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**How to Perform in front
of an Audience**

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- CEMAS is a project within the International Co-operative Alliance working on the improvement of materials and methods for cooperative education and training in developing countries, with particular reference to the needs of members and committee members
- a clearing house for information and advice on education and training
- a production unit, producing prototype materials, manuals and reference booklets
- an ideas bank for the use of all cooperative educators and trainers

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International Co-operative Alliance

How to Perform in front of an Audience

An illustrated manual for co-operative education facilitators



Co-operative Education Materials Advisory Service



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Objective

The objective of this manual is to help co-operative field workers and other educational facilitators perform effectively and interestingly before an audience

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Foreword

As compared to other means of communication such as audio-visual aids and the mass media, face-to-face communication is the most effective. The physical presence of the facilitator, his personality and humanity; his direct contact with the audience; his body movement and variation of voice, and his ability to facilitate interaction within the group, lend to the communication process something infinitely more real and captivating than could any mechanical device or written symbol offer. At any rate, devices and symbols in whatever form they take, are of little use in themselves if not handled by a competent facilitator.

So, pivotal to any situation involving direct communication with an audience is the role played by the facilitator. This is to say that the quality and effectiveness of communication will depend, to a large measure, on how skillfully and competently the facilitator performs before his audience.

Co-operative field workers are, essentially, facilitators whose vocation entails constant performance before audiences: at members' meetings; during seminars and other gatherings where they are called upon to talk to people, demonstrate, instruct, inform or guide them. This requires proper training, for performing before an audience is an art and skill that must be learnt, developed and perfected through constant practice and feed-back.

This brief manual is a modest attempt by ICA-CEMAS to offer some practical ideas on how to perform before an audience. In compiling it we are mindful of the fact that the subject treated here involves a highly skilled art. Volumes have been written on this subject, the best of them, two thousand and more years ago. Nonetheless, it is our hope that the manual will prove of use to co-operative field workers and all those engaged in the wider field of co-operative development. We think that if they put into practice the hints given here, combining these with their own natural abilities, communications with all forms of audiences will be rendered both effective and enjoyable.

Sam Mshiu
Geneva, April 1986

I Introduction

The Role of the Facilitator

It is easy enough to get the feeling that most teachers are cut out of the same pattern. Their appearance is alike, they speak in a particular way and perform predictably.

But in adult education, the role of the facilitator has always been looked upon more liberally: people have different personalities, so each facilitator must work out a style that suits him. No educator should try to be someone else by imitating teachers from his own background. As facilitator, it is important to develop your own style. It is also essential to consider how you are interpreted by your audiences.



Remember, the local population may not be accustomed to pictures, the written word or sophisticated teaching aids. But they are alert to the spoken word. Remember, traditions and historical facts in your own society have been carried from one generation to the next by word of mouth, anecdotes, songs and rhyme. So, perhaps your lessons should not include too many pictures, diagrams, tables, or too much writing. Moreover, no-one is interested in your ability to write a thousand words or to speak for a quarter of an hour without stopping. All communications must be **good** for something and the first consideration of all facilitators must be: what will it be good for?

Decide on the real purpose; is your communication to:

EXPLAIN or INFORM?

or

PERSUADE and CONVINC?

Generally, all audience communications are **one** of the above. Therefore the purpose of this book is clear: to help teach you to perform more, clearly, intelligently, interestingly and effectively, before your co-operative audience.

II The Meeting Place

2.1 Class-room : Formal Set-up

Whether you are a facilitator invited to talk to an on-going educational activity or organising a new one, make sure that you arrive at the venue in good time! This enables you to make a last minute check on room layout; your reference notes; teaching aids; overhead projectors; cassette players; tape recorders; chalk-board; chalk, erasers and for flip charts with felt pens (if possible in several colours).

Having checked and satisfied yourself with the arrangements, the facilities and media resources, and while waiting for your audience to gather, you may spend some time with the society's chairman or the manager to discuss your audience. Learn all you can about them - their common problems, occupation, etc. The more you know about your audience, the easier it will be for you to communicate with them effectively. Try also to familiarize yourself with the organisation and work of the co-operative - if you have not already done so.

The Staging

You must be seen and clearly heard. Your position or the position of the audience will vary according to the subject and the nature of your material. When they are learning **knowledge** the class may be seated individually - and when learning skills, group them.



... See and be seen clearly

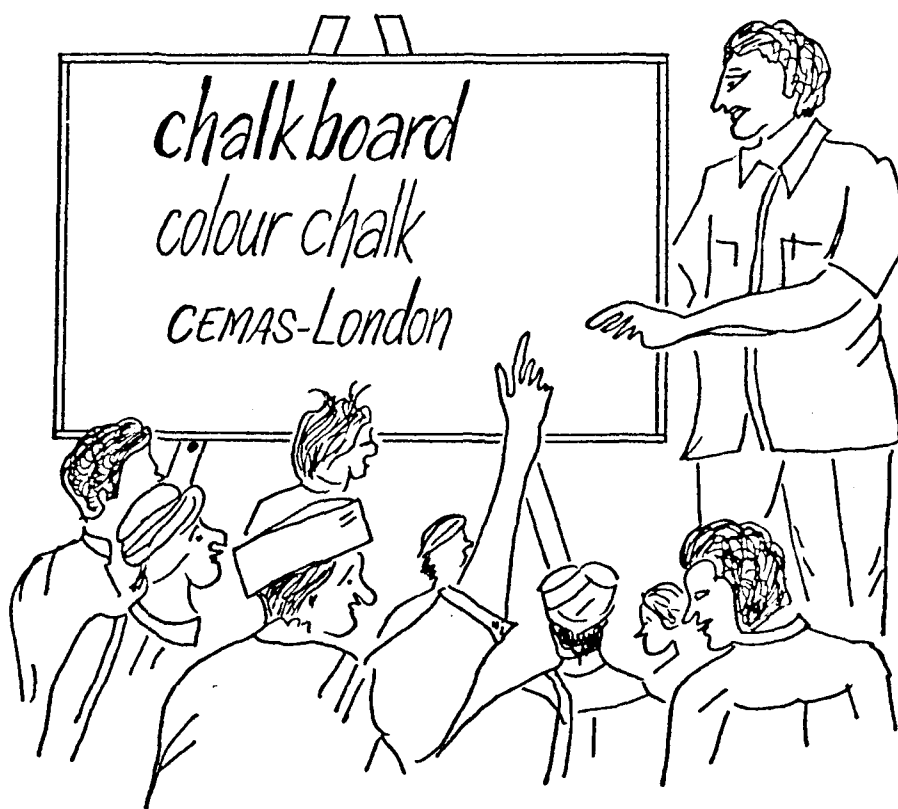
You should choose your own position so that all the audience can see and hear you clearly all the time. It is, moreover, important to test the group early to find out if they are correctly seated (defective sight or hearing among the group members means that you can place them in a better position).

Visual aids require slick handling. Reveal an aid at the appropriate time. Remove it after it has served its purpose, otherwise the attention of the class is divided between you and the class.

You have to handle your own visual aids. An element of variety can be achieved by having posters or diagrams carefully masked. Paper strips are used to keep the facts concealed until required.

A few general tips when using a flipchart or a chalkboard.

- Keep it to your left (if you are right-handed) or to your right (if you are left handed).
- When writing do not talk.
- Write neatly, **briefly** and clearly.
- Drawing strokes are best made away from the body or downwards.
- Stand clear.
- Give the audience time to read and understand.
- Then carry on talking.



... Write neatly, briefly and clearly

Experienced facilitators react to the audience. They use timing: words and pauses linked to the audience. In a formal set-up your timing must allow for facts to sink in and, where needed, for notebook work to be completed.

2.2 Outdoors : Informal Set up

Communication has been defined in various ways and with many models, but it can be defined quite easily in three words:

UNDERSTANDING

AGREEMENT

ACTION

If you get these together from your audience, you have communicated! But, as you are outdoors with *only your voice, your gestures and your enthusiasm*, you really need to think about the way you are going to get your points across. So before you go on to the other important sections on voice, gestures and use of language, let us study this question.

Some facilitators stop at the first word: **understanding**. That really is insufficient! (How would you really know whether or not they have understood?). You would only know if the target-group has understood if they do something — and do, in fact, what you, as a facilitator intended.

Therefore, any real agreement and true understanding must be expressed in appropriate action; whether such action is to be immediate or later, oral or physical, is based on co-operative requirements and the nature of the work involved. In short, you must have a pretty clear and precise idea of your purpose *before* communication.

How then do you start to get yourself ready for informal, outdoor performances ?

Remember the key words:

WHAT ?

HOW ?

WHEN ?

Let us glance at the first word: **What. What is it we wish to have done?** It could be to inform on a *more effective reporting system*; or a *better budgetary control*; or *increased sales*. Whatever it is, say it exactly: *this society is to increase sales*, for example.

Now to the **How**, or rather: **How well?** *This society is to increase its sales by five per cent*. The added percentage informs the society of **how well**. But now, you must tell them **When**, or, if you prefer: **by when**. So you may say: *the society is to increase sales by five per cent during the next six months*.

Now you have perhaps put away bad habits and said something which is precise and has an exact objective. So if you start outdoor communication by using these three basic words, you have done a lot.

Remember, try not to utter vague words when communicating with groups — such as: *to give an idea*; *to know*; or *to understand*. Why not? Well, such words are rather imprecise. They are a little loose and easily misunderstood. Try for words which are more exact. (To **increase**, for example, is a good choice.) Use words that denote **action** — such as:

to list

to organise

to find

to establish

to evaluate

to construct

to regulate

to defend.

There are others, too. But bear these examples in mind, and use them when putting your performance together.



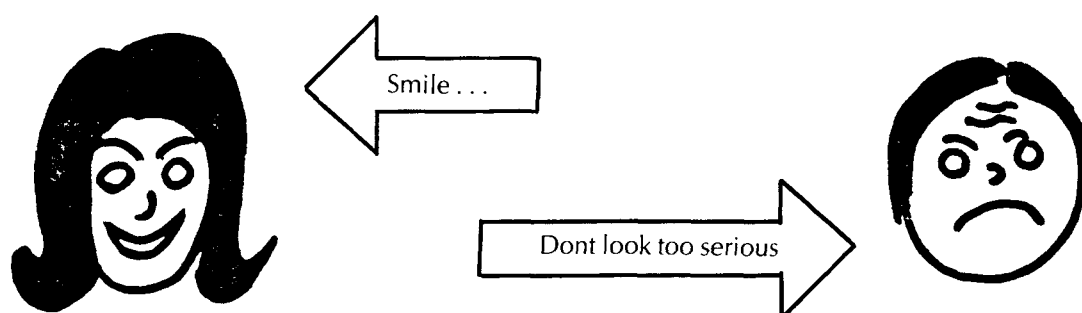
III Climate Setting

If your audience is coming together for the first time - whether in a formal class-room set-up or in an informal out-door one, it is always advisable at the very beginning to have an informal introductory session. This is sometimes called **climate setting** or **warming up**. Start by introducing yourself: who you are, your work, hobbies, family life, etc. Feel at ease! Be informal! Smile occasionally and make a little joke about yourself - if you can manage a good one.

Then let each member of the group introduce himself or herself. Remember, some people are shy or completely petrified when asked to talk to or in a group. Some adults feel tense or nervous in a class-room - perhaps some latent fear deriving from bad experience in their childhood school days. The situation becomes even worse where the audience consists of both literate and illiterate people. The timid ones may not talk unless spoken to. Try hard to help them by encouraging them to talk. Try to create the feeling that learning is an enjoyable, informal activity involving sharing of ideas and experiences rather than an irksome, "punishing" exercise.

When introducing themselves, some group members - especially the timid ones - will probably mention only their names. Seek more information from them by asking follow-up questions such as "would you please tell us where you come from?"; "what do you like doing best?"; "have you been a member of **our** co-operative long?"; etc. Such questions may not elicit much information, but you must remember that this is not an interview as such, but a way of getting people involved, and also a way of getting them to know each other, even though casually. It is a **warming up**, after all.

Ask the audience if they have any additional questions that they would like to put to the speaker. You should however control, in a "diplomatic" way, the flow of such questions so that this does not develop into a "cross-examination" session. Intervene when you feel that the question asked seeks information that might be embarrassing to the speaker. For example, some people - especially women - do not feel too happy to discuss their age in public.



During the climate setting, make the atmosphere as relaxed as possible. The starting point is, of course, to make **yourself** as relaxed and as friendly as possible. This is not to say that you should be falsely congenial or patronizing. Do not be too serious, and never feel or act as if you were superior to your audience.

If well managed, a climate setting session will go a long way towards eliminating, or, at least, reducing some of the tensions and fears inherent in your audience.

IV The Material

When you make your notes do not lose sight of your objective by including a mass of material covering “everything”.

Grade your material according to its importance in achieving your objective. Otherwise you will waste valuable time by including fringe material which may not be essential. Do not read from notes. Edit them down to a few brief ideas. Try to speak freely, only consult your notes in the final resort.

It is possible to dispense with even the briefest of notes, believe it or not, by using this tried and trusted method.

Material for the Vocal Delivery of Your Communication

Here is a basic formula intended for the spoken delivery. (This formula was first used successfully in ancient Greece, more than 2,000 years ago by one of that country’s playwrights, **Euripides**.) You can sum it up in four letters:

A. I. D. A.

These letters stand for **Attention; Interest; Desire; Action**. Because, before any meaningful seeing, hearing, or doing *can* take place, your audience must have

- A** - a matter called to their **attention**
- I** - they must be **interested**
- D** - they must have a conscious **desire** for something
- A** - they must be given an opportunity to **act**.

When you plan your next speech presentation, write down these initial letters: **A. I. D. A.** vertically and then make brief notes by each of the letters; it is a blueprint or a guide, on how you are going to speak. It can, in fact, help you even without notes, so long as you remember **A. I. D. A.** To help you perform better, here are suggestions on achieving those points.

A. Attention

Get the attention of your audience when you begin. They must feel that what you are going to say is of value to them. It could be one of these:

- (i) Make a short statement with dramatic value.
- (ii) Hold an important paper up to show them briefly.
- (iii) Ask a “rhetorical” question, (a question which does not require an answer).



I Interest

After having got their attention, ensure that the next part of your statement is of **direct** interest to them; it must relate to **their** needs. (This should be easy enough, if you have done your research.)

D Desire

What are the desires and wishes of your target groups? What do **they** need? (Think in terms of **their** needs and formulate your speech accordingly.)

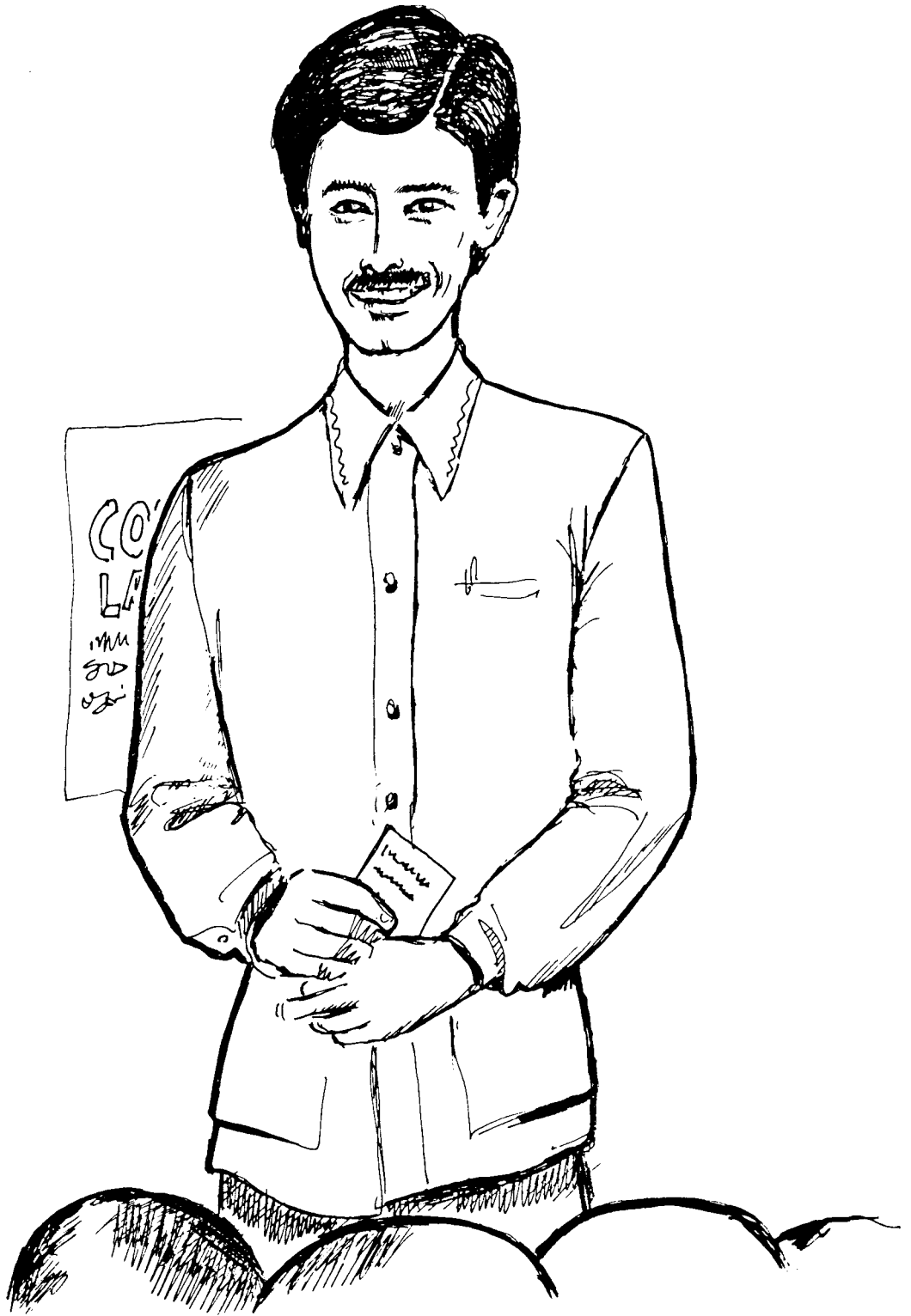
A Action

Give them opportunity to act. But be specific in asking for action. Avoid vague generalisms and ask them to do something really **specific**, or, conclude your speech by:

- (i) summing up all the points very briefly, or
- (ii) giving a relevant quotation, or
- (iii) ask again, a “rhetorical” question, one that points ahead into the future.



V Appearance



... posture: smart and upright

You only have one chance ever to make a first impression, so make it a good one!

Audiences are sensitive to first impressions so make certain yours does not irritate or distract your trainees. You should appear neat. Clothes should be appropriate to the occasion and by controlling your nerves an impression of friendly confidence can be made.

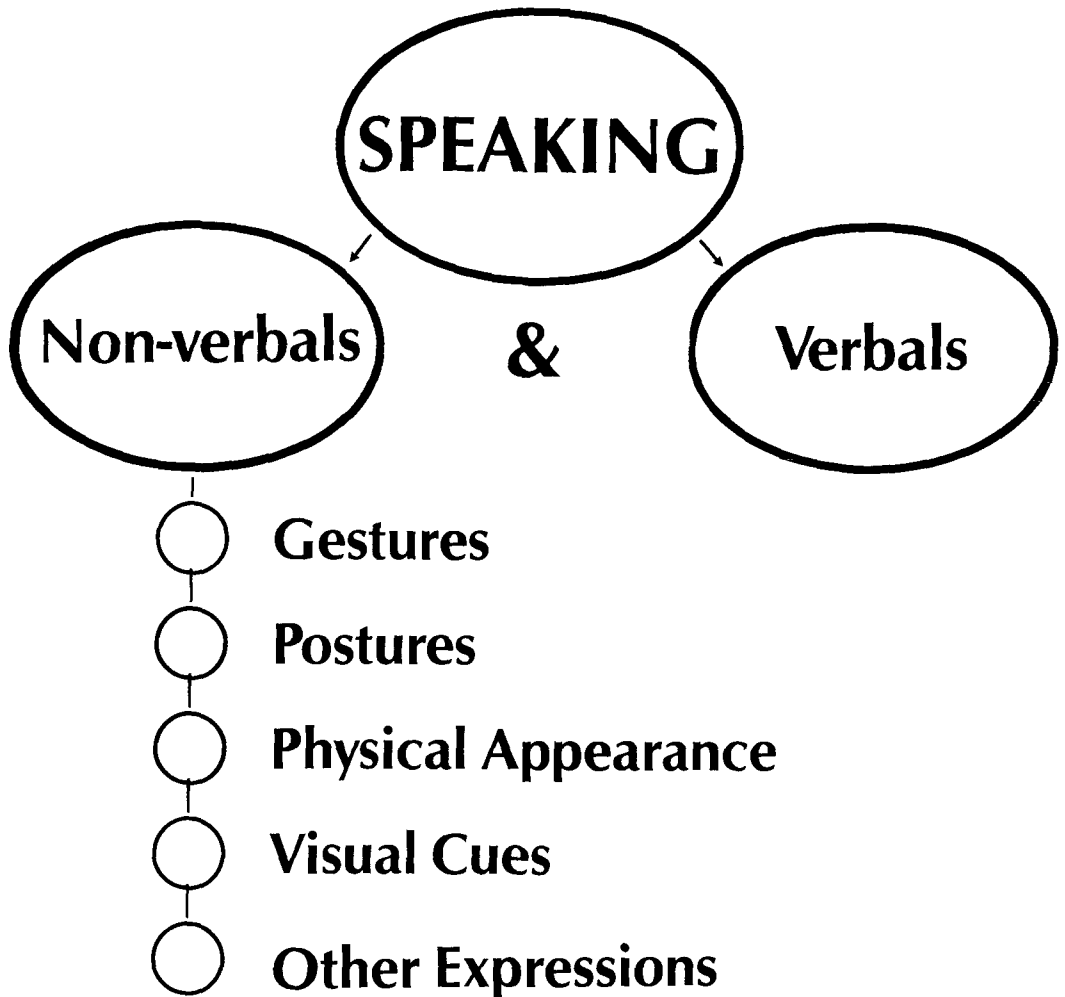
Posture should always be smart and upright and at the same time relaxed.

Train yourself to avoid unnecessary movement which will distract the audience: pacing up and down; tossing chalk in the air; reading from notes. This kind of behaviour on the part of the facilitator can result in distraction and stops the message being put across.



VI Manners

Whether the general purpose of your talk is to inform or to persuade, you can also **speak** to groups in a way which calls upon all their senses, as well as their sense of sight. This can be done by both the word of mouth as well as **controlled gestures**. This part of speaking or communicating is called: **delivery**: the delivery of your message to the group (in the same way as a letter is given to you - it is *delivered!*).



But you deliver it with dignity and understanding for your audience. Moreover, remember that your audience has, in general, an attention span of a maximum of 15 minutes at a time. If your presentation is brief, (it is best to plan your talk to be as brief as is appropriate) then you have no difficulty. But should it be longer, then the diagram on the following page, covering a 45 minute period should be considered.

Academic research has shown that the attention span of the average listener at any given time is
= 15 mins x 3 = 45 mins



ALERT!

(1) 15 minutes



OFF

(2) 15 minutes



ALERT!

(3) 15 minutes

What does this mean to you as a communicator?

- (a) First, introduce your subject and briefly tell them the points you intend covering, then start off interestingly.
- (b) Ensure that you back up these points with suitable examples. (Remember also that in the second 15-minute period, the audience's attention is fading.)
- (c) Then round on them and give emphasis to the most important points and close your talk by summarising the contents. End on a high note! Remember that all the senses can be touched even by word of mouth. (Surprisingly, they can – and this is done by using words which produce images or pictures in the mind of your audience).

So, when composing your communication, use colourful words that produce the mental pictures you wish your audience to see. Here are some examples that emphasize the kind of spoken points you could make. (But the writer realises that this is very much an individual matter and you will need to call upon your own imagination and experience).

- “Reading a great book is like discovering gold”
- “as brave as a lion”

- “the granite rock of the co-operative movement”
- “as strong as an ox”
- “the sweet taste of success”.



... use colourful word-pictures: “as firm as a rock”;
 “as strong as an ox”

spoken communication means:

- Maintaining eye contact (do not read out items, except for very short pieces).
- Involving your audience (refer to them, using “you” and “your” frequently).
- Changing the tempo of your delivery (speak sometime slowly – sometimes faster; sometimes softly and sometimes loudly).
- Speaking, where possible, with only brief notes (this means you can speak freely and you are **in charge of** your speech).

Stand in a relaxed fashion; look at all your audience all the time. When finished - sit down, and do not continue unnecessarily; it is impolite.

In addition, you will find the following hints useful:

- Try to control your emotions: do not be too excited; do not lose your temper
- Try to cultivate a dynamic personality and self confidence
- Develop, through constant practice and feedback, a good poise, and refinement both in voice and actions
- Be imaginative, creative and resourceful
- You should be well-read and informed — not only in your specialised subject but in all general matters
- Cultivate a positive and encouraging attitude
- Be courteous, sympathetic, tactful and helpful
- Be patient, and tolerant
- Be firm, but without being authoritative
- Practice democratic leadership
- Set a good example to your audience in the way you conduct yourself
- Be friendly

Finally, remember to be **honest** and **sincere** in all your endeavours.



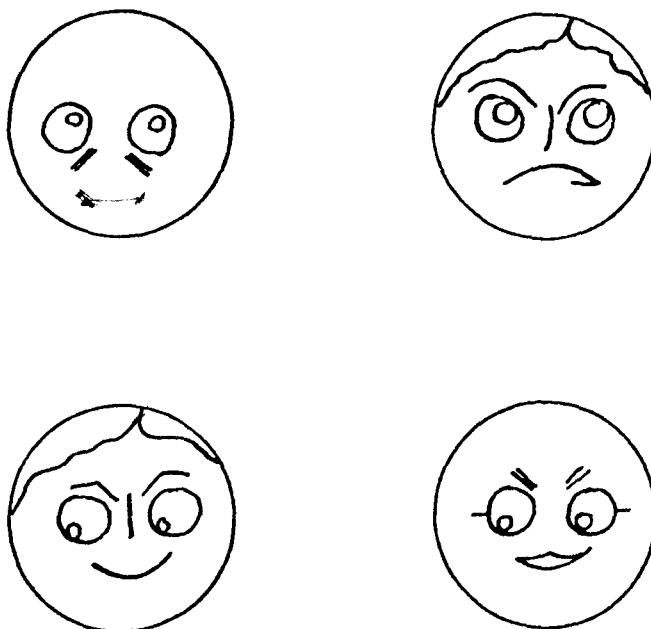
VII Gestures

Your use of natural gestures should depend on the situation.

Larger groups can take the more “dramatic” gesture, while the smaller, more intimate group, requires more relaxed and subtle movements. Accordingly, your emphasis with your hands or any body movement must suit the occasion and the point of your lesson. But such movements greatly help putting across any message: educational or inspirational. As a facilitator, to stand or sit in a wooden position is poor co-operative education methodology whatever way you look at it.

7.1 The Eyes

The manner in which you use your eyes can have a great bearing on attentiveness. (Remember, the power of the hypnotist is strong and commands unblinking attention from his subject).



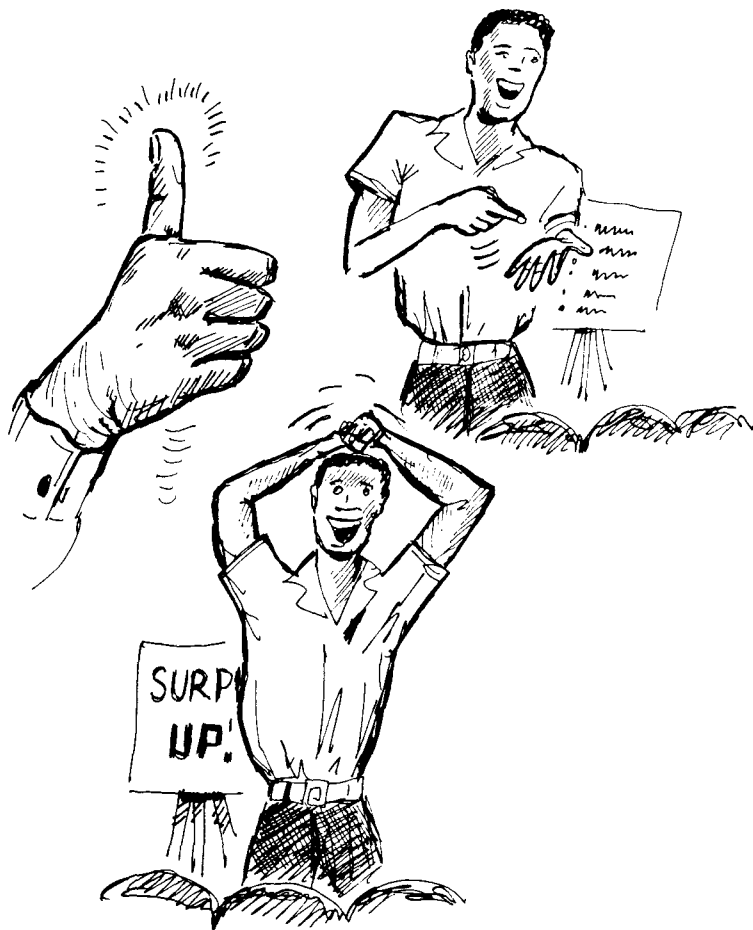
Although you cannot look at each member of the group all the time, you can maintain eye contact intermittently during the entire period. Select a focal point at the back of the room or, if outdoors, a mid-distance tree just above the heads of the group, from there allow your eye to patrol the audience. In this way, everybody will be alert to your eyes and you will always have a fixed point to look at during your session. (This also improves posture).

7.2 The Hands

The hands can be expressive and aid in emphasising points. The open palm, for example, as you count off your fingers, one by one, in putting specific points over, likewise, one by one.

- the single upraised finger, when you wish to strike a cautionary note
- the two open hands held upwards towards the audience to surprise; good tidings; or big returns; depending on the verbal context
- the clenched fist hit into the open palm, to express determination to overcome obstacles
- the two hands firmly clutched together to indicate co-operation - working together
- your two thumbs or two fists clenched and raised upwards in an international gesture of victory: problems overcome!

The subtle use of hands like this authenticates your message and lends strength to your co-operative purpose.



... use your hands

7.3 The Body and Arms

When standing, particularly in an outdoors situation, maintain an upright relaxed posture; legs apart and hands gently clasped in front of you.

This relaxes both you and your audience, at the same time, you are free to move your head or hands to make sweeping gestures where appropriate or extend your open arms in a welcoming way. This position can be best applied in front of a larger group of people. It also lends itself to many variations that you, the reader, will have used before or will evolve.



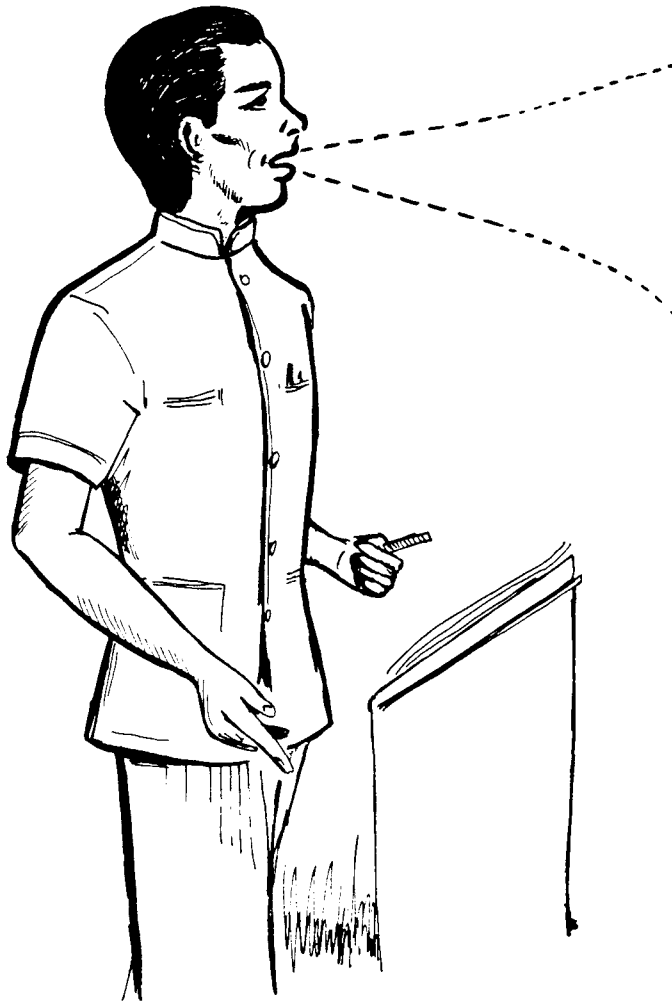
... using arms and body

VIII The Voice

When a facilitator takes the floor, he assumes a manner of speech quite different from his everyday conversation. He speaks louder, slower and chooses words with greater care. The technique of good speakers, such as that of radio or television news-readers, should be studied. Particular note should be made of speed and pace.

Special points of note in speech are:

- (i) **Speak slowly** and allow each word and sentence to be heard. (If you cannot speak slowly and clearly you will not be able to educate).



... speak slowly and clearly

- (ii) **Avoid verbal muddle** by using a pause to think out what you are going to say. Better a long pause than to say something unintended. In fact, a deliberate pause creates an air of expectancy and adds variety to your presentation.



... be enthusiastic

- (iii) **Avoid difficult words** if simpler ones can be used. But, if a new word or concept has to be introduced, have its meaning understood very clearly, through repetition and exemplification. Remember, you are talking to **express** and not to **impress!**
- (iv) **Avoid monotony.** Do not drone on, such a voice encourages drowsiness and reduces attention. Break the monotony by the full use of emphasis, volume and speed occasionally.
- (v) **Be enthusiastic.** It puts life into your voice and into your group. Occasionally, your presentation may seem monotonous to you, but never betray your lack of interest as you will then forfeit that of your group.

IX Use of Language

When communicating **interest** your listeners. To do that bear these points in mind.

9.1 Concreteness

Be concrete or specific when talking. Translate words like “goodness”, “comradeship” or “co-operation” into an example you know; such as the activities of the Chairman or President →, or name a worker at one of your undertakings. People are visually minded, they will grasp at a “word-picture” or spoken illustration, more quickly, than a wide generalization.

9.2 Common Ground

Another way to interest audiences is to get on common ground with them. (If your subject is accountancy, you can well afford to show how helpful it might be to keep the cheque-stubs in cheque books in order. If the subject is co-operative clinics, you could point out their benefits to members by showing the flaws in the present private system of doctors with its policy of “better” health for the rich).

9.3 Basic Emotions

Everyone is motivated by certain basic emotions. The good co-operative communicator appeals to those basic emotions for sincere purposes. He shows how, what he has to say, can affect members of the audience.

Among such emotions (not all positive ones) are:

fear
anger
pity
love
shame
regret
sorrow
pride

When appealing to such sentiments be **selective** and not **manipulative**.

In addition, it is a fact that most people are more easily moved to action by appealing to their sense of **avoiding** losses, rather than **making** gains.

But, a sincere speaker can use such appeals, to help further co-operation in all its aspects.

9.4 Humour

In all human activity, some relief from severe attention is necessary. So communicators must remember to establish friendly contact with the audience. A personal narrative may do the trick or a twinkle in the eye, and this will ease the way for a facilitator more than an oxcart load of wisdom and learning.

9.5 Suspense and Curiosity

Use a little suspense and curiosity to hold the audience's attention.

Curiosity is fundamental. (Just as hunters and fishermen attract prey to traps, so you as a facilitator can arouse interest). *Get just enough drama into your talk to help the listeners, get them wondering as to what is going to come next.*

This can be done quite subtly by using sentences and phrases such as: "I shall justify this statement later"; "as you will soon see"; "There's another reason why this is so". These sentences and others like them add a little element of suspense to your communications whether by the spoken word or even the written word.

9.6 Your Plan

Our minds can be like untidy rooms - good things scattered everywhere. So let's put those facts and figures in their proper drawers and cubby-holes so that when we need them we will know where they are.

Let's **learn** to plan - for that all important performance before an audience. For a coherent speech you must determine your **general** purpose: do you intend

to **EXPLAIN**?

to **PERSUADE**?

to **ENTERTAIN**?

If it is to persuade or to explain consider the following example:

(i) **General Purpose:** to **PERSUADE**

Specific Purpose: to make a ten minute talk before members on the need to attend annual general meetings.

CONDITIONS:

Time limit: ten minutes

Audience: 82 co-operative members, mostly men, some women, all of whom are married

Theme: The society has failed to take major decisions due to non attendance of members at annual general meetings. Attendance at meetings should be the concern of all members as it is the only way they can exercise their democratic rights and take right decisions that will help the society develop (for their own benefit).

It is important that you know everything about the conditions before you communicate.

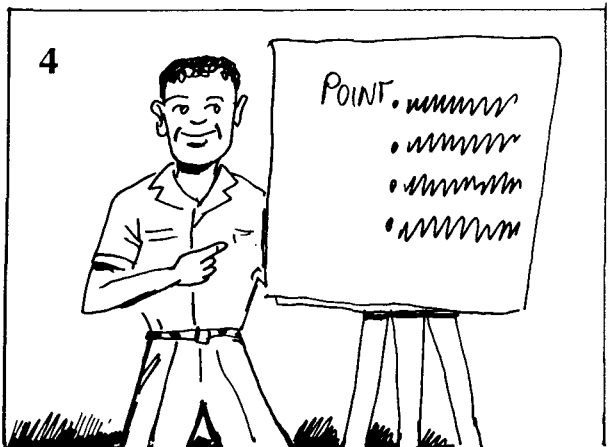
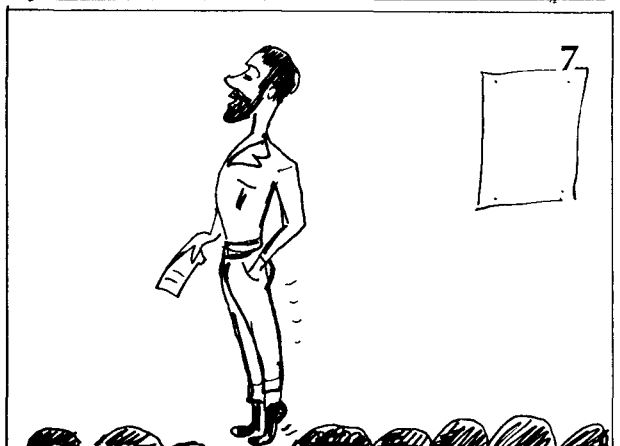
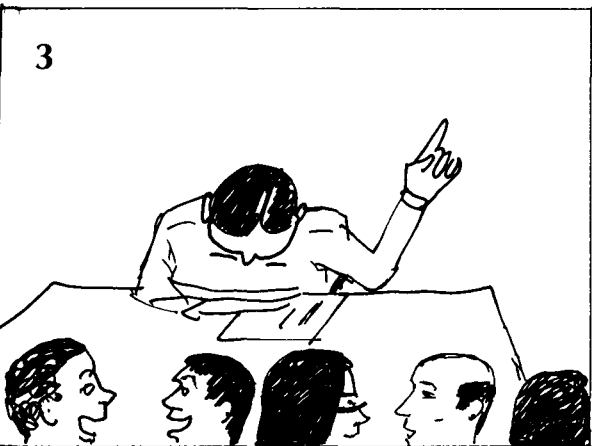
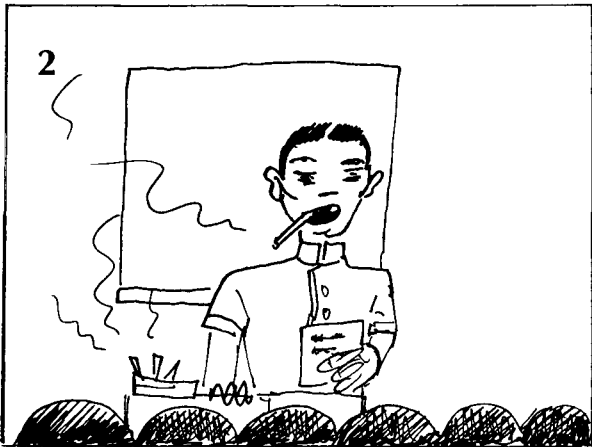
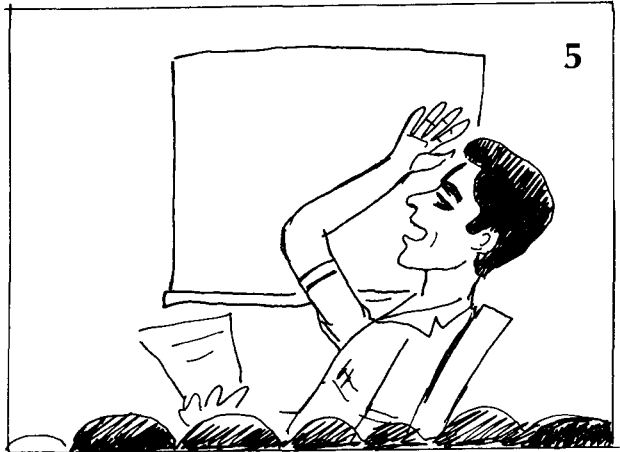
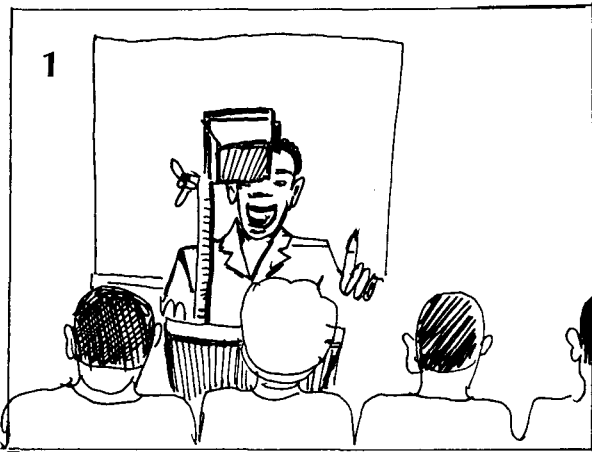
Additionally, it is very important that you write out a theme sentence, because it gets at the central idea.

When you have your central idea you have made a real start toward clarity and good order. (Anyone with some fluency and invention can speak for five minutes or write five pages on some subject. But unless the speaker knows what he is driving at he doesn't get anywhere. This you can now avoid!)



Exercise

Turn to the next page and study carefully the eight illustrations of a facilitator performing before an audience. Then, applying the ideas you have gained from the previous pages of this manual, critically comment on each illustration, explaining the bad points and the good ones. Then look at our comments on page 33.



Comments on Exercise

- PICTURE 1 Bad!** The facilitator is blocked by his overhead projector and has lost eye-contact.
- PICTURE 2 Bad!** The facilitator is smoking - (not really polite to his group).
- PICTURE 3 Bad!** The facilitator has lost eye-contact and loses the attention of the group.
- PICTURE 4 Good!** The facilitator is facing his group; the flipchart is clearly seen. He reinforces his spoken words by pointing at key words on the board.
- PICTURE 5 Bad!** The facilitator appears uninterested in the group and their reactions.
- PICTURE 6 Bad!** The facilitator is playing with a coin and distracts the audience.
- PICTURE 7 Bad!** The facilitator is not looking at the group; he is posturing and, in this instance, standing on tip-toe.
- PICTURE 8 Good!** The facilitator maintains eye contact with the group while using the overhead projector, without blocking the picture.

What can you do for CEMAS?

One of the main tasks of CEMAS is to stimulate and facilitate the exchange of ideas and experience among cooperative educators throughout the world.

That can only be achieved through real cooperation among cooperators.

You will make a vital contribution by sending us specimen copies or details of education and training materials that you have seen or successfully used yourself: books, manuals, exercises, handouts, posters, leaflets, brochures, materials for general member education, for committee members or for staff training at different levels.

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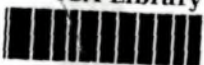
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