Although excellent flip-chart pads are available commercially, you can make your own with a tablet of newsprint, an artist's pad, or even sheets of construction paper, newsprint, or brown wrapping paper.
  - a) If paper is not in pad form, reinforce the top of the sheets with a double fold of paper or cardboard. Staple sheets together or fasten with lightweight bolts and thumbscrews.
  - b) If the flip chart is not self-supporting, tie it to the top of a stand, an easel, or movable chalkboard. You can improvise a stand by using the back of a chair or an upended table.
- 2) Plan the contents of the chart. It's a good idea to write out the flip chart in miniature while you are planning it. Changes or corrections can be easily made before you make the actual chart.
  - a) The first page should be the title page.
  - b) The second page should define the subject.
  - c) The following pages should explain the subject.
  - d) Offer proof that your explanation is sound.
  - e) Finally, summarize and ask for action on the last page.
- 3) Use large letting that can be easily seen.
  - a) Use wide-line marking pens.
  - b) Use plastic stick-on letters.
  - c) Use lettering patterns or stencils to trace letters.
  - d) Emphasize or underline key words.
- 4) Use color to emphasize key points.
- 5) Don't try to crowd too much on one page—only one idea per page.
- 6) To provide the presenter with a cue sheet, duplicate what the audience is seeing in miniature on the back of the preceding page. Then stand slightly behind the flip chart, facing the audience, and explain what they see.

### **How to Make Posters**

You don't have to be a sign painter or an artist to make an effective poster. Just follow these simple rules and your posters will carry a terrific punch.

- 1) Select the main idea. Jot down a few simple words that explain it.
- 2) Decide on the effect you want to create—funny, dramatic, serious, or factual.
- 3) Try out different ideas. Put them all down on scratch paper.
- 4) Experiment with lettering.
  - a) Block out the chart using light-penciled guidelines.
  - b) If you aren't an artist, use computer print-outs, plastic stick-on letters, pressure-sensitive letters, trace lettering patterns, or use letter stencils. This saves a lot of time.

- c) Use plain block letters. Make them a little taller than they are wide.
  - d) Don't squeeze the letters together or place them too far apart.
  - e) Avoid fancy or difficult-to-read lettering.
  - f) Follow this guide for letter sizes:
    - i) For 10 to 15 people (10 feet away), use letters 1/2-inch high and 1/8-inch thick.
    - ii) For 15 to 30 people (25 feet away), use letters 1-inch high and 1/8-inch thick.
- 5) Use color and illustrations.
- a) Color adds interest to posters. Use colored ink or poster paint to fill the letters.
  - b) Select colors that contrast sharply to the background color.
  - c) Cut out pictures from Boys' Life or Scouting magazine.
  - d) Trace pictures from magazines.
  - e) Using an opaque projector can enlarge pictures or diagrams from magazines..
  - f) Make the main idea the largest and brightest. Use lots of white space to make the main idea stand out.

### **Other Types of Charts**

*Pin board chart.* Word strips or sentence strips rest on pins stuck in a pin-up board.

*Sentence-holder chart.* Word strips rest in a shallow pocket made from cardboard and fastened to board.

*Folded word chart.* Word strips are folded in center, then opened during the presentation.

*Strip chart.* Strips of paper are used to hide the points until time to show them.

## ***How To Use the Chalkboard***

Chalkboard work should be simple and brief. Copying lengthy outlines or lists of subject matter is a waste of time for both the presenter and the audience. If it is important for the participants to have a copy of the material, it should be duplicated and distributed.

The chalkboard is similar to a store window. Everyone knows that an overcrowded, dirty, or untidy window has little appeal as compared to one that is clean, neat, and displays a few well-chosen items.

### **When To Use Chalkboards:**

- Use chalkboards often! They are the workhorses of training aids.
- Use chalkboards when the group is recording ideas.
- Use chalkboards when a permanent record is not needed.
- Use chalkboards to encourage participation.
- Use chalkboards to attract and hold attention.
- Use chalkboards to add interest to a presentation.
- Use chalkboards to increase retention.
- Use chalkboards to speed up learning.

### **Advantages Of Chalkboards:**

- Minimal cost
- Are usually available.
- May be used in a variety of ways
- Are simple to use.

### **Limitations Of Chalkboards**

- Do not provide a permanent record
- Can become commonplace
- Are usually stationary
- Cannot be used with large groups
- Few people use chalkboards creatively

### **A Few Rules For Using The Chalkboard Will Increase Its Effectiveness As A Visual Aid:**

1. Words should be printed instead of written. Draw a pair of light guidelines to define the top and bottom row of letters. Form the letters in a clear, simple Gothic style. Avoid fancy scripts or print that is difficult to read.
2. Use chalk that has been sharpened with a knife or sandpaper pad. It is easier to control the printing with pointed chalk. To keep chalk from breaking, grip the chalk so that your forefinger extends over the tip of the chalk.
3. Put the chalkboard where it can be seen by everyone, or use a section of a permanently located board that is easy to see.
4. Don't crowd the chalkboard. A few important points make a vivid impression.
5. Keep the material simple. Brief, concise statements are more effective than lengthy ones.
6. Plan chalkboards ahead. Keep the layouts with your presentation notes and use them as "cue cards."
7. Gather everything you need for the chalkboard before the group meets—chalk, ruler, eraser, and other items.
8. Use color for emphasis. Yellow and pale green chalk are more effective than white chalk.
9. Print all captions and drawings on a large scale. The material must be clearly visible to all participants.

10. Erase all unrelated material. Other work on the chalkboard distracts attention. Use a chalkboard eraser or cloth, and not your fingers.
11. Keep the chalkboard clean. A dirty chalkboard has the same effect as a dirty window.
12. Prepare complicated chalkboard layouts before the group meets. Work can be covered with poster board until you are ready to show it.
13. Check for glare and eliminate it by tilting the board or by removing or blocking off the offending light.
14. Keep erasers clean. Learn to erase with straight up-and-down strokes rather than swishing the eraser in circles.
15. Templates or stencils can be used to trace an object. Stick figures and designs can be traced on a chalkboard by using an opaque projector.
16. Strips of paper can be fastened over printed material on a chalkboard so that information can be revealed step by step.

## ***Overhead Projector Techniques***

The overhead projector combines the advantages of the slide projector, flip chart, and chalkboard. Most overhead projectors are designed for the projection of transparencies up to 10" x 10" in size. In addition, opaque objects may be silhouetted on a screen very effectively for a shadow-picture effect.

Many council service centers, churches, and schools have overhead projectors that may be available for use at your roundtable. The following are some of the advantages of using the overhead projector, as well as some techniques for more effective presentations.

1. Projection can be done in a normally lighted room—a darkened room is not necessary.
2. The presenter faces the audience. By keeping eye contact with the audience, the presenter is able to maintain control of the group while at the same time serving as projectionist.
3. A large image is projected at a short distance. If the projector is 12 feet from the screen, the projected image is approximately 8 feet square.
4. Transparencies are easily prepared and are economical. They can be prepared in advance.
5. A roll of clear acetate film can be used on the overhead projector with felt-tip pens to create the presentation as you go. Write or create pictures as you speak. Simply roll up the film for the next frame.
6. It is possible to write or draw on prepared transparencies with grease pencil to emphasize a point. Marking can be erased with a soft cloth.
7. Strips of opaque paper or cardboard can be used to cover sections of the transparency to disclose information progressively.
8. Overlays can be used for a step-by-step buildup or breakdown of a layout.
9. The trainer can use a pointer to call attention to details or important points on the transparencies.
10. Using a copy machine, excellent transparencies of typewritten copy or pages of books can be prepared in seconds.

## ***How to Make Slides for Roundtable***

**Slides of Program Activities.** “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Slides are an effective means of communicating information. Rather than trying to describe a troop campout to Boy Scout leaders, show your own slides.

You may be fortunate enough to already have such slides available, or you may be able to borrow some from a Scouting friend long enough to have duplicate copies made. Duplicate slides are relatively inexpensive. If not, begin now by making your own slides as special activities occur.

Slides are very portable; they can be economically processed, and can be used with any size group.

**Using Slides Instead of a Flip Chart.** Sometimes presenters have tendency to rely on the flip chart too often. Using slides can transmit the same information.

1. Follow the same rules for making a flip chart, but use 8½” X 10” single sheets of light-colored paper. Light-colored construction paper or mat paper makes an attractive color background.
2. Lettering should be heavy or in bold colors.
3. If you have or can borrow a copy board, your picture taking will be a snap. Otherwise, do the best you can to frame the sheet of paper in your viewfinder and snap the picture. A single-lens reflex camera works best.
4. When you are ready to use the slides, just project a slide instead of turning a flip-chart page. The narrative would be identical.

Slides can be used to show unit organization, building the organization progressively step by step with each additional slide. Cutouts or badges can be laid on the light-colored background and moved or replaced as needed for each picture.

Slides of exhibits or displays can be used to show others how to set up a variety of displays, particularly when there is not space to set up the actual displays.

A word of caution—don’t make your presentation a personal slide show. Participants won’t be interested in where you went on your vacation.