INTRODUCTION

The most spontaneous response one might give upon seeing the above title may be "DON'T DON'T use lecture as a learning/teaching technique with adults!" However, that may be an easy "dodge," a bit presumptuous, and unrealistic since it almost goes without saying that the lecture remains and, for sometime to come, probably will remain a most important learning/teaching technique in adult education (in the church as well as in other adult education programs). In fact, the lecture is one of the oldest and most direct learning/teaching techniques. This time has made it so hallowed that many people have confused the lecture and learning/teaching as being synonymous.

In the midst of its long-standing history and acceptance, as well as the mystique and confusion which surround it, the lecture can be used to greater advantage if: (1) one has some grasp of what the learning/teaching process is; (2) it is clearly understood what the lecture can accomplish and what it cannot accomplish in the learning/teaching process; (3) the same guidelines are applied to the choice and use of the lecture as are applied in choosing and using the wide variety of learning/teaching techniques (old and new) in the learning situation; and (4) strong consideration is given to using other techniques like audience participation, discussion, and simulations to enhance the use of the lecture.

This article is not devoted to the how of developing and giving a lecture. The public libraries, as well as two sources listed here, abound with such discourses.

Most of these resources would agree with one writer that a good lecture must: (1) motivate group interest; (2) be well organized and clear; (3) be developed well; and (4) be presented well.

In lecture preparation, the following steps would be suggested by that same writer: (1) analyze the learning group; (2) determine the exact purpose to be accomplished; (3) determine the main points and do necessary research; (4) organize the points and materials; and (5) develop and support the points. Good lecture presentation would be natural, conversational, direct, animated, enthusiastic, with sufficient voice projection and emphasis to be heard.

supported by appropriate gestures and visual aids, and
with concern for listener acceptance and under-
standing.

This article is devoted to considering in turn each of
the four propositions mentioned above on how to
improve the use of the lecture, with accompanying
suggestions. Since volumes could be written on each
proposition, it is obvious that only a
"skimming of the surface" and not "coverage in
depth" will be possible here. Thus, it is hoped that this
article will help the reader think through and answer
some questions in regard to improving his or her use of
the lecture as a teaching tool. It is further hoped that this article will also raise some
questions and curiosities in the reader's mind that will
stimulate further inquiry. It is not asked that the reader agree with what is said and defined in this article, but it
is asked that the reader accept what is said and defined for purposes of understanding the author's line of
thinking.

THE LEARNING/TEACHING PROCESS
This process is indeed complex. It is not for those who
with an easy "cut and dry" answer of one, two, three.
Learning is a human process and accordingly does not
attempt to explain that which is attributed to grace. It
is an internal process with the person, controlled by the
learner and engaging his whole being—intellectual,
emotional, and physical. It is based on the growing
body of research which suggests that adults can learn,
contrary to the popular notion that "you can't teach an
old dog new tricks."

Teaching formulates the other side of the
learning/teaching process. Here is how one adult
educator states the case:

The truly artistic teacher of adults perceives the
locale of responsibility for learning to be in the
learner; he conscientiously suppresses his own
comprehension and concerns himself with what the
student himself is learning for himself, what he wants
to learn. I have described this faith in the ability of
the individual to learn for himself as the
"theological foundation" of adult education, and I believe that without this faith, a teacher of
adults is more likely to hinder than to facilitate
learning.

DEFINITIONS

"Format" or "Method" is the organization of persons
for purposes of a learning experience.

"Technique" involves the variety of ways that the
learning experience is managed so as to facilitate
learning.

"Lecture" is referred to here as a technique, not a
format or a method. The lecture is a carefully prepared
oral presentation of a subject, theme, or problem by a
qualified person. It may also be labeled as a speech or
sermon.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions about the characteristics of adult
learners are also crucial components of the
learning/teaching process. A growing body of
knowledge indicates that adult learners are different
from child learners. These are not so much real
differences as they are differences in assumptions that
are made in traditional education (Christian education
as well as secular education).

The assumptions about the characteristics of adult
learners are that, as a person matures: (1) his/her self
concept moves from being a dependent personality
away from one of being a self-directing human being; (2)
he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience
that becomes an increasingly valuable resource for
learning; (3) his/her readiness to learn becomes
oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of
one's social roles; (4) his/her time perspective changes
from one of postponed application of knowledge to
immediacy of application; and accordingly (5) his/her
orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject
centeredness to problem/situation-centeredness.

IMPLICATIONS

Since "participation," "ego-involvement," and
"interaction" are boldfaced words in the lexicon of the
adult educator, the assumption is often made that the
more active the learner's role is in the process, the more
he/she is probably learning. It is acknowledged and
accepted that some persons may wish not to be
involved actively in the learning process. Thus, use of
the lecture as a learning/teaching technique needs to
be designed and implemented so as only to maximize the
opportunity for interaction, ego-involvement, and
participation to the extent the participants desire it,
but also to increase the adult learner's competence in
self-direction and the other characteristics of adult
learners mentioned above.

WHAT THE LECTURE CAN AND
CANNOT ACCOMPLISH

In any educational experience, objectives serve to
indicate what particular activity is seeking to
accomplish, including content components as well as
behavioral aspects.

The lecture is suggested as one of the most appropriate
learning/teaching techniques for the behavioral
outcomes of knowledge and values. Other more
appropriate techniques may need to be chosen for the

\*Haberman & Bower, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (New York:

\*ibid., p. 29.
behavioral outcomes of understanding, skill, attitude, and interest.
There is also some evidence in education that straight
factual, descriptive, or explanatory material may be
learned by direct absorption through the lecture,
whereas principles and concepts may be best learned
by group-participation learning/teaching techniques.

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING
THE LECTURE AND OTHER LEARNING/
TEACHING TECHNIQUES

QUESTIONS
Three guiding questions to be answered when choosing
the lecture as a learning/teaching technique are: (1)
How does your selection and use of the lecture fit into
your understanding of the way people change and
grow (learning theory)? (2) What position does this
lecture hold in the context of the goals toward which
you are working in the learning/teaching situation? (3)
What immediate or observable needs, at this time,
with these persons, does this lecture meet?

CRITERIA FOR DECIDING
Additional factors which influence the decision of
whether or not to use the lecture include:
(1) The more the instructor knows about the subject
at hand and the less the participants know about it,
the more appropriate the lecture would be.
(2) The more knowledge and experience the group
has with the subject, the more a group participation
technique should be considered in place of the lecture.
(3) If the size of the group is over twenty persons for
any one activity and no smaller groupings can be used,
the lecture should be considered.
(4) The lecture can deal with more facts in a shorter
time than any other technique.

PURPOSES
The lecture may include any or all of the following
purposes:
(1) Presenting information in an organized way;
(2) Identifying or clarifying problems or issues;
(3) Motivating, stimulating, persuading, and
influencing attitudes of the listeners;
(4) Analyzing a controversial issue;
(5) Inspiring the audience;
(6) Encouraging further study or inquiry.

LECTURE ENHANCED BY
OTHER TECHNIQUES

PROCESSING INFORMATION
One problem of today's world is that we have what
University of Missouri Professor Daryl Hobbs called
an "information overload." This means we have more
information than we know how to handle and how to
process. Some of the information overload comes
from lectures.

One way to process some of our real problems arising
out of the "overload" is to engage existing church and
community groups in problem solving. Here is one
way the lecture can be used in combination with and
enhanced by another technique—problem solving.

LECTURE AS A SYMBOLIC HEALER
Most people are involved in some aspect of the
competitive business community.

It is suggested that a speaker may also serve as a
"symbolic healer to reduce the tensions, frustration,
and possible feelings of guilt arising inevitably from
the structure of a highly organized, highly specialized
and competitive business community."

The suggestion that use of the lecture can be enhanced
by using it with other techniques is based squarely on
the notion that quality in adult education is in direct
proportion to the quality and extent of interaction,
ego-involvement, and participation of the persons
involved.

If this author were charged with the practical
responsibility for a one-hour educational meeting on
any theme, subject, or problem which required use of
the lecture, here are three ways he would consider
designing the program.

A lecturer who is knowledgeable on the theme,
subject, or problem to be considered would be invited.
He should be also willing to "roll with the punches" or
"frothwheel."

1. Before the speaker gave his lecture, the
participants would be divided into pairs, threes, or
groups of four to six. They would be asked to generate
questions or identify problems they would like the
lecturer to talk about, thus outlining his speech—an
inductive lecture.

2. Before a lecture, the audience could be divided
into four sections to serve as "listening teams." One
section could listen to the lecture for points requiring
clarification, one for points of disagreement, another
for points of elaboration, and another for problems of
practical application. After the lecture, sections would
"buzz" for a short time to pool their thinking about
points they want raised and to select a spokesperson to
present the issues to the speaker.

3. Following a lecture, the members of the audience
could be asked to form buzz groups to discuss how
they plan to apply the information to their own
situations. Then a spokesperson would be asked to
report from each group.

CONCLUSION
If this article has offered one or more usable ideas
and/or has stimulated the reader's curiosity to conduct
a personal continuing inquiry on the use of the lecture
as a teaching/learning technique with adults, it will
have accomplished the author's avowed purpose.

*Daryl Hobbs, "Trends and Mutual Change in Vocational Education,"
Instructor Training Conference, University of Missouri, Kansas City, April, 1970.
187

American Baptist Churches / USA
F. O. Box 851 Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 19482-0851
Baptist Leader, February, 1975
LARGE GROUP MEETINGS

ENHANCING INTERACTION

WITH

LISTENING TEAMS

CLARIFICATION

REBUTTAL

ELABORATION

PRACTICAL APPLICATION
(2) before a presentation the audience can be asked to serve as “listening teams” according to the section of the room they are sitting in—one section to listen to the presentation for points requiring clarification (the clarification team), another for points with which they disagree (the rebuttal team), another for points they wish to have elaborated on (the elaboration team), and a fourth for problems of practical application they wish the speaker to address (the application team). After the presentation the teams are asked to “buzz” in groups of four or five to pool their thinking about the points they want raised, following which one member of each group gives a summary of its deliberations and the speaker responds to each item in turn, until time runs out or all items are discussed.
have a deep commitment to applying principles of adult learning in everything I do—even in one-hour keynote speeches. Indeed, one of the most frequent (and gratifying) comments I get on evaluation sheets of my sessions is, “Malcolm practices what he preaches!” This makes me both happy and sad—sad that it should be such a noteworthy behavior.

My foundational principle of adult learning in making presentations is that the learners be active participants in a process of inquiry, rather than passively receive transmitted content. A second principle is that the process should start with and build on the backgrounds, needs, interests, problems, and concerns of the participants. My experience is that when people have the opportunity to learn by taking some initiative and perceiving the learning in the context of their own life situations, they will internalize more quickly, retain more permanently, and apply more confidently. And I am convinced that every learning experience should result in both some acquisition of content and some enhancement of their self-directed learning competencies.

Theory of Large Meetings

These principles also provide the foundation of my special theory of large meetings, which are a prominent mode in conferences. The additional basic premise of this special theory is that the educative quality of a large meeting is directly a function of the quantity and quality of interaction in the meeting. This is to say that the more and better the interaction within and among the various elements of a large meeting, the greater the learning is likely to be. A second premise of the theory is that there are three areas in which interaction can be influenced:

1. the platform itself,
2. the audience, and
3. the relationship between the platform and the audience.

Let us examine the possibilities of each in turn.

Interaction on the platform is at its lowest point with a single speaker or film. The amount of interaction can be moved up a notch by adding a chalkboard, flip chart, filmstrip, or some other visual aid for the speaker to use. Interaction can be increased another notch by adding one other person, so that two people are interacting in debate, dialogue, or interview. Maximum interaction can be achieved by introducing two or more people to the platform for a symposium, panel discussion, group interview, dramatic skit, or demonstration.

Interaction between the platform and the audience is at its first level up from passive with an invitation to the audience to ask questions of the speaker following the presentation. A still-higher level of interaction can be achieved by bringing representatives of the audience on to the platform to serve as “reaction” or “watchdog” teams. A reaction team is asked simply to listen to the presentation and then to give its reactions in a series of statements or through a panel discussion. A watchdog team is asked to listen for terminology or concepts it thinks members of the audience may not fully comprehend and to interrupt the presentation at any time to ask for clarification. To the extent that the people selected to serve on the teams are truly representative of the main characteristics of the audience (in terms of age, gender, special interests, occupations, and geography), to that extent will the audience psychologically identify with the interaction on the platform.

Interaction among members of the audience can be promoted in several ways. The audience can be asked to meet in small groups of from two to five or six without moving from their seats and perform several functions: (1) Before a presentation, they can be asked to take a few minutes to pool the questions or issues they would like the speaker to address and have one member summarize the result—thus, in effect, outlining the speech for the presenter; (2) before a presentation the audience can be asked to serve as “listening teams” according to the section of the room they are sitting in—one section to listen to the presentation for points requiring clarification (the clarification team), another for points with which they disagree (the rebuttal team), another for points they wish to have elaborated on (the elaboration team), and a fourth for problems of practical application they wish the speaker to address (the application team). After the presentation the teams are asked to “buzz” in groups of four or five to pool their thinking about the points they want raised, following which one member of each group gives a summary of its deliberations and the speaker responds to each item, in turn, until time runs out or all items are discussed; (3) following a presentation, the audience can be asked to form buzz groups to discuss for a few minutes how they plan to apply one or more of the ideas contained in the presentation, with the results being summarized by one member of each group.

Occasionally I have added a component in the design, which I think of as “back-home application,” but which in the literature is usually referred to as “transfer of training.” I ask the participants to reflect for five minutes on their experience so far and to select one or two ideas they have picked up that they think they would like to try out in their back-home situations. After five minutes I ask them to form groups of four or five and take turns describing to other members of their group (1) the idea they would like to experiment with; (2) the steps they would take in applying it, and (3) any obstacles or resistances they anticipate encountering in putting it into effect. After a reasonable amount of time (depending upon the time available), I call them back to order and invite volunteers to present their plans to the total audience. After each presentation, I invite members of the audience to react to the plan and, particularly, to suggest strategies for dealing with the obstacles and resistances. During the last five minutes or so I add my own ideas about strategies for bringing about change.

---

Applying Principles of Adult Learning in Conference Presentations:

Malcolm S. Knowles