

# A COMMUNICATION SKILLS MANUAL

BY SUE LAVER

FOR ZEDAP



## FOREWORD TO THE ZEDAP MODULES

The Ministry of Health, through the Zimbabwe Essential Drugs Action Programme, has produced this module for use by primary health care workers in Zimbabwe. The module aims to provide the minimum necessary knowledge for a nurse at a primary care unit. This material may also be used for the training of other health workers.

The material is intended to be used in teaching and upgrading sessions as well as a reference manual.

These modules have been produced because when ZEDAP did a survey in all provinces in February 1987 we found that many primary care units had very few books. We also found that there was a desire by staff to upgrade their skills in a variety of areas.

The titles for these modules were selected on the basis of suggestions made during the baseline survey. A local expert with experience of working outside the central hospitals was asked to produce a draft for a particular subject.

The draft was then reviewed and rewritten by a special group of people. ZEDAP asked each province to nominate a different person for each review group. Each group included State Certified Nurses, State Registered Nurses and staff related to the subject under review.

While the group was reviewing the material they produced an amended draft which was field tested. After this a Draft 2 was produced. This Draft 2 was then widely circulated to all provinces; to people who had participated in the previous reviews and to the original author. All these people were asked to comment. The material was also reviewed by Dr. Felicity Savage, a WHO consultant who advised on the editing of the material.

The process is a dynamic one in which the users have been involved in defining the subjects and producing appropriate material. Now that the modules have been produced it is your chance to have an input:

If you have any comments please send them to:-

Zimbabwe Essential Drugs Action Programme,  
P.O. Box 8168,  
CAUSEWAY,  
HARARE  
ZIMBABWE.

You are free to copy any of this material and use it as you wish. If you wish to revise the material and have access to a microcomputer ZEDAP would be willing to copy the files for you. The material has been written with Microsoft Word and laid out with Xerox Ventura Programmes.

This is a new way of producing training materials. These modules have been produced in Zimbabwe, for Zimbabwe by Zimbabweans. The production process was generously supported by WHO and DANIDA.

New editions of these modules will be produced if ZEDAP receives enough comments and suggestions for revisions. ZEDAP looks forward to incorporating your ideas into future modules.

We hope you find these modules useful and that you enjoy reading them.

We look forward to hearing your comments!

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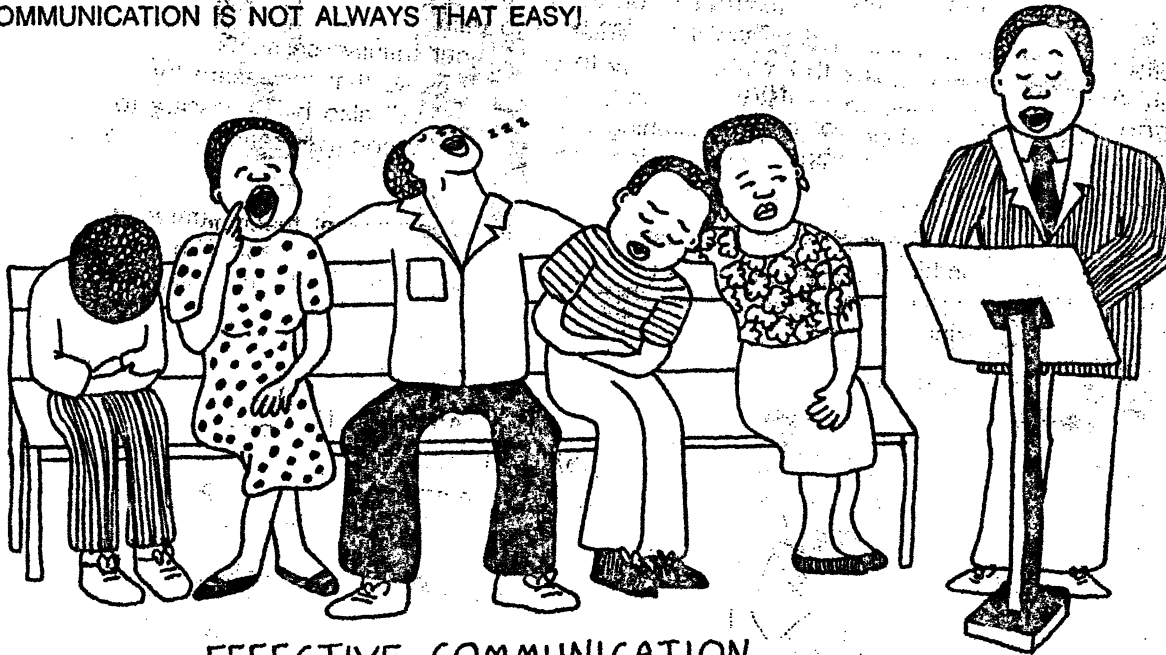
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## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever found it difficult to get people to understand exactly what you mean or what you want them to do? The busy District Medical Officer may wonder why his staff do not understand his hurriedly given advice; the Senior Sister may not understand why the patients do not correctly interpret or act on her advice; the Hospital Cleaner may feel dispirited because no-one takes the time to listen to his problems and the trainer thinks that the class is lazy because the test results are poor.

THERE IS EVIDENCE ALL AROUND US THAT WE AND MANY OF THOSE WITH WHOM WE WORK AND PLAY, FAIL TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY. OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS TRAINERS ALSO SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT GOOD COMMUNICATION IS NOT ALWAYS THAT EASY!



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION  
IS NOT ALL THAT EASY!

### WHAT THIS MODULE IS ABOUT

THIS MODULE IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE a range of practical guidelines for those whose role it will be to communicate information to Health and Health related workers about the Zimbabwe Essential Drugs Action Programme. Although the module does not provide information on every possible method of communication, we hope that it will also be useful for others who are engaged in sharing information about health and other issues in Zimbabwe.

THE INFORMATION IS PRESENTED in 4 main parts:

PART ONE is concerned with CHOOSING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

PART TWO is concerned with USING DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

PART THREE provides INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO PREPARE A LESSON PLAN

PART FOUR provides a COMMUNICATORS CHECKLIST

## WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

**'ALTHOUGH EVERYONE COMMUNICATES, IT IS SAID THAT GOOD COMMUNICATORS ARE BORN NOT MADE'**

We describe **COMMUNICATION** as a two-way process. In reality however, we find that communication is sometimes 'one-way' and it fails. There are many barriers to prevent good communication. These may occur because there is a misunderstanding between the educator and the client, or because the client only has a limited ability to understand the information. Problems also occur when the information that is being communicated is irrelevant to the learner, or because the communicator fails to use communication methods which will promote participation and understanding.

We would like Trainers to think of communication as being a **TWO-WAY ACTIVE** process, in which every opportunity is used to assist the learners to gain information through active participation. This means that you will need to **PLAN** your training sessions carefully. You will also need to **INVOLVE** the learners in activities so that they learn by **SEEING AND DOING**, and not merely by listening to lectures. It will also be necessary to use a **COMBINATION** of methods in your training sessions if your communication is to be successful.

**TO ASSIST YOU IN THIS PROCESS** we shall describe some different teaching strategies which you can combine to make your sessions more realistic, and fun to teach. We also offer practical advice on how to use a small range of visual aids which will be available for use in your training centres.



**COMMUNICATION IS A  
TWO-WAY ACTIVE PROCESS**



**GOOD LUCK!**  
**WE ARE SURE THAT YOU WILL SOON FIND  
THAT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CAN BE  
FUN AS WELL AS REWARDING.**

## PART ONE

### CHOOSING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

You will have found out by now, that there is a wide range of information contained in the ZEDAP manuals; ie you will find **FACTS** about diseases, information about **MANAGEMENT** of diseases, lists of certain **SKILLS** needed to perform specific tasks, and there are also suggestions about the need to **CHANGE** behaviour or attitudes in the target population.

What you may not know at this stage is that some teaching methods are better than others for conveying certain information and that no single teaching method would be suited to the transfer of **ALL** the information contained in the manuals. For example, we know that a lecture is most effective for transferring a lot of **FACTS** to many people in a short time. However a lecture is **NOT** appropriate if the Instructor wishes the group to become involved in problem solving exercises or discussions. So we need to use other communication methods such as role playing or drama which will promote participation by the group and permit 'hands-on' experience.

We also need to learn that communication efforts can be greatly enhanced through good Visual Aids such as slides, overhead projections or even the chalkboard. Visual Aids help to reinforce knowledge and transfer ideas and information to the learner through different images such as drawings or real life photographs. Instructors therefore need to learn about the **EFFECTIVENESS** of different teaching methods, and to grow confident in their use so that they can be successfully **COMBINED** to making training and learning an enjoyable experience.



NO SINGLE COMMUNICATION METHOD IS EFFECTIVE FOR COMMUNICATING THE FACTS. TEACHING APPROACHES NEED TO BE COMBINED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.

Study Table 1 below. It outlines different methods and aids which can be used in the teaching process. It also outlines the relative strengths of different teaching approaches in terms of their suitability for the transfer of skills, knowledge, change of attitude etc.

TABLE. 1.

**TEACHING METHODS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS**

	FACTS	SKILLS	DECISION MAKING	ATTITUDE CHANGE	BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
Lectures					
Seminars	.				
Panels	.				
Workshops	.				
Debates	.				
Demonstrations	.				
Role playing	.	.	.	.	.
Drama	.	.	.	.	.
Group discussions	.		.	.	.
Mass media, eg newspaper	.			.	
Pamphlets	.			.	
Exhibitions, posters	.				
Manuals	.				
TV	.				
Radio	.				
Films,	.				

**TAKING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH TRAINING METHOD INTO ACCOUNT HOW WOULD YOU COMBINE THESE METHODS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION? WOULD YOUR CHOICE PROMOTE PARTICIPATION AND TWO WAY COMMUNICATION IN THE LEARNER GROUP?**



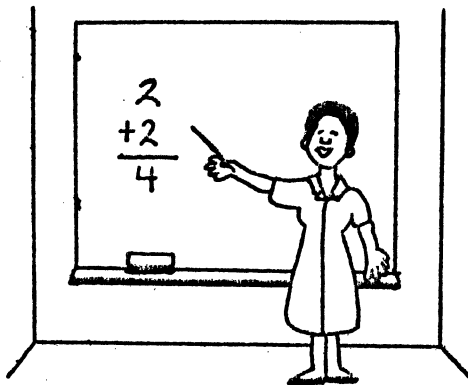
## PART TWO

# USING DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

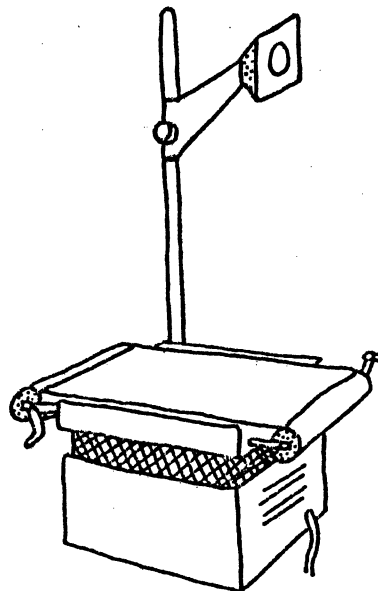
### INTRODUCTION

In Part Two of the module we focus on certain methods/techniques which trainers should be able to use confidently in their training programmes. We hope that as you gain confidence in communicating information you will use alternative methods and indeed discover new ideas for conveying information to your target groups. Whichever strategies you choose to use in the training process will be YOUR CHOICE so try to remember these points:

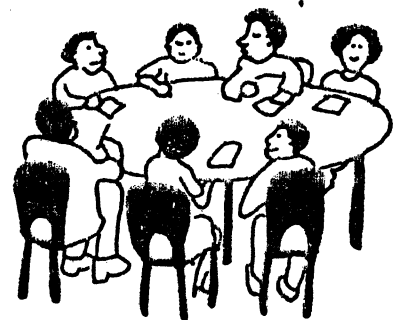
- **AVOID** the temptation only to lecture; it will not be in the best interests of the learners or yourself
- **ALWAYS** try to make the learning environment active and participatory, for example ask questions, set problems, organise participatory strategies such as group discussions [see page 19], role plays [see page 21], drama [see page 22].
- **ILLUSTRATE** your teaching where possible ie, speak simply and clearly, use the chalkboard [see page 9], overhead projector, slide projector [see page ] etc
- **ALLOW** for individual differences but ensure mastery, ie, let students proceed at their own speed, leave time to re-inforce information and for feedback etc
- **BE PREPARED** to revise your approach at any time.



CHALKBOARD



OVERHEAD  
PROJECTOR



GROUP

## 1. TEACHING AIDS

### WHAT IS A TEACHING AID?

Teaching Aids may simply be described as 'TOOLS FOR THE JOB'

There are many, many examples of teaching aids; each of which can be used to re-inforce communication. These include:

- VISUAL AIDS [something SEEN]  
eg, chalkboard, flannelgraphs, photographs and posters, charts and diagrams, models, overhead projectors and slides etc OR
- AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS [something seen and HEARD] eg, tape recorders, film, television which provide both sight and sound.

Visual and Audio Visual Aids are used to:

- Attract and focus attention on particular issues
- Increase understanding of the learner
- Invite participation by the learner group
- Consolidate and re-inforce learning
- Create awareness and impact

IN THIS MODULE we shall focus on those Teaching Aids which will be available and of particular assistance to ZEDAP instructors.

- Posters
- The Chalkboard
- The Overhead Projector
- The slide projector

#### REMEMBER!

- A TEACHING AID IS ONLY AS EFFECTIVE AS ITS USER CAN MAKE IT.  
IT CANNOT NOT WORK ON ITS OWN!
- VISUAL AIDS ARE SEEN.
- AUDIO VISUAL AIDS ARE SEEN AND HEARD.

# TEACHING AIDS

## [A]. POSTERS and WALL CHARTS

**POSTERS** are well known to most people as a medium for transferring limited information or ideas to the target. They are suitable for a wide variety of topics and can be used for different audiences in a variety of ways eg these may be:

**SINGLE GLANCE POSTERS**, ie read and understood quickly without spoken word

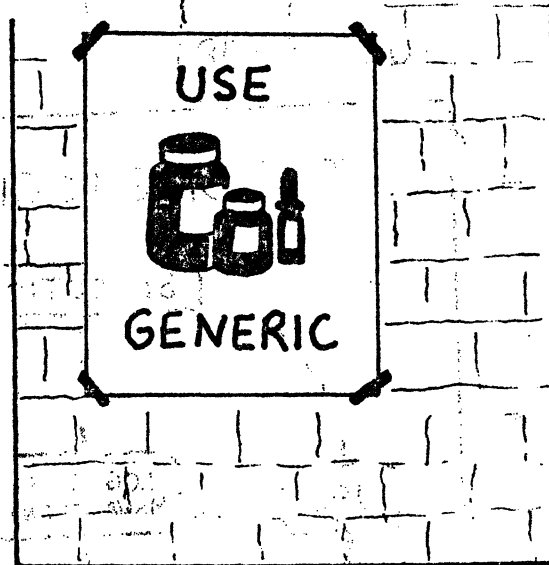
**STOP AND STUDY POSTERS**, ie the observer needs time to look at the pictures and captions.

### (A) SINGLE GLANCE POSTERS

(used mainly to remind or introduce a new idea)

Choose a suitable site for display ie,

- Choose a site that be seen easily by the people you want to reach
- Avoid walls covered with masses of other posters
- Choose a clear space so that the poster attracts maximum attention
- Try to select a place where the poster will be protected from the elements, ie sun wind, rain
- Position the poster straight, at eye level
- Change the poster regularly so that people notice the new information



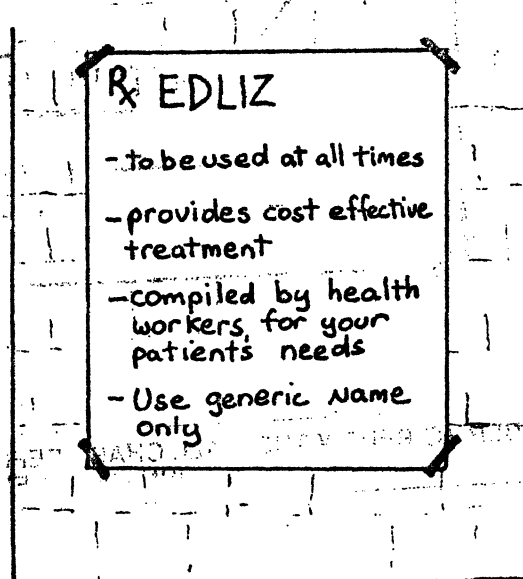
SINGLE GLANCE POSTER

### (B) STOP AND STUDY POSTERS

(USUALLY CONVEY ONE MESSAGE)

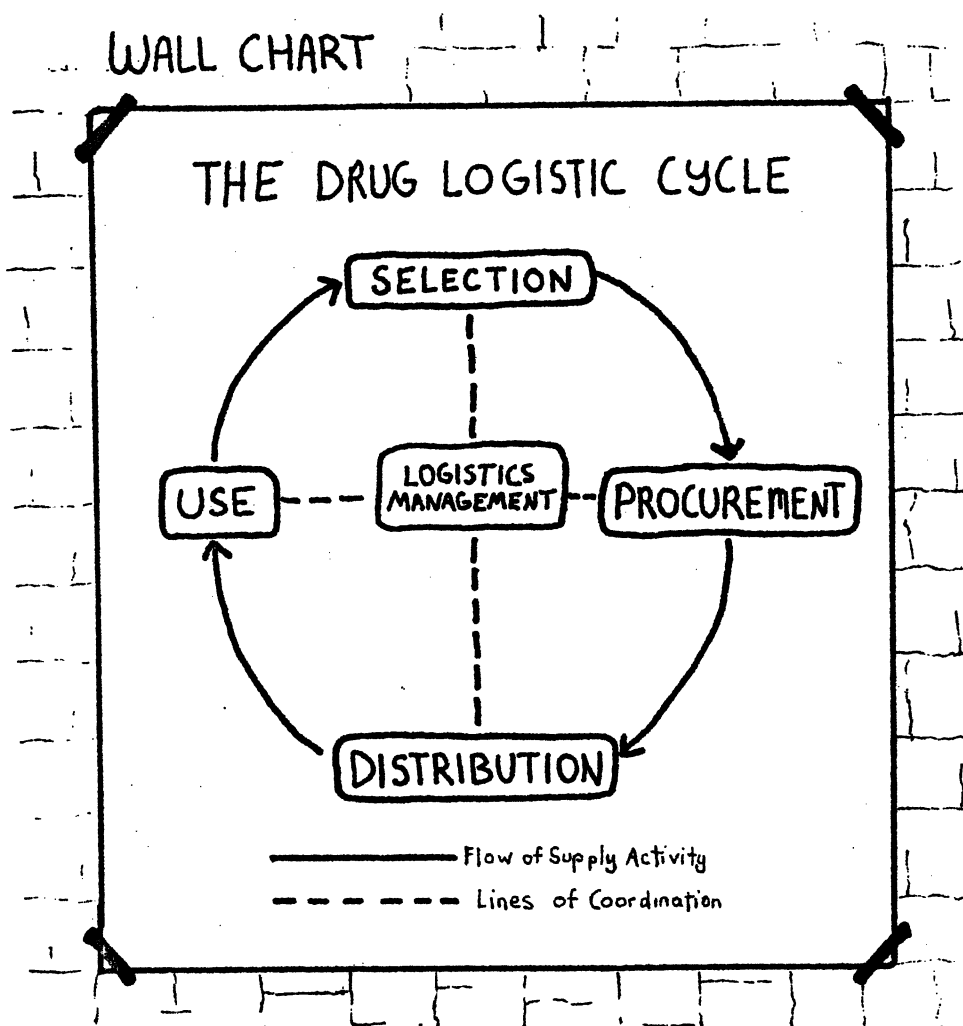
Choose a suitable site for display ie

- Choose sites where many people meet, eg, bus stops etc.
- Do not display in places where people pass by hurriedly, eg roads.



STOP AND STUDY POSTER

- **WALL CHARTS** are similar to posters except that they may include more information with symbols and diagrams, such as the ZEDAP Wallcharts are used as an aid to informal study and as a supplement to informal teaching. They can be as simple or complex as the training demands: their main purpose is to present facts in a visual form. Choose a suitable site for the display ie,
  - Display the wall chart in a place where people can stop and study
  - Keep the wall chart at eye level
  - Ensure that the lighting is good
  - Refer to the wall chart in teaching, that is, use it as a TEACHING AID



REMEMBER TO RENEW THE WALL CHART BEFORE IT BE BECOMES TATTY AND TORN OR FADED.

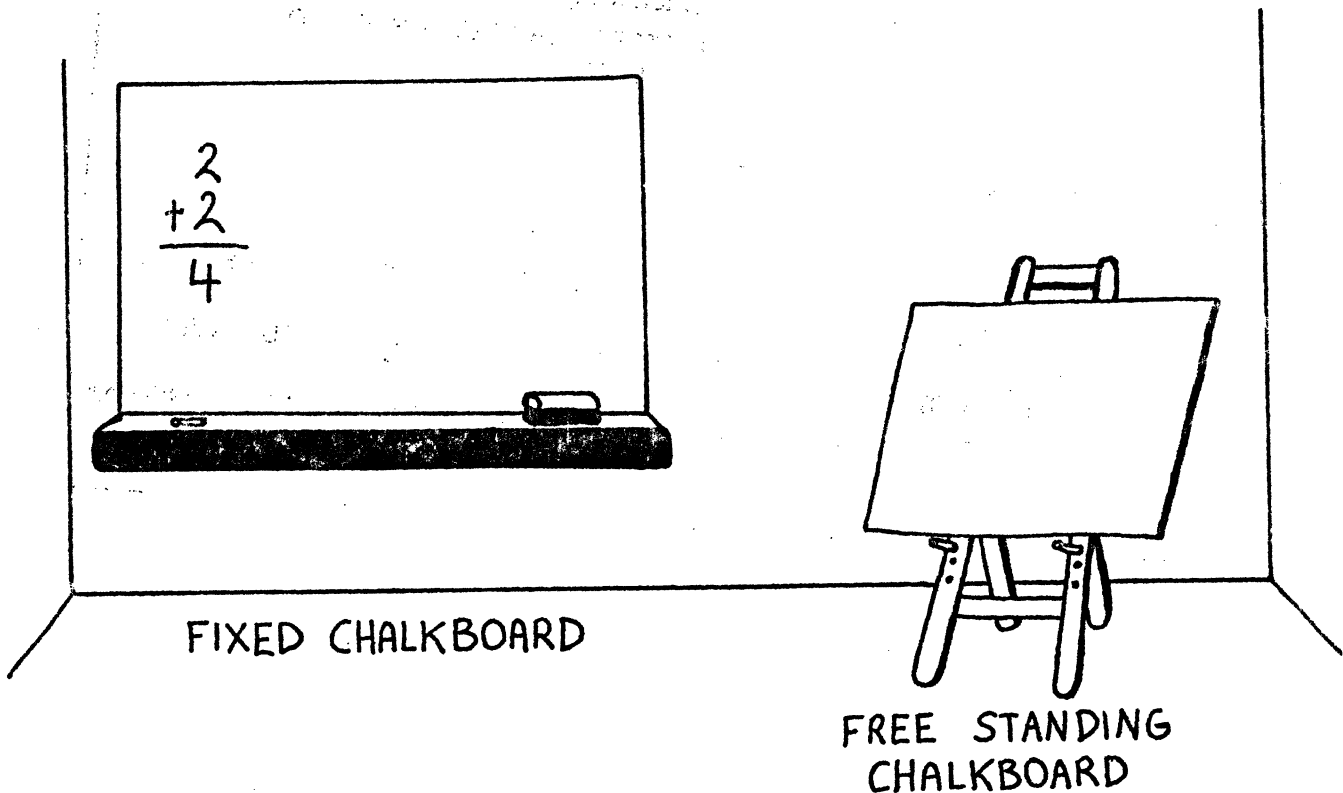
## TEACHING AIDS (Continued)

### [B]. THE CHALKBOARD

The chalkboard is possibly the most common of all teaching aids. However it is one of the most abused of all teaching aids because it is often poorly used and trainers do not recognise its potential. But do not scorn the chalkboard too quickly, it is one of the cheapest teaching aids, it is longlasting, simple to use, can be adapted for many different activities and can be very effective, providing it is used correctly.

#### USES OF THE CHALKBOARD IN ZEDAP TRAINING SESSIONS

- To supplement a talk, or slide show
- To emphasise important points, words, definitions
- To draw attention to important issues
- To summarise a discussion
- To leave a reminder



**PRACTICAL HINTS ABOUT USING THE CHALKBOARD**

- Plan your training session ahead
- Be neat and tidy!
- Ensure that your writing is the same size and can be seen by all the learners
- Try to keep a straight line when you write. It is not uncommon to see sentences trailing off the board!
- Erase irrelevant words/phrases PROPERLY! There is nothing so irritating for the learners as to have to sit and look at half rubbed-out words
- Avoid erasing information with your fingers as you write
- Print or encircle important words as you build up the story-line
- Use colours to highlight points, but not too many at once!
- ALWAYS CLEAN THE CHALKBOARD AFTER YOUR TEACHING SESSION!

**FURTHER HINTS**

- USE A WET CLOTH TO CLEAN THE CHALKBOARD
- SOAK CHALK IN A SOLUTION OF SUGAR AND WATER IT WILL NOT SPREAD SO MUCH DUST!
- ERASE USING A DOWNWARD MOTION, IN THIS WAY THE CHALK DUST WILL FALL DIRECTLY TO THE FLOOR!
- MAKE COLOURED CHALKS BY SOAKING WHITE CHALK IN DYE OR COLOURED INK

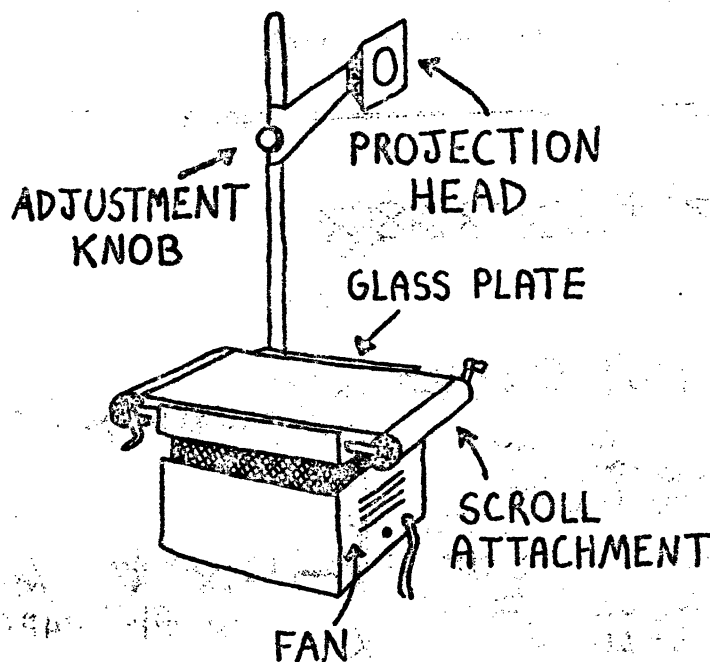
## TEACHING AIDS (continued)

### [C] THE OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

The Overhead Projector or OHP as it is also commonly referred to, is one of the most valuable of all teaching aids. The OHP projects onto a wall or screen, words or coloured visual images which have been drawn, typed or even printed onto transparencies. The transparency may be a piece of 'see-through' plastic or an 'acetate' sheet which is especially made for use by OHP operators. Some OHP's have acetate paper which is obtainable in a 'scroll'. This fits onto one side of the projector, thus allowing a continuous feed. The only possible disadvantage of the OHP is that electricity is needed for its operation, that it is an expensive piece of equipment and therefore sometimes also requires spare parts which may be difficult to obtain. So it is very important to take great care of your OHP if it is to serve you well.

### USES OF THE OVERHEAD PROJECTOR IN TRAINING SESSIONS

- To demonstrate visually the important points
- To show diagrams if necessary
- To highlight issues
- To build up information as you teach
- As a visual support for other methods of communication



**FOLLOW THESE STEPS WHEN PREPARING TRANSPARENCIES**

**1. TO PREPARE YOUR OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY:**

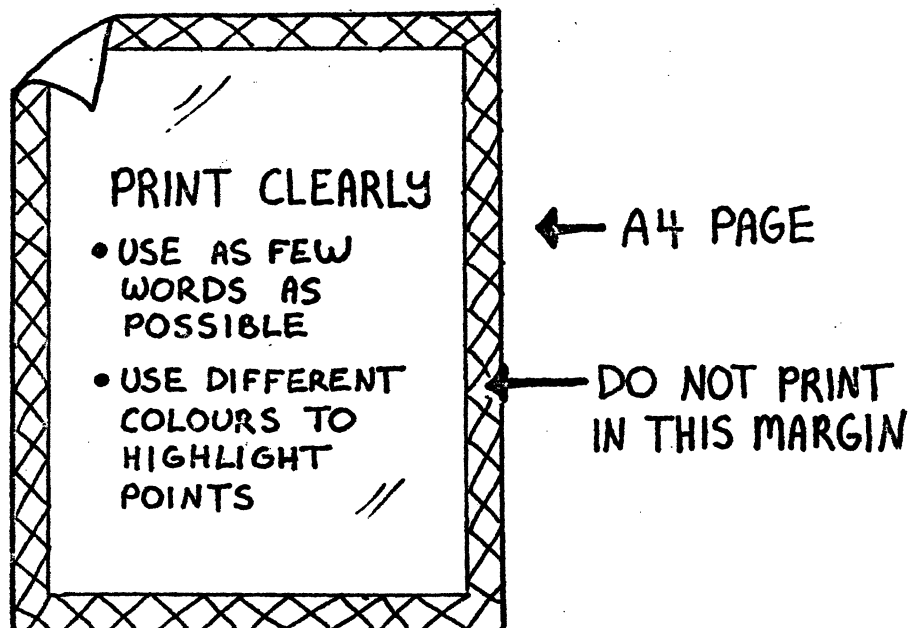
- (a) Select the material which you will use for your transparency. If there is no acetate paper, then clear plastic sheets, or old but well cleaned, X-Ray plates will do.
- (b) Measure your page according to the size of the OHP screen. Ensure that you leave a margin at the sides and top and bottom. This will ensure that all your information can be displayed at once if necessary. (See diagram 1)
- (c) Plan your information, diagrams etc carefully. Try to summarise the main points. You should not try to convey your entire talk on the OHP.
- Remember that you can also ADD information to your original transparency as you talk. This can be done by using special pens as described below.
- (d) Choose your pens, choose your colours. There are basically two kinds of pens which you can use for writing or drawing on transparencies:
- Spirit-based pens whose images are permanent ie, writing/drawing etc can only be erased using methalated spirits
  - Water-based pens whose images can be erased using water.

**NOTE** Ball point pens and pencils are unsatisfactory

- (e) Use large bold lettering, and clear simple drawings with as few lines and labels as possible.

**DIAGRAM 1**

**AN EXAMPLE  
OF A  
TRANSPARENCY**



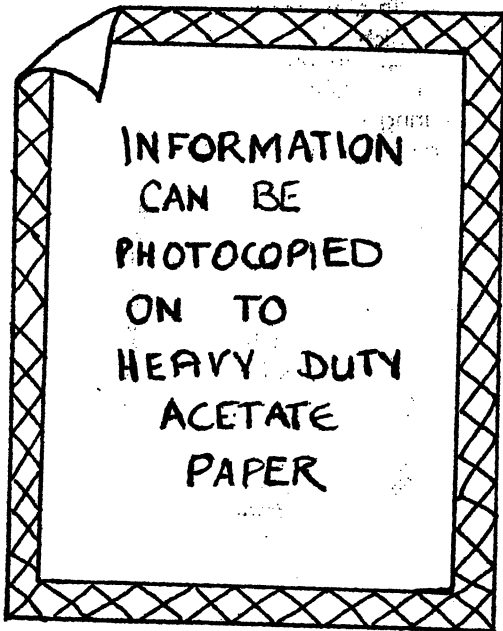


**FURTHER IDEAS FOR MAKING GOOD TRANSPARENCIES**

- It is possible to photocopy information from a typed sheet or book onto OHP acetate paper. However, you must ONLY use heavy duty acetate paper which is especially designed for use in Photocopy machines. If you break this rule you will cause a great deal of damage to the photocopying machine.
- IF YOU USE THIS METHOD, DO NOT BE TEMPTED TO COPY TOO MUCH INFORMATION. IT WILL MAKE YOUR OHP CROWDED AND UNREADABLE. [See Diagram 2 (a).]
- For permanency, it is a good idea to mount your transparency in a cardboard frame which will preserve it better and make it easier to handle. Similarly, you could fasten the edges with heavy duty adhesive tape. [see diagram 2 (b)]
- If a concept is to be developed step-by-step, then it is a good idea to cover the presentation with paper 'masks' which can be turned back at any time [see diagram 2 (c)] during your presentation.

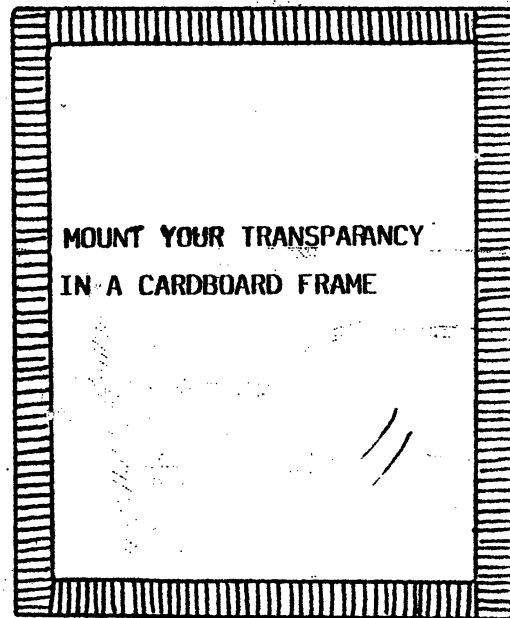
**DIAGRAM 2(a)**

EXAMPLE OF TRANSPARENCY  
PREPARED ON THE  
PHOTOCOPIER



**DIAGRAM 2(b)**

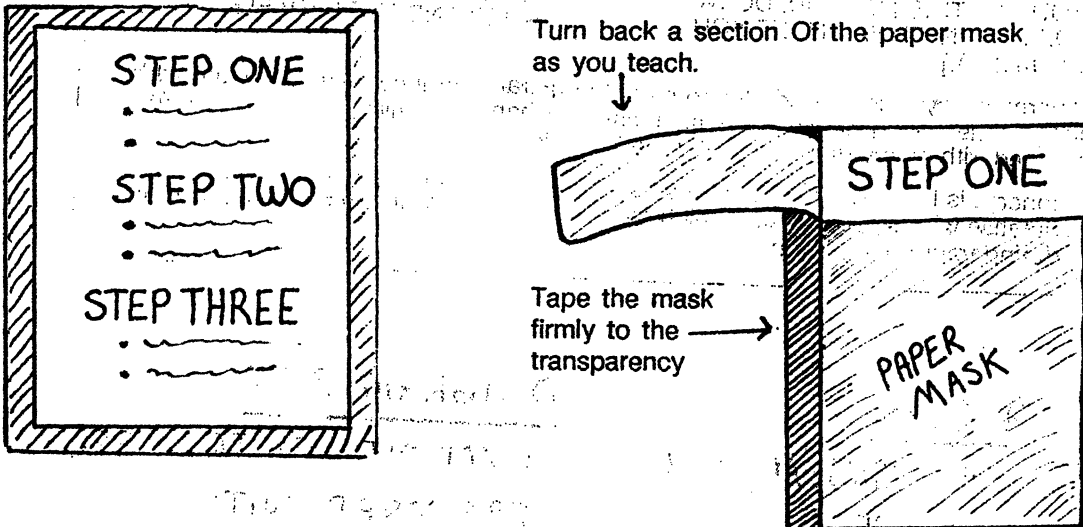
EXAMPLE OF TRANSPARENCY  
PREPARED WITH A  
CARDBOARD FRAME



↑  
CARDBOARD  
FRAME

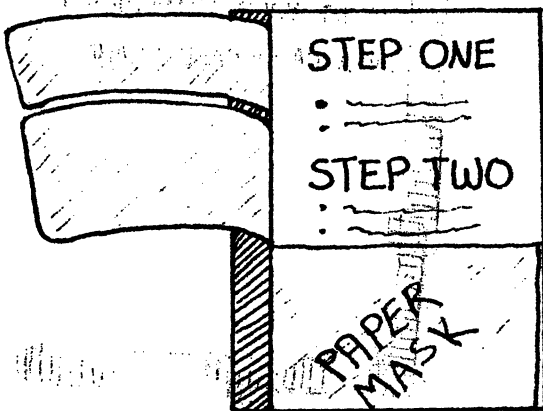
Diagram 2 (c)

Example of transparency prepared with paper masks which can be turned back during a step-by-step presentation.



(1) Prepare the transparency as usual

(2) Cover the information with a paper mask which can be turned back during the presentation.



(3) Transparency in use with information uncovered in stages.

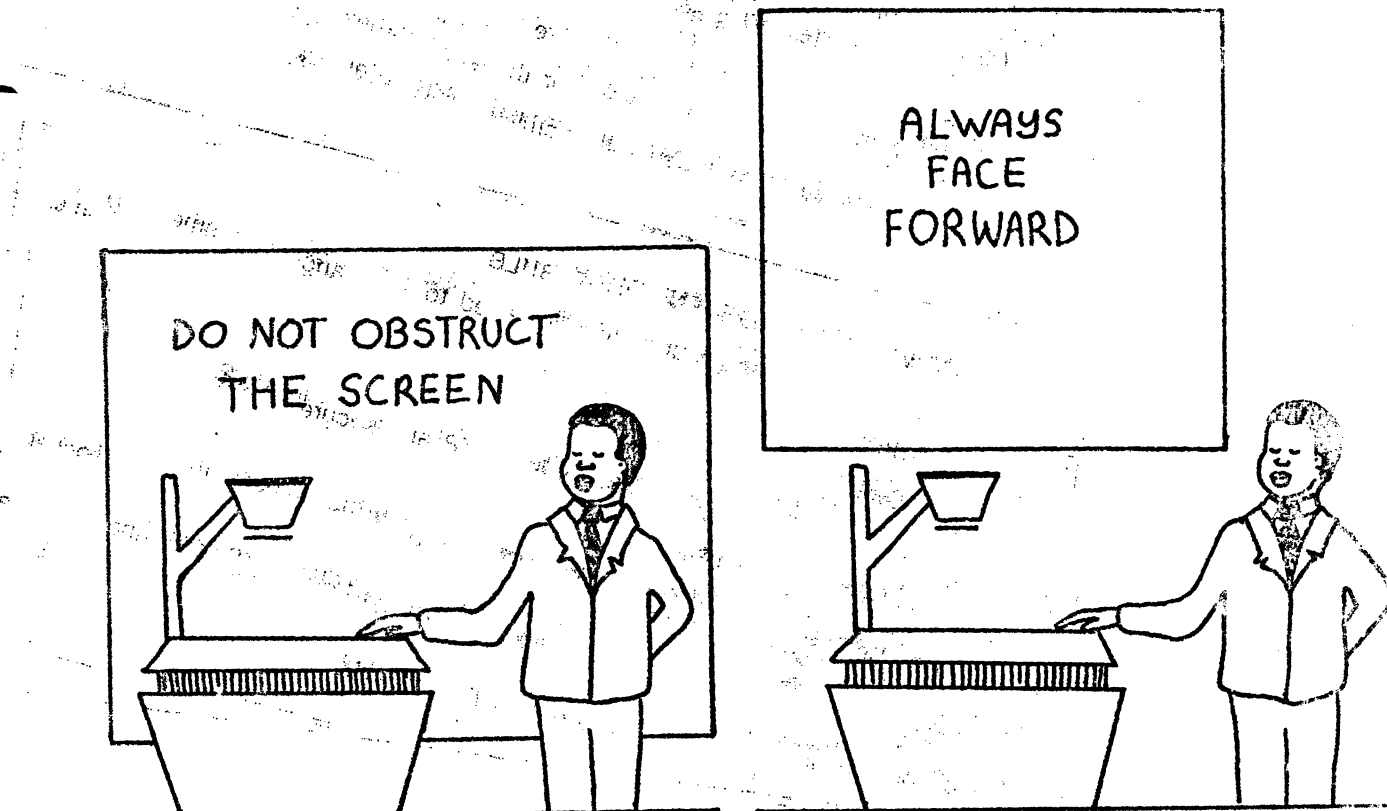
## FOLLOW THESE STEPS WHEN SETTING UP THE OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

### BEFORE YOUR TRAINEES ARRIVE:

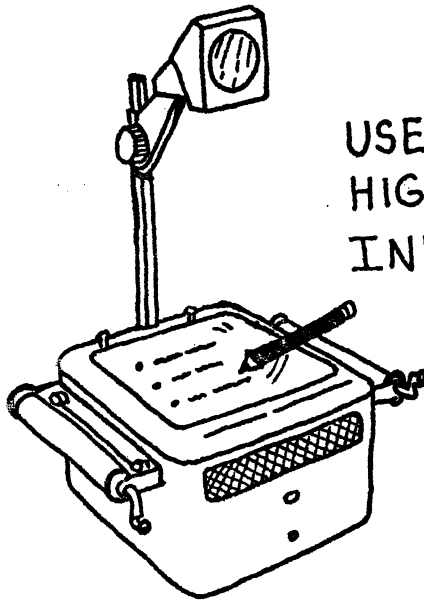
- (a) Set up the projector, and test the power and its position
- (b) Place the transparency on top of the screen. The headings or title of the OHP MUST FACE TOWARDS THE WALL OR SCREEN AND NOT THE AUDIENCE.
- (c) Switch on and practice before your session begins.
  - Adjust the height of the image so that everyone will be able to see.
  - Test the focus by adjusting the projection head
- (d) Turn off and place your transparencies in order. Place a sheet of paper between transparencies so that they do not stick together.

### FOLLOW THESE STEPS WHEN USING THE OHP

- (a) Always face the audience. NEVER turn your back on the group
- (b) Read the information from the transparency in front of you. THERE IS NO NEED TO TURN YOUR BACK AND POINT TO THE SCREEN BEHIND YOU.



- (c) USE A PEN, SMALL POINTER or even the shadow of your hand TO HIGHLIGHT CERTAIN POINTS.



- (d) Either read the text or keep quiet and allow the trainees to read the text before you comment. Watch the audience for reaction all the time; pause, ask questions, consolidate as you teach.
- (e) Have a sheet of paper under your hand if you are adding points to your transparency. This will avoid sweat marks and smudging.
- (f) Switch off the OHP when you are not referring specifically to the transparency.
- (g) Check that the fan is working or the OHP will overheat
- (h) Clean the glass screen with methlated spirits after use.

#### HOW TO CHANGE THE OHP BULB

The Lamp Bulb in your OHP will need to be changed from time to time.

To do this :

1. Switch off the Power.
2. Lift up the glass plate of the OHP and secure in position.
3. Locate the bulb.
4. Using a clean cloth for protection, depress the bulbs in the socket, remove and inspect.
5. Inspect the inside of the projector; gently dust if necessary and replace the glass as before.
7. Switch on the power to test the new bulbs.

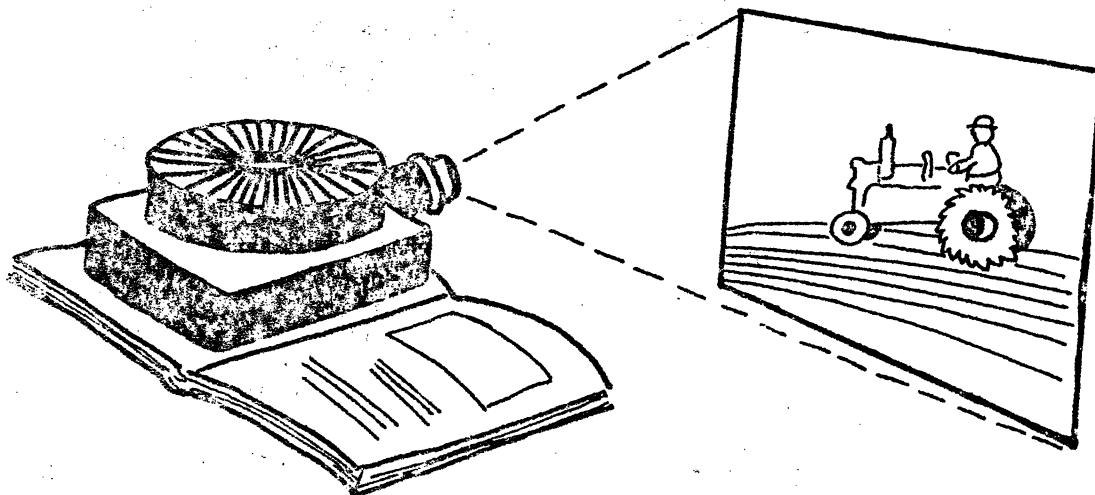
## TEACHING AIDS (continued)

### [D] SLIDE PROJECTORS

There are many different kinds of slide projectors and written instructions about their use will vary according to their type. It is very important therefore that Instructors take time to become familiar with their projector and READ the instructions BEFORE attempting to use it as a supportive aid for teaching.

#### USES IN TRAINING SESSIONS

- To illustrate points/issues
- To add realism to your presentation
- As a starting point for discussion
- To support a lecture or discussion and to summarise your teaching points



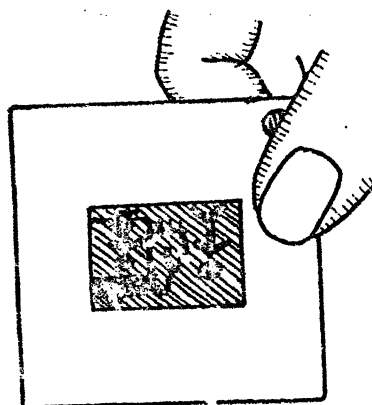
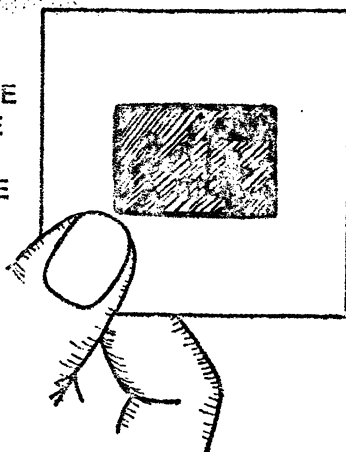
#### HINTS FOR USE

The following general hints apply for most projectors.

##### 1. SELECT YOUR SLIDES CAREFULLY

- Choose only those which are relevant to and illustrate your teaching topic. Do not be tempted to include many other slides 'just for interest-sake'.
- Do not use any slides which are damaged or they will cause a jam
- AS A RULE 20 SLIDES WILL TAKE ABOUT 10-15 MINUTES TO PROJECT

HOLD SLIDE  
UP TO THE  
LIGHT  
RIGHT SIDE  
FACING



TURN THE  
SLIDE  
UPSIDE  
DOWN AND  
LOAD INTO  
THE  
PROJECTOR

LOADING POSITION

## 2. POSITION YOUR PROJECTOR CORRECTLY

- Ensure that you have access to electricity [and that it is working]
- Ensure that your room can be darkened effectively
- Position the projector at the correct height, distance and angle in front of the screen [which may even be an old white sheet, a blank wall in the absence of a proper screen]
- Ensure that the projector and the screen are stable and safe, ie that neither will topple or fall.
- Ensure that your audience will be able to see properly from all parts of the room.

## 3. LOAD THE PROJECTOR

- [a] Hold your slide to the light, ensure that it is the right way up
- [b] Depending on the projector either turn the slide to one side or turn it upside down and insert it into the projector
- [c] Mark your slides on the top right hand corner to indicate its loading position. This will save time in future.
- [d] Remember to load the slides in the correct order SOME PROJECTORS HAVE LONG SLIDE TRAYS, OTHERS HAVE ROUND CAROUSELS.

## 4. PROJECTING YOUR SLIDES

- Use a pointer or long stick to draw attention to objects or persons of particular interest
- 'Talk' to the slide when it is on the screen, not when it has passed
- Do not block the view from the trainees
- Avoid focussing the discussion on one slide for too long or it may lose impact, but pause long enough for questions!

## SLIDE PROJECTOR TROUBLESHOOTING

**PROBLEM**

**POSSIBLE REMEDY**

<p><b>Can't find power cord</b></p>	<p>→ Look for a built-in storage compartment in the projector for example under the projector.</p>
<p><b>No power after plugging in</b></p>	<p>→ Check that the outlet is "live" (a fuse or circuit breaker may have killed all electrical power in the room). Check the circuit breaker on the slide projector; on some models a button on the bottom of the projector must be pressed after changing lamps.</p>
<p><b>Fans run but lamp does not light</b></p>	<p>→ Some projectors have separate switches for "Lamp" and "Fan" or a two-stage switch for these two functions. Make sure all switches are properly set.</p>
<p><b>Image not level</b></p>	<p>→ Most slide projectors have an adjustment knob on one of the rear feet. Use the knob to raise or lower that side. Projector may also be raised by positioning books underneath it. But Take Care - this may be unstable.</p>
<p><b>The blank image is distorted without slides</b></p>	<p>→ The lenses may be out of alignment or even broken. This is especially likely with the Kodak Carousel, in which several lenses are loosely held in place on the</p>
<p><b>Projector gets very hot; slides begin to burn</b></p>	<p>→ Stop immediately! The Kodak Carousel has a heat-absorbing glass between the lenses next to the lamp. If this flat glass is broken or missing the heat builds up quickly and can cause damage.</p>
<p><b>Slides image upside-down or backwards</b></p>	<p>→ Remove the slide and reverse it. (Improper loading can be avoided by labelling slides correctly).</p>
<p><b>A Slide jams in the gate</b></p>	<p>→ Remove the slide manually using a Carousel, press the "select" button (power must be on). If the slide does not pop up, remove the tray. To do this turn off the power and use a coin to turn the screw in the center of the tray; this unlocks the tray, allowing it to be lifted off. It also gives access to the 'gate' for manual removal of the slide.</p> <p>Jamming can be avoided. Do not place bent/damaged slides in the slide tray or carousel. Remember that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- plastic mounts warp easily.</li> <li>- cardboard mounts tray.</li> <li>- glass mounts may be too thick for the compartments</li> </ul> <p>Jamming is more likely with narrow slide compartments. Use the 80 slide tray whenever possible.</p>

**PART TWO (continued)**

**PARTICIPATORY METHODS OF COMMUNICATION**

Participatory activities are useful for raising awareness about different issues during a training session. They also allow participants to explore problems, try to find answers and arrive at decisions. These activities can take many different forms eg, they can be in the form of discussions, role plays or drama. In this module we shall focus on the use of discussion groups, role plays and drama in the communication process. There are of course many other participatory activities which are not described in this module, but can also be used to great advantage in the communication process. Let us start with the group discussion.

**A. GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Group Discussions can be used to highlight or develop important points contained in training modules. They also provide a useful time for participants to get to know each other better and openly discuss their viewpoints. Discussions therefore provide a positive atmosphere for exchange of ideas and information. The discussions are guided by a Leader who is more probably, but not always, the Trainer.

**SOME PRACTICAL HINTS FOR WORKING WITH DISCUSSION GROUPS**

● Numbers

The ideal number is usually between 8 and 12. If there are fewer some people may feel threatened; if there are more then some people may get left out of the discussion.

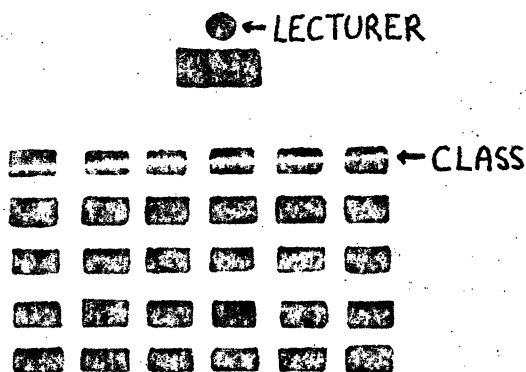
● Timing

Allow 1/2 - 1 hour at least if possible but always tell the group the amount of time available for the discussion. It is best to end the group when it is going well rather than drag it on over time. Timing is important too; avoid the last part of the day when participants may be hungry, tired, looking forward to a meal etc

● Location and Seating

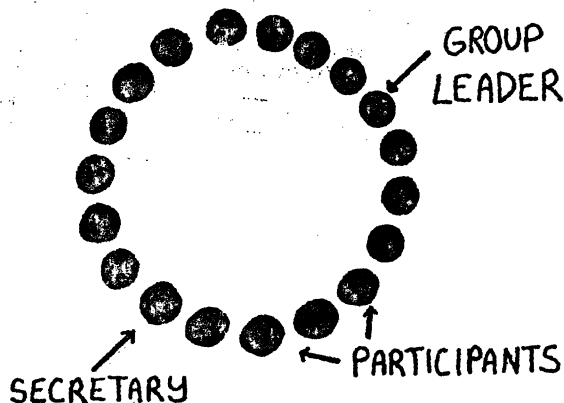
Choose neutral territory for the discussion ie, anywhere rather than the Boss's office if possible. SEATING is very important and chairs, benches, etc, should be arranged as near to a circle as possible. (See Diagram 3a and 3b)

**DIAGRAM 3 (a)**



**A NON PARTICIPATORY TEACHING ARRANGEMENT**

**DIAGRAM 3 (b)**



**A PARTICIPATORY TEACHING ARRANGEMENT**



**HINTS ABOUT DISCUSSION SKILLS**

THE ROLE of the group Leader is:

- To identify the group, their relative strengths and weaknesses
- Assist group members to clarify and identify their fears, worries, interests etc
- To guide members through the discussion
- To assist the group to attain their objectives
- To keep a careful record of decisions proposals etc
- To summarise the findings of the group at the conclusion

**1. GETTING STARTED**

- INTRODUCE everyone, by name if possible
- START WITH A ROUND; this gives everyone an opportunity to make a brief statement but remember - no interruptions until everyone has finished
  - no comments until the round is completed
  - do not force anyone to participate, that is allow them to pass if necessary as this re-inforces the principle of voluntary participation
- SELECT A RAPPOORTEUR and inform that person of their role
- TRIGGER THE DISCUSSION by providing a focus for example, What do you think about this training programme?
- ACCEPT INITIAL SUGGESTIONS WITHOUT TOO MUCH COMMENT but make a careful note of them for future reference
- WATCH THE GROUP and draw in those who would obviously like to express an opinion but cannot find an opening
- TAKE NOTES as reminders

**2. DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES****(A) SILENCES**

A silence can be as threatening to the group as it is to you as group leader. However you should also remember that a silence can assist the group to gather their thoughts! It may be useful however to:

- Have a list of relevant questions to feed into the discussion
- Invite the rapporteur to summarise the discussion
- Change to an alternative activity,

for example - use the chalkboard to illustrate a point

- read an important point from the manual
- use roleplay

**(B) DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR**

The way that some group members behave can pose a problem to the group leader. These problems can range from the attention seeking individual who dominates the discussion to the discussant who does not participate at all. There are also those who take a long time to tell a story which says very little in the end. These are not easy problems to deal with. Try to think WHY your group member acts in this way, get to know them better, use techniques such as 'rounds' to ensure the involvement of others, try to make everyone feel wanted and important in the group.

## PARTICIPATORY METHODS OF COMMUNICATION (continued)

### B. ROLE PLAYING

Roleplay generally means 'taking on the role or character of another person in a certain situation, and acting out what that person may do or say in that situation'. Role play helps people to understand what it feels like to be in another person's shoes. It can be realistically applied to explore, identify, and illustrate many different issues which may arise in the course of communicating information to a group. The method has the added advantage that it is enjoyable for participants to do and that it provides a good opportunity for participation by the learner group. An example of a topic for roleplay would be for Trainees to enact planning problems experienced by the Rural Health Centre Staff or to demonstrate how to take a good case history from a mother whose child may be suffering from malaria.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE of how roleplay can be used to illustrate a communication problem at the Rural Health Centre. Working in pairs each participant should take the opportunity to play the role of the District Nursing Officer [DNO] and Nurse-in-charge [N]

INTRODUCE the role play and explain that you are going to illustrate a common problem by acting it out.

#### ROLEPLAY

**DNO:** Cross, irritable because RHC nurse forgot to order immunizations in time for the clinic, inventories are not up-to-date and there are many patients waiting outside for attention. Blames Nurse, will not wait for an explanation and disregards all attempts by the nurse to explain. (The DNO will act out the situation, using the language and expression that should normally be used under the circumstances.)

**NURSE:** Afraid to explain that order for drugs was given to the DMO last week when he visited the RHC. Does not want to admit that she is unfamiliar with the procedure concerning the inventories. Does not want to lose credibility with the patients waiting outside so decides it is better not to speak up. She also wants to make a request for urgent leave compassionate leave but does not know how to approach this. (The nurse will act out this situation, using the language and expression that would normally be used under the circumstances.)

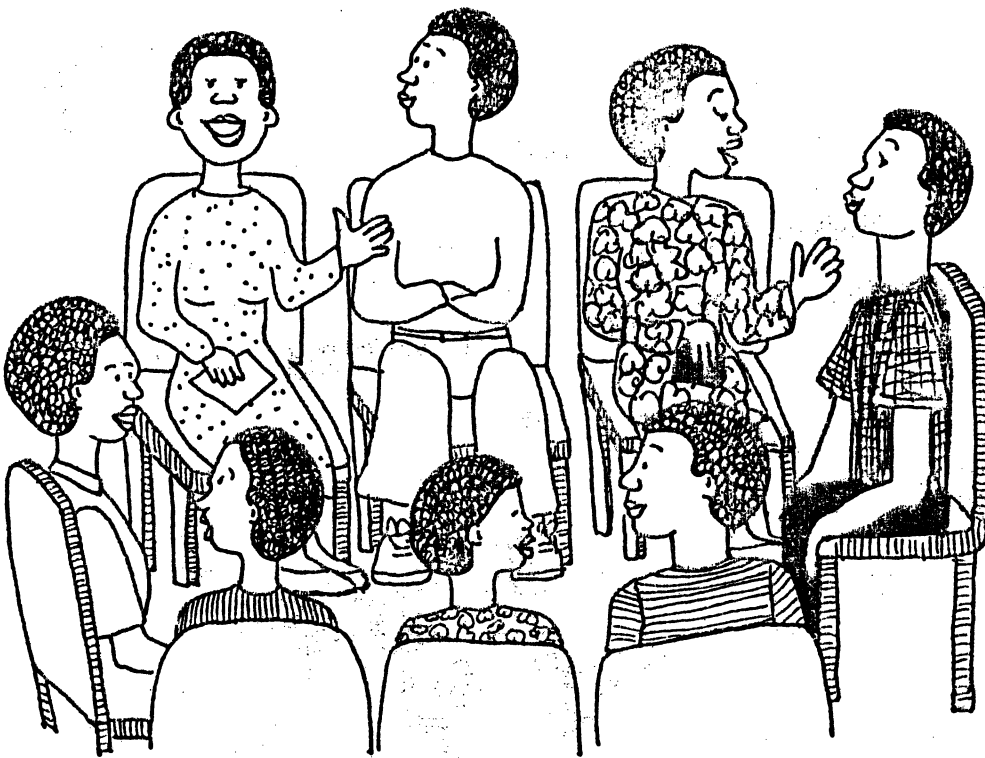


**ROLE PLAY (CONTINUED)**

On completion of the Role Play **THE CLASS** may then discuss the problem after everyone has had a turn at roleplaying. Discussion points would include the need to;

- Identify the problem
- Explore the problem
- Suggest appropriate ways of overcoming the problem

The roleplay could then be repeated, this time to illustrate the **solution**.



**THE CLASS MUST THEN DISCUSS THE PROBLEM  
AND FIND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.**

## PARTICIPATORY METHODS OF COMMUNICATION (Continued)

### C. DRAMA

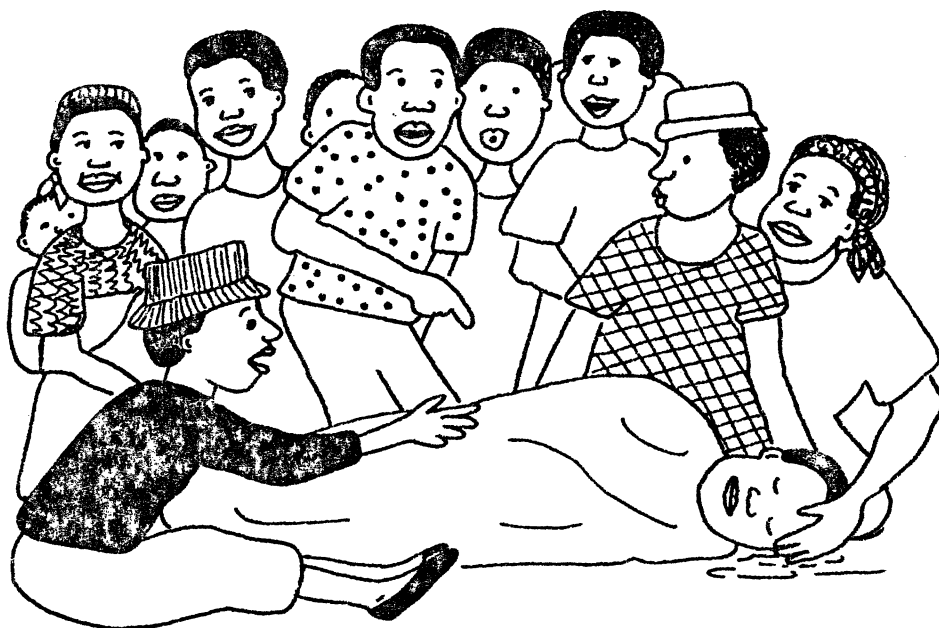
Drama or Popular Theatre as it is also sometimes referred to allows audiences to experience and act out problems and potential solutions to problems which they face daily. Drama is an effective TOOL for education because:

- It engages and holds the interest of larger numbers of people than 'conventional' methods of health education such as lectures or talks.
- It can be used as a means of cultural expression, that is, it can be made appropriate for local situations and language groups
- It reflects reality, addresses current problems, conflicts builds on local skills and involves the learners

**ABOVE ALL DRAMA IS ENJOYABLE AND A VERY EFFECTIVE AS A TOOL FOR EDUCATION**

### USES OF DRAMA IN TRAINING PROGRAMMES

- To state a problem for example, poor stock control, communication problems
- To find the causes of a problem for example, shortages, ordering
- To decide what solution should be used eg, using stock cards, monthly ordering, correct requisitioning
- To show the benefits of the solution for example, less waste, availability, satisfied patients



USING DRAMA TO CONVEY INFORMATION OR  
SOLVE PROBLEMS

**HINTS ABOUT CONDUCTING A DRAMA SESSION**

1. DEFINE YOUR TEACHING OBJECTIVES CAREFULLY, that is, define, what you want to convey to your audience
2. Define your theme
3. Decide on the story and the sequence, but base it carefully on your objectives
4. Decide on the characters and use individual/group activity to work out the dialogue and actions
5. Make the necessary improvisations for the venue stage etc
6. Decide if you want to incorporate songs, slogans, puppetry etc
7. Plan your method of feedback, [discussions?]
8. Decide on the time available for the drama and feedback
9. Let the participants practice their roles together at least once.

**A TYPICAL STORY ABOUT HOW THE PROBLEM OF STOCK CONTROL COULD BE DRAMATISED:**

**SCENE 1.** Mother arrives at the Rural Health Centre to find a long queue. It is hot, her baby is unwell and there are many people ahead of her. Finally after an hour long wait she reaches the front of the queue and sits down with baby to talk to the nurse. Mother is told that baby has a fever but that there is nothing that can be done because there are no more drugs and the next supply will only arrive the following week

**SCENE 2.** The DNO visits the clinic the following day and is surprised to find that the drug situation is so bad. She opens the store room to find it full of rubbish and empty boxes. She checks the stock cards to find that they have not been filled in either. The DNO is very cross but realises that she did not take the trouble to teach the Nurse about the importance of adopting a good routine for ordering and storing drugs at the Rural Health Centre.

**SCENE 3.** The play now focusses on the important role of stock cards in drug management. As if teaching nurses, the DNO uses a Chalkboard to demonstrate the important points. The Audience that is, the trainees can each be given a Stock card to complete as part of the dramatisation. In this way the participation of all is ensured.

The audience must then be encouraged to discuss the play, volunteer information and ask questions.

**REMEMBER!**

Drama is not just entertainment. Entertainment is of secondary importance to the message, the content of which is very important. Plays should not last more than 15-20 minutes. The impact of the play can be measured through:

- A group discussion
- The kinds of questions asked by the trainees
- Reaction and level of audience participation

**REMEMBER!** A number of different strategies can be combined to make drama sessions interesting and informative. Do not be afraid to use the chalkboard to illustrate certain points, a group discussion to solve certain problems, puppets to convey sensitive issues, songs to highlight a concept or music to attract the audience.

## **PART THREE**

### **PREPARING A LESSON PLAN**

**IN THIS SECTION OF THE MODULE WE PROVIDE SOME BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO PREPARE A LESSON PLAN**

Follow these instructions step-by-step

1. Read through your training materials carefully
  2. Underline the important points
  3. Summarise the important points when you have completed reading the material
  4. Look at the content again. Decide what kind of information is in the section. Then decide which methods would be most suitable for conveying the information that is
    - in a semi-formal session using an OHP
    - in a group discussion
    - through a roleplay
    - using the chalkboard in combination with other methods
    - using a slide projector?
  5. Plan your lesson carefully, taking into account the available time.
  6. Do not forget to allow time for discussion and feedback!
- An example of a lesson plan is provided on the next page.

**LESSON PLAN**Date ..... 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 1988

Time ..... 10.30 - 12.30 (2 hours)

Venue ..... P.M.D. Offices - Mashoualand East.

Topic ..... Ordering and Stock Control --  
Drug ordering

- Objectives :
1. to demonstrate how to prepare a drug order
  2. to inform trainees about the ordering of other items such as stationary, equipment.
  3. to emphasise the necessity for regular monthly orders.
  - 4.

Content: See P. 11, 12 and 13 of Section 4 on Drug ordering.

Teaching Aids ..... O.H.P.  
Discussion  
Role play.

## PART FOUR

### A COMMUNICATORS CHECKLIST

ONCE YOU HAVE SELECTED YOUR TRAINING METHOD AND PLANNED YOUR SESSION, USE THESE CHECKLISTS TO SEE THAT YOU ARE FULLY PREPARED TO TEACH.

#### CHALKBOARD\*

- Chalk available?
- Coloured Chalk to hand?
- Board clean to start?
- Wet cloth available for cleaning?
- Ruler handy to draw straight lines if necessary?

Tick here


\* DON'T FORGET TO CLEAN THE CHALKBOARD WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH!

#### OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

- Screen clean and free from dust?
- OHP in position?
- Power on?
- Fan working?
- OHP in focus?
- Transparencies in order with sheets of paper in between to prevent sticking?
- Marker pens to hand?
- Lesson notes handy?
- A pointer handy?

Tick here


**REMEMBER!** Always face and watch your group

- Switch off the OHP when discussing an issue
- Listen to see that the fan is working
- Leave the OHP clean and in good working order
- Report faults immediately if you are not able to attend to them yourself



**SLIDE PROJECTOR**

**MAKE THESE CHECKS BEFORE THE GROUP ARRIVES:**

- Checked the room?
- Is it available for the time you need it?
- Checked that the room can be darkened?
- Checked the seating arrangement?
- Projector in place and working?
- Slides selected?
- Slides in position and the right way up?
- Power on?
- In focus?
- Pointer stick available?

**Tick here**


**AT THE END OF THE SESSION REMEMBER TO REMOVE YOUR SLIDES, STORE THEM CAREFULLY AND PACK UP THE PROJECTOR. REPORT ANY FAULTS IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO DEAL WITH THEM YOURSELF**

**POSTER**

- Is the poster/wallchart presentable?
- Positioned correctly at eye level?
- Enough light?
- Strategically positioned for the target group?
- Straight?
- Firmly fixed in position?

**Tick here**


## GROUP DISCUSSION

Tick here

If the discussion is to be held indoors

- Is the room ready?
- Are the seats arranged in a circle

If the discussion is to be held outside

- Are there enough seats for everyone?
- Have you checked the place
- Is there enough shade, no ants, place to sit etc?

- Is there a chalkboard/OHP handy so that you can illustrate/note important points if necessary?
- Do you have your guide notes ready?
- Are you sure of the objectives?


Remember to appoint a Rapporteur at the beginning of the session.

## ROLE PLAYING

Have you:

Tick here

- Arranged a suitable venue for the roleplay and the feedback/discussion?
- Arranged suitable 'props' for example a table, or chairs etc.
- Planned the session?
- Assisted the participants to group for example in pairs etc for the roleplay?




## CONCLUSION

Our module contains a range of important ideas and facts about selected training methods and aids which can be used in the communication of information about the Zimbabwe Essential Drugs Action Programme (ZEDAP). It is very important however that trainers take up the challenge to translate words to action. By this we mean that they use the information as a means to making each training session more effective. It is also important that Trainers combine different teaching methods and Aids and encourage the participation of the learners as much as possible. In this way, teaching will become more rewarding and more exciting ie, something to look forward to, not to dread.

On a final note we should like to point out that in choosing to write about specific teaching methods and Aids in this manual, many other useful strategies have been omitted. Perhaps there will be an opportunity to expand the content of the manual at a later stage but in the meantime, if you feel that there is a particular method or teaching aid about which you would like further information, please write to us at the address given below. We shall make every effort to address your needs in future editions of the ZEDAP Communication Skills Manual.

Sue Laver

Department of Community Medicine

Medical School

Box A178

AVONDALE

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