About Me

- I am no expert in adult education.
- I am an earnest educator who too often watched farmers struggle to pay attention and knew there had to be a better way to teach.
- I learned from many people and from reading a bunch of stuff.
- Northeast SARE funded my learning.
- UNHCE supported and encouraged my learning.
- I am thankful to all for I am a better educator!
We Will Be Most Effective Today If You....

- Write your responses
- Share your ideas and experiences
- Are concise in your comments
- Are respectful of each other
- Stay on topic
- Seek to actively learn and engage
- Build on other’s comments positively
Effective Presentations: How to Develop and Deliver a Farmer-Friendly Talk

Seth Wilner
Regional Farm Management Specialist,
Sullivan County, New Hampshire
Let’s Define **Effective** in terms of Educational Programming

Using **new information** to **solve problems**, adopt **new practices**, or change **behaviors**.
Write what you think:

Think about one of the Best presentations for farmers you’ve been to or conducted.

Write what you think made it effective.
Write what you think:

Think about one of the Worst presentations for farmers you’ve been to or conducted.

Write what you think made it ineffective.
Key Point

Your Own Style and Prior Experiences Count!
How Do Adults Learn?

• “Adults learn by experience.”
  (Bell, 2012, pg. 3)

• "Learning is an adaptive change in behavior resulting from experience."
  (Corkin and Wilson of MIT's Brain and Cognitive Science Department)
“Educators cannot give their ideas to adult learners like birthday presents. What they can give is new experiences”
(Zull, 2006, as cited in Bell et al., 2013, pg. 3)

The brain does not take meaning; it must make meaning.”
(Wolfe, 2006, as cited in Bell et al., 2013, pg. 3)
The job of the teacher is to **facilitate** learning **experiences**. Participants need some content knowledge to **engage** in learning experiences.

(Dr. Ann Spencer, 2013)
Chuck Bagley

Chuck Bagley, (M.Ed, Certificate Of Advanced Graduate Studies) specializes in effective adult education methodology. He is a lecturer and the Director of Faculty Development at Granite State College.

What follows is his summary of how the brain moves information into the long-term memory for recall and retrieval.
The Learning Continuum
According to Chuck Bagley
Facilitate Active Learning Experiences
Key Point

As a Farmer Educator, **Facilitate** Experiences to Achieve True Long Term Learning
Write what you think:

Describe times you have facilitated learning instead of telling information.
Dr. John Medina and Brain Rules

- Dr. John Medina is a developmental microbiologist.
- He wrote a book called “Brain Rules” where he shares the results of scientific research on how the brain works.
- His work offers insights on how to effectively teach and learn.
- What follows are some of his rules and their application to teaching.
John Medina Rule #4:

We don't pay attention to boring things
John Medina Rule #5:

Repeat to remember

Learning is cumulative
John Medina Rule #6:

Remember to repeat

"If I had six hours to learn anything, I would spend four of it practicing." - Clark Aldrich
John Medina Rule #10:

Vision trumps all other senses
John Medina Rule #12:

We are powerful and natural explorers
Write what you think:

How would you incorporate any or all of the brain rules we discussed into your work as a farmer educator?
Medina’s Brain Rules

- We don’t pay attention to boring things
- Repeat to remember
- Remember to repeat
- Vision trumps all other senses
- We are powerful and natural explorers
Key Point

To Be An Effective Educator You Need to Consider How the Brain Learns and NOT just Provide Content
Dr. Sandy Bell

- Dr. Sandy Bell is an Associate Professor of the Adult Learning Program in the Neag School of Education’s Department of Educational Leadership.

- She is recognized as a pioneer in the application of adult learning principles to support the education and success of small-scale farmers.
Dr. Bell and Janet McAllister co-wrote a guide for farmer educators called:

“Sustainable Agriculture through Sustainable Learning: Improving educational outcomes with best practices for adult learning”

The guide was funded by Northeast SARE and portions of it are in the following slides
Putting it all together

Dr. Sandy Bell’s Five Best Practices for Farmer Educators
Five Best Practices for Farmer Education

1. Provide a safe environment for learning.

2. Identify learners’ knowledge and personal views about the content.

3. Link the content to learners’ prior experience.

4. Let learners work together to experiment and solve problems with the content.

5. Give learners choice in content, processes, and outcomes.

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Best Practice 1

Create a Safe Learning Environment
Write what you think:

How do you think emotion impacts peoples’ learning?
Six Core Emotions

- Joy
- Surprise
- Sadness
- Disgust
- Fear
- Anger
Core Emotions influence the feeling of “safety” in learning

“Positive”
Trigger these . . .
Joy
Surprise

“Negative”
Avoid triggering these . . .
Fear
Anger
Sadness
Disgust

Really avoid things that trigger this
(It shuts down learning centers in the brain and engages “survival mode”)

Really try to trigger this
(It creates a “dopamine response” that primes the brain for learning)

Notice the greater proportion of “negative” core emotions? That’s called the brain’s “negativity bias.” Any ideas why we are wired that way?

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Threats, fear, or high stress can activate excessive metabolic activity in the amygdala that interferes with information entering the brain’s processing, patterning, and memory circuits.

😊 Set a positive emotional climate.
Key Point

Triggering Emotions Can Make An Educational Event Effective or Ineffective. Plan for it!
Write what you think:

What assumptions did you have about participating in this webinar in the days leading up to it?
Best Practice 2

Identify Learners’ Prior Knowledge and Personal Views
Mental models can be changed only by **new** experiences that are significantly **different** from prior experiences.

The change in mental models can be **Sudden**, but most often it is **Gradual**.
Examples of questions you can ask to help uncover the mental models of farmers with whom you work.

1. What problem have you had with ________________?  How did you go about addressing it?

2. Can you tell me what led you to ________________?  What type of things did you consider when you made that decision?

3. You seem to feel strongly about _________________.  Can you tell me a bit more about why you feel so strongly about it?

4. When you tried _________________, how did it turn out?  Was there anything you wish you had known more about or had some experience with first?

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Best Practice 3

Link New Content to Prior Experience

Components of Prior Experiences

- Perfect match
- Similar but more in new
- Similar but more in new
- Perfect match
- Something missing in new
- Completely new

Components of New Experience
Past Experience → Current brain patterns → Current Mental Models, Knowledge, Skills

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Past Experience

Current brain patterns

Current Mental Models, Knowledge, Skills

New Content

New experiences with the content

NEW brain patterns

NEW Mental Models, Knowledge, & Skills

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Best Practice 4

Let Learners Work Together to Experiment with new Content
Best Practice 5

Give Learners Choice in Content & Process
Strategies for Principle 5

**Before a learning event**
- Can you ask learners for input on the content? Can you find out what learners want to know more about?
- Can you provide choices regarding location, learning format, level of participation, or time commitment?

**During a learning event**
- Can you offer choices regarding order of topics, time devoted to topics, activities, or outcomes?
- Can you provide opportunities for learners to teach, learn from, and give feedback to each other?

**After a learning event**
- Can you provide resources for learners to continue their learning, and to keep in contact with each other?
- Can you enable learners to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences with a broader community?

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“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

- Ben Franklin
If you always do what you’ve always done......
You will always get what you’ve always got.
Effective Presentations Summary

- Assess farmers’ preconceived feelings, assumptions, and values around information you are presenting.
- Address preconceived feelings and views in your teaching.
- Be clear on the usefulness of your information for your audience and communicate it to them.
- Create a safe learning environment. Try to trigger positive emotions and avoid fear.
Effective Presentations Summary

- Facilitate learning activities that help farmers link new information to their prior experiences.
- Limit continuous lecture time to 20 minutes max.
- Do something every 10 minutes to get the attention of your audiences’ brains. Ask a question, have participants share an idea with a neighbor, etc.
Effective Presentations Summary

- Use visuals where you can instead of text.
- Provide opportunities for learners to work together and experiment with the information.
- Let learners have some control over content and delivery.
Resources

The references used in this presentation are listed on the following web site:

http://extension.unh.edu/sare/Effective-Adult-Learning-Methods-Farmers