Giving A Demonstration

A demonstration is a teaching method used with both large and small groups. Demonstrations become more effective when verbalization accompanies them. For example, in a half demonstration-half lecture, an explanation accompanies the actions performed. It is a generally accepted learning theory that the greater the degree of active participation and sensory involvement by the learner, the more effective learning will be.

Advantages (Newby, Stepich, Lehman, & Russell, 1996, p. 48)

Demonstrations...
- Utilize several senses; students can see, hear, and possibly experience an actual event
- Stimulate interest
- Present ideas and concepts more clearly
- Provide direct experiences
- Reinforce learning

Disadvantages (Kozma, Belle, Williams, 1978, p. 343)

Demonstrations...
- May fail
- May limit participation
- May limit audience/client input
- Require pre-preparation

Tips: (Chernoff, 1994, p. 17-20)

1. **Know your audience**
   - How much experience or knowledge do they have?
   - Are you teaching them a new technique or sharing basic information?

2. **Set your objectives**
   - Review your lesson plan for your objectives
   - What do you expect the learner to be able to do following your demonstration?

3. **Plan your preparation time**
   - Plan for the time it takes to shop for groceries and to prepare props
   - Make a list of ingredients, utensils, or props needed
   - Test equipment, recipes, methods etc. ahead of time

4. **Plan your recipes/activities**
   - Choose uncomplicated recipes with few ingredients
   - Consider the amount of pre-preparation required
   - Be aware of the cost of ingredients
   - Do you need a full recipe? How long does it take?
   - Do you need to prepare a recipe in advance?
   - Practice recipe or activity

5. **Involve your audience/client**  
Ask for a volunteer to stir, chop, and assist with other preparation  
Involve the audience in activities or demonstrations where possible

6. **Be prepared for various room arrangements**  
Do you need an electric skillet? Burner? Extension Cord?  
You may need to be flexible, go prepared for a variety of settings  
Exclude distractions (close the door, turn off the radio/TV)

7. **Help your audience/client to see what you are doing**  
Use trays and clear containers  
Arrange the room so everyone can see (If a large group, may need to be in a semicircle.)  
Face your audience as much as possible

8. **Provide handouts to support what you say**  
Typed copies of recipes used  
USDA Better Living Series or Ohio State How-tos  
Review the key points of the demonstration

9. **Be organized**  
Have everything for one recipe on a single tray  
Place ingredients in a logical order and label (name, quantity)  
Work in one direction  
Dovetail various tasks  
Plan for serving procedure & clean up (serving utensils, dish cloths, waste containers, etc.)

10. **Follow food safety precautions**  
Remind participants to wash hands before handling food  
Keep foods out of the Danger Zone

Demonstrations are an effective method for teaching concepts and problem-solving procedures. A good demonstration should lead to increased attentiveness, learning, and performance.

**References:**


**Source:** Training Curriculum, Family Nutrition Program, Purdue University Cooperative Extension, 2001.