

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE COLLEGE

AUSTRALIAN COMMAND & STAFF COLLEGE



RAN STAFF ACQUAINT COURSE

**EFFECTIVE SPEAKING
READER**

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CHAPTER 1 - SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES AT ACSC

1.1 On many occasions during the Course you will be invited to speak before an audience. The opportunities for speaking will be both formal and informal, ranging from addresses given to the assembled Course to heated sub-syndicate discussions, from oral logistics briefings to chairing a committee meeting.

1.2 Each of these opportunities requires slightly different skills. All rely on some fundamental attributes of good communication: knowing what you are trying to achieve, structuring your argument logically, and presenting your message in a way easily comprehensible to your listeners.

1.3 Most students begin the Staff Course apprehensive about the programme of speaking engagements. This is natural, but frankly unnecessary: all students are 'in the same boat', and all opportunities to speak are intended as training vehicles. Difficulties encountered and mistakes made are valuable if you learn from the experience. In nearly every case students gain so much in both technique and confidence during the Course that by its end they cope easily with tasks may have 'stumped' them before they came to the College.

Speaking activities

1.4 Students are required as part of the Course to participate in the following speaking exercises:

- delivery of two short talks
- delivery of one information brief
- chairing and participating in tutorials, syndicate discussions and formal meetings
- presenting in conjunction with other students, the results of syndicate and group exercises
- introducing visiting speakers, chairing subsequent discussions and proposing votes of thanks

In addition to these programmed activities, students are expected to be prepared to express their opinions freely in informal discussions, tutorials and other events.

1.5 Syndicate DS will provide students with written critiques of all assessed oral exercises. In addition, DS will provide informal verbal debriefs, within 24 hours of each assessed oral activity. These debriefs may be undertaken on a one-to-one basis and are designed to give students rapid feedback on their performances.

Short talks and Electives

1.6 Students will give two Short Talks and one elective presentation during the Course. Details of venues, timing, topics and debriefing procedures are contained in the relevant Exercise Instructions.

1.7 **Video recording.** Each short talk will be recorded on video. Students are encouraged to view a play back of their performance. They may also use this facility for rehearsal, by arrangement with the Course Planning Officer.

Tutorials, syndicate discussions and meetings

1.8 Where tutorials, syndicate discussions (SYNDISCs) or group exercises are programmed, students may be nominated to lead the activities.

1.9 Full participation in tutorials, syndicate exercises and discussions is an important part of training in verbal communications at ACSC, reflecting as it does the reality of service as a staff officer. Further guidance on how to get the most from these activities is given in Chapters 5 and 8.

Oral briefings and presentations

1.10 Briefings and presentations given by military officers are similar to short talks in that they are intended to summarise much information in a logical form easily assimilated by the audience. Such a brief will allow a senior officer to grasp the essence of a subject quickly as a basis for any necessary decisions.

1.11 Students will be given several opportunities during the Course to give briefings and presentations, as an individual, and as part of a team. Guidance on how to prepare and deliver a good brief is given in Chapter 3.

Information brief

1.12 During the Course each student will present one Information Brief. The date and order of presentation will be indicated in the daily program thus: #(Student Number). Guidance on how to deliver a good Information Brief is given in CHAPTER 3, paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5.

Hosting visiting lecturers

1.13 A student will sponsor each lecturer visiting the College. Sponsor duties are detailed in the RANSAC Standing Instructions. These duties include, but are not limited to, introducing the speaker to the audience, chairing the discussion after the lecture and finally proposing a vote of thanks. Additional advice on how to perform these functions is given in CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

1.14 As is the case with all Course activities, the rewards gained from these oral exercises are in proportion to the effort applied. The more thorough the preparation and the more enthusiasm with which each activity is undertaken, the greater the improvement each student will see in his/her own oral techniques. Verbal communications skills are acquired easily by some, by others with more difficulty. Experience has shown that any student who applies themselves conscientiously in this program of exercises will graduate as at least a satisfactory 'spokesperson'.

CHAPTER 2 - PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

THE SHORT TALK

2.1 There are as many ways of preparing a speech as there are speakers. Many students come to the College already eloquent in presenting their ideas verbally to others. For those of you who lack at least recent experience of 'taking the floor', this chapter is intended as a guide to producing a satisfactory Short Talk. The chapter is in two parts: preparation, and the mechanics of delivery.

PREPARING A SHORT TALK

The theme

2.2 On most occasions a military officer will be given a topic when called upon to speak. This poses the first problem for the speaker: the subject may be one in which they have little interest, or perhaps knows so well that they are bored with it, or (surely not as a military officer?) one of which they are totally ignorant. Nevertheless they have a speech to give and if it is to have that essential element of vitality, they must find something original and thought-provoking to say.

2.3 So the first rule is: **THINK ABOUT THE TOPIC - FIND A THEME**. For a talk to be a success, the speaker must have an obvious thread running through it. This does not mean merely something that may be said; it means something that **MUST** be said, an important and challenging statement about the topic that stimulates the audience and sets them thinking.

2.4 The importance of this central, perhaps controversial ingredient of the talk cannot be over-emphasised. Many previous students at the College have limited their treatment of a given topic to an impersonal list of facts. However well organised such a list, the result has been dull and flat. Personal views and a touch of individuality make all the difference in a short talk.

2.5 This is the primary distinction between a short talk and a briefing. An oral brief should be impartial and impersonal; logical presentation of information is what is required. The short talk needs the element of persuasiveness and in some circumstances (at the College?) entertainment.

2.6 You may not want to sell an article, or win a vote, or organise a society, but unless you set a target for yourself and establish the way in which you want your audience to react, your speech will lack punch.

2.7 So think about the topic, and establish the main message or theme you want to get across.

Gather and organise your material

2.8 In the course of your ruminations on the topic of your talk, important points supporting the main theme will have occurred to you. Now is the time to assemble these in a logical order. Some speakers jot these ideas down on small cards, one idea to each. They are then able to arrange and re-arrange these cards until they attain the optimum order.

2.9 The second rule for a good short talk is: **SET UP A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF ARGUMENT WHICH SUPPORTS THE MAIN THEME.** This applies equally to Defence written work and especially Defence papers.

2.10 Now you know where you are going, it is time to gather facts and opinions you can use in the talk. Usually you will need to go to books and magazines for hard evidence to back up your case; only if you know your subject really well can you dispense with this step. In any case **do not spend too long on research, and be ruthless in culling your material.** Common failings among previous students have been: taking so long in research that there is inadequate time left for preparing the actual presentation; and feeling compelled to include so much information that the **audience drowns in a sea of half-digested facts.** It is better to present one telling point expressed well, than ten equally valid points that are improperly explained and unrelated to one another.

2.11 One important point: if your topic (or the stance you are taking on it) is a controversial one, you will need to dispose of any counter-arguments. For example if you were putting the case for unilateral disarmament by the West, an important part of your talk would be countering the latent fear of the former Warsaw Pact nations.

2.12 One way to do this is to set up each counter-argument as a hypothesis ('some people say the Russians cannot be trusted...') and then to show why the assertion is unfounded. Ridicule and emotive language are often used for this purpose, but the practice is essentially dishonest, though it may draw temporary agreement from your audience. If your talk is to be more than propaganda, your discussion of counter-arguments to your theme must have a soundly logical base.

Assimilating the material

2.13 The next step is: **TAKE EACH IDEA IN TURN AND DECIDE HOW TO PRESENT IT TO YOUR AUDIENCE.** Under each of your main ideas list the relevant facts you have gathered. Say over to yourself the words you might use, and try to vary the way it comes out. Each time you recite your presentation your mind retains an impression, and when you finally speak you will utter a combination of all the impressions you have acquired. Gradually your talk will take form and you will clothe your thoughts in words.

2.14 By the time you finish assimilating the material, you will have shaped the main body of your presentation. You should be able to face the audience confident that you know what you are talking about. But you are still not quite fully prepared to stand up and deliver the talk. Two important considerations remain: how you are going to begin and end the talk, and what visual aids you can use to drive your message home.

Structure

2.15 You are in a position now to **FINALISE YOUR STRUCTURE TO EMPHASISE YOUR MAIN THEME.** This requires preparing the introduction and conclusion, and reviewing the body to make certain that the points in it direct the audience inevitably to accept your theme. There is much wisdom in the old 'schoolie' adage:

‘Tell them what you are going to tell them,

then tell them,

then tell them what you have told them’

(Some politicians are skilled in avoiding the second step. This approach is not advocated here!).

2.16 The introduction. What you say in your opening sentences should attract attention, arouse interest, and lead without interruption into the main part of your speech. The introduction should be positive and forceful - a weak beginning, especially one with an apology (‘I don’t really know why I have been asked to speak about this topic, because it is not my field of interest...’) gives a poor impression which may ruin the whole presentation. You should set the scene, leaving your audience fully aware as to what you intend to say, and convinced that the subject is of real importance to each of them. An opening joke is not essential, and may waste valuable time in a short talk.

2.17 The body. You should look back now at the framework you established earlier to see if it still meets your needs. Examine each point in the light of your main theme, and once again be ruthless in culling those that do not contribute directly to your aim. Your talk is like a rope: the strands lie around the core, combining together into a coherent whole. Loose or broken fibres serve only to weaken the rope. Similarly in your speech, individual thoughts combine to form the strands of your argument, which in turn support the main theme. And given enough rope

2.18 The conclusion. Like the introduction, the conclusion needs to be definite and clear. Its purpose is to drive home your message and leave the audience with a good impression. If you wish, a climactic statement of the theme can follow a brief review of the points you have made. Do not leave your audience in mid-air; come in for a graceful landing and make an effective stop.

2.19 Timing. In most situations you will be given a time limit for your talk. Stay within it - over-running is the mark of the amateur badly prepared. You may be tempted to write out your whole talk, and either memorise it or read from the script on the day. Memorising a speech of any length is a technique that demands a special talent possessed by few people, and for the less experienced can be a recipe for disaster. Similarly, reading a script with the spontaneity expected in a short talk - as opposed to an oral briefing - is difficult, and is not recommended for students at the ACSC. The best way of ensuring that your speech runs to time is to do plenty of practice, and then use a stopwatch (preferably digital, with large figures) during the talk. If you have planned and rehearsed your talk sufficiently, you will know how you are going for time as the talk progresses, and can vary your pace and content so as to end with a punch, on the dot. A list of headings, or cue cards should be sufficient.

2.20 Visual aids. Visual aids such as Power Point slides, overhead transparencies or 35mm slides can be used to enhance your message. Keep in mind, however, that they should be used to **add to the effect** - they should not distract your audience from the main theme of the speech, as has often been seen in past student presentations. Further guidance on the preparation and use of visual aids is given in CHAPTER 4.

Rehearsal

2.21 The last rule in preparing a good short talk is: **PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE**. Conscientious rehearsal is the overriding requirement for a good speech. Of all the mistakes previous students have made in their short talks, the most common error, and the underlying cause of many others, is insufficient practice. So run through your talk again and again, trying each time to make your points in different words. Practise at least twice against the clock, and try to entice a fellow student to listen to, and criticise, your performance. If you intend using visual aids, recruit someone to assist in operating the equipment, and rehearse with him.

DELIVERING A SHORT TALK

2.22 You should by now be fully prepared and keen to deliver your speech. The following paragraphs list some worthwhile hints to improve your performance, based on previous student presentations.

Preliminaries

2.23 Some time before your talk is due to start, you need to check the venue to see that all is ready. Physical factors such as lighting, air conditioning, seating arrangements and the public address system (if there is one) are important to the receptivity of your audience, and should be checked (at the Staff College these details need to be checked by you in consultation with the staff). Pay particular attention to any visual aids you may be using: make sure all electrical equipment is connected and working; check the order of vu-foils and slides; and satisfy yourself that all your visual aids can be clearly seen from any seat in the audience.

2.24 Check your cue cards, if you are relying on them. Are they all there and in the right order? Are you going to hold them in your hand, or put them down on the lectern or table close at hand? Have you obtained a working stopwatch? Set it ready to start at the push of a button.

2.25 These are all minor details, but any one of them can, if ignored, disrupt the flow of your talk, so it is worth taking a little care beforehand.

Approaching the speaker's position

2.26 An audience very often gets its first impression of a speaker when he or she is on the way to the platform. In the case of a short talk, it is particularly desirable that the speaker gives the audience a favourable first impression. Time on the platform is too short to allow you to overcome a poor first impression even if the talk is brilliant. Walk to the platform in a positive manner. Don't be buttoning buttons, arranging clothing, looking in a folder for notes, or be doing anything which might not leave the best impression on the audience. If you are speaking in uniform, make sure you are dressed correctly, and remove pens etc from breast pockets. Are your shoes clean?

Speaker's position

2.27 A speaker may use any position or stance. However, be very careful that this is not one that will distract the audience from what you have to say. The best position for the speaker is an easy, erect stance. Get both feet on the floor, not too far apart, and avoid rocking and rising on the toes, leaning on anything or weaving and twisting the body. Don't worry about your

hands. If they get in your way put them straight down to the sides until you want them for a gesture. At all costs avoid jingling any change in your pockets.

2.28 Particular reference must be made to the use of a lectern if provided. You will see many visiting lecturers at the Staff College who lean all over the lectern - avoid this trap. If possible step away from the lectern altogether, but if you must have a barrier between yourself and your audience, or if you need the lectern to hide your ill-prepared notes, stand upright behind it. Don't lean on it.

'Get physical'

2.29 Your hands and face are a vitally important part of your speech equipment. You must learn to use them. Gestures of the hands, the head and the whole body serve to illustrate and interpret your talk. The more earnest you become the more you will need to use gestures, but the gestures must be controlled. Too many are as bad as none; and awkward, inappropriate gestures are a real hindrance.

Take command of the audience

2.30 Any effective speaker must look at the audience; this means all of the audience. The eyes should rove so that the complete audience is covered from both corners of the front row to both corners of the back row and slowly enough to give each listener the impression that the speaker is talking to him as an individual. The talk should be friendly and relaxed - almost a conversation - as if the speaker were answering a question. Can you imagine a conversation between two people in which one doesn't look at the other? It would not be a very inspiring conversation. Such an attitude would kill a conversation, and it can kill a speech.

Speak to the back row

2.31 Another common fault in the inexperienced is mumbling. Force yourself to open your mouth as you speak. Hold your head up, and project your voice to the back row. If you practise this it will not be long before you find it coming naturally. Paradoxically, a well-projected voice does not need to be overly loud or forced; it resonates of itself. A good speaking voice has certain characteristics which you should also work on in your practice: it should be pleasant and natural, reflecting the personality of the speaker; it must sound honest and sincere; it must have vitality and strength; and it must be easily heard.

Vary your pitch

2.32 The pitch of our voices in normal conversation flows up and down the scale from high to low and back again, never resting, but always shifting. The effect is pleasing, and it is the way of nature. However, when we stand up and face an audience, our voices often become dull, flat and monotonous. If the speaker is aware of such a thing happening, it is a simple matter to correct it, but often the speaker is not aware that their voice has been keyed to a monotonous pitch. An accomplished speaker also can make any phrase or word stand out by either suddenly lowering or raising voice pitch. The people that do radio or TV commercials are usually masters of the change of voice pitch.

Speak slowly, speak fast

2.33 When giving a talk or speech, the speaker should talk slightly more slowly than in normal conversation. This is a point that must be watched carefully, because too slow a rate can cause a talk to become dull and monotonous. The slightly slower than normal rate, however, gives the speaker a better opportunity to emphasise words and better opportunity to vary his rate of speaking. When we talk in normal conversation, we constantly change our rate of speaking. It is pleasing, natural and emphatic.

The pause

2.34 The pause is an extremely effective method of emphasis and most accomplished speakers make quite common use of it. If the speaker has a point to deeply impress on the minds of those listening, a complete stop is in order. This sudden silence has the same effect as a sudden noise; it attracts notice. It makes everyone in the audience attentive, alert, awake to what is coming next. A second pause immediately following the points then has the further effect of allowing the point to sink in. Take note of the use of the pause when next looking at a TV commercial.

The essential ingredient

2.35 Finally, the most valuable asset of an accomplished speaker is ENTHUSIASM. If the speaker is enthusiastic about the topic, the talk has sparkle, snap, and vivacity, all of which seem to have an electrifying effect on the audience. No group can deny attention to an enthusiastic speaker. But do not confuse enthusiasm with noise. An enthusiastic speaker displays feeling, fervour, and suppressed excitement, all without being noisy, blatant or boisterous. Watch for this quality of enthusiasm in guest speakers who appear at the Staff College. Some will be obviously enthusiastic, some will not. Note the difference in effect.

CONCLUSION

2.36 Much of what has been written in this Chapter is no more than common sense - the danger is that you, as students will not give this advice its due weight as a result. Self-evident it may be, but talks given by past students have shown the need for it.

2.37 In giving a short talk you have taken on an obligation to your audience. The officers gathered to hear you expect you to give your best, something which will justify their being there. They are not passively waiting but are keen to know what you have to offer. If you take care over your preparation, and rehearse conscientiously you will not disappoint them.

CHAPTER 3 - PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

ORAL BRIEFS AND PRESENTATIONS

(This Chapter has been extracted from CSC401, 'Communication Skills and Staff Duties' of the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College. The associated segment of the GCM text is Chapter 10 - 'Setting Your Ideas: The Proposal')

AIM OF A BRIEFING

3.1 The aims of a briefing or presentation are primarily:

- a. to save time by eliminating the need for a senior officer to read through a large volume of paper; and
- b. to enable the senior officer to question the briefing officer, and to discuss a problem or situation with other commanders or with his staff.

TYPES OF BRIEFINGS

3.2 The scope can range from the short briefings by a junior staff officer on some routine matter, to a full scale presentation made to a joint commander on a plan for a major operation. However, all briefings or presentations will have one or more of these objectives:

- a. to impart information,
- b. to obtain a decision, and
- c. to review a plan or situation.

3.3 The aim of every briefing is to facilitate a rapid and coordinated response. In this sense therefore, routine staff co-ordination in which one member of the staff briefs another is not considered a briefing, and is more properly labelled a discussion, conference or exchange of ideas. There are four different types of briefings. These are the information, decision, staff and mission briefing. Although there are elements common to all, each is distinct and is discussed below.

Information briefing

3.4 The purpose is to inform the listener. The briefing neither elicits nor requires a decision. It deals only with facts. Its purpose may be to keep the listener abreast of the current situation or to supply specific information as requested. The briefing should normally contain a short introduction, sufficient to orient the listener. As in any briefing, the presentation of the facts must be orderly, objective, clear and concise.

3.5 The briefer should aim at presenting only the minimum of material with which those being briefed are already familiar. The mental discipline required to present objectively only the essential facts, without drawing conclusions, is difficult to achieve. Finally, it should be noted that the information briefing forms an essential part of each of the other types of briefings.

Decision briefing

3.6 A decision briefing will undoubtedly contain an information briefing as one of its components, but it is more comprehensive in its scope and is presented for a different purpose. It requires an answer to a question or a decision on a possible course of action. Points to note are:

- a. At the outset, the briefing officer must announce clearly that a decision is sought.
- b. The listener may have to be reminded of all the salient facts in order to arrive at a sound decision.
- c. The briefing officer must be fully prepared for interruptions and questions at any point during the briefing. He or she must also be prepared to give deductions and conclusions and to recommend a course of action.
- d. At the end of the briefing, the briefing officer must ensure that he or she understands the decision given. Whenever appropriate, the decision must be recorded and disseminated to all concerned.

Staff briefing

3.7 This is perhaps the most widely used type of briefing. It will normally involve a presentation. A presentation is really an expanded decision briefing, when a staff presents to a commander the key factors in a situation, their deductions from them and the various courses open to him. The commander is then required to approve an outline plan and give various decisions. In this case the provisions of the paragraph above still apply but in addition the presentation team must:

- a. plan the presentation in detail and rehearse it thoroughly;
- b. confine their presentation to essentials - commanders are busy people and must not be bothered with unnecessary detail; and
- c. be completely objective in their presentation of the courses open.

Mission briefing

3.8 The mission briefing is designed especially for operations. Its purpose can be to inform, to give specific instructions or to install an appreciation of the mission. It is closely related to the information briefing; however because it is invariably followed by some specific action, it is covered separately.

3.9 Normally, the first step in accomplishing a mission is to inform the personnel involved. This is done through orders, which may be written or oral. However, when a situation is so unique or the task of such a critical nature, particularly where the emphasis is on individual effort, it will be necessary to brief in small numbers or even on an individual basis. This is called a mission briefing. It is usually conducted by a specific briefing officer, depending on the nature of the task to be performed. In summary, the mission briefing is the final review of a forthcoming action to ensure that those taking part are certain of their objective, the particular problems which may confront them, and how they are to overcome them.

PREPARATION OF A BRIEFING

General

3.10 Very few officers seek the opportunity to give a brief. More likely, someone other than you will probably initiate the requirement. Your commander may request that a briefing be presented. You are selected because the subject is within your daily duties. You may not be given the choice as to time of speaking and too often you may think the preparation time totally inadequate. To deliver a briefing clearly, convincingly and concisely requires preparation. The following steps will assist in getting you on the platform prepared and on time.

Subject and purpose

3.11 Because the choice is not yours, you must ensure that you know exactly the subject of the speech and the reason it is to be given.

- a. **Examine the subject.** Is the given topic too broad? Can it be redefined for easier handling? Are you certain that it is a clear interpretation of what is wanted? Don't prepare a broad area when what is desired is specific information in a narrow one. You may need help from your associates on this. Seldom does the speaker represent himself; he usually talks for his organisation. Establish clearly in your mind the exact subject.
- b. **Determine the purpose.** Weight and balance factors are important in preparing a flight plan. Just as important in preparing a speech are the weight and balance of the materials to be included. Determine the purpose of your speech. Get help from your organisation if necessary, but get that purpose clearly in mind. A commander's critical decision may rest upon your unprejudiced presentation of information. A clearly defined purpose will enable you to select the material; weigh and balance it against this purpose; and prepare a speech that presents clearly, concisely, and objectively the factual and pertinent information.

Body of the briefing speech

3.12 With the subject and the purpose of the speech established, assemble and organise the information that will make up the body of the speech. Only the beginner will begin with the beginning. The body of the speech will contain the 'skeleton' or outline of main headings supporting the subject, and the 'flesh' or proof of the main headings. After this body is prepared, you can prepare the conclusion and the introduction. These are the recommended steps in preparing the body of the speech:

- a. **Refer to the subject and to the statement of purpose.** Write down all the main headings (sub-topics) which might advance the purpose of the speech. Put them down in the random order in which they occur to you. They will undoubtedly range from the significant to the relatively insignificant. What is important is that they reflect all approaches to the topic and to the purpose of your speech. This is a step in which your objectivity must be carefully weighed, your prejudices discarded.

- b. **Review these main headings.** Review the headings carefully and often. Then refine, combine and discard. Some, you will discover will have better 'weight and balance' if rephrased; some will not stand alone; some will serve as minor, or supporting, points; others will be discarded. Aim at the final selection of 3, 4 or, at the most, 5 important main headings advancing the purpose of your speech. You may have thought of a hundred reasons why the commander should take a particular course of action, or why a staff should accept your conclusions. In an 8 or 10 (or 50) minute briefing speech you will be more convincing if you advance the 3, 4 or 5 major reasons. You cannot inform, convince or persuade by a flood of assertions; you can by reason and proof.
- c. **Arrange the selected main headings in a logical order.** This logical arrangement will serve a dual purpose: it will enable you to be as free from notes as possible when delivering your speech and in moving from one major point to the next; and your audience will be able to move along with you. A briefing on anti-personnel weapons will be easier to follow, by speaker and audience, if grouped by type rather than discussed indiscriminately. Of the many arrangements possible for your speeches, you will want to consider these:
- (1) **Chronology.** An arrangement in time order is well suited to many situations, easy to remember and simple for speaker and audience to follow.
 - (2) **Order of importance.** Arrange the main headings in the order of their importance in supporting the purpose of the speech. The order can be ascending or descending. You will do well to keep audience as well as subject in mind in determining relative importance. The same subject briefed before a staff conference might have a purpose different from its purpose before VIPs or an inter-departmental audience.
 - (3) **Geographical.** Geographical arrangement is well suited to topics dealing with area references. In conjunction with visual aids, as developed in a later section of this manual, the geographical arrangement will be of frequent use to the briefing speaker.
 - (4) **Cause and effect or problem-solution.** Military briefing speeches often lend themselves to this method of arrangement. Development needs little explanation. Effects and solutions are seldom single, and the speaker must consider carefully his responsibilities for accuracy, completeness and objectivity.
- d. **Rephrase the main headings.** Make them concise, colourful, equal in importance in supporting subject and purpose and parallel in grammatical structure. These main headings are the skeleton upon which your speech will be built, and the skeleton should show through to the audience. Properly supported by the flesh of logical proof, factual information, and oral or graphic illustration, these main headings will convince the audience. They must be so phrased that the audience will identify them, remember them and carry them from the conference room. Make them concise so they will be remembered and parallel in grammatical structure so that the audience will recognise them as your main points while you are speaking. Work these main headings in vivid, active voice, present-tense

language if possible. It has been suggested earlier that you will not be expected to be oratorical or eloquent, but do not handicap yourself by language that is dull, trite or lifeless.

- e. **Develop the main headings.** Put flesh on the skeleton! If you were a political orator, addressing a rally of your party on the eve of election, any assertion damaging the opposition or advancing your own cause would probably be greeted with enthusiastic approval. The military audience isn't like that. You have to support the points you offer. Concrete examples, clarifying details, and oral or visual illustrations will provide this support. In this stage of preparation it may be good to 'talk through' your supporting proof. Talking will 'firm up' your proof, sharpen your phraseology and clarify your thinking. It will enable you to give the maximum substance in the minimum time, an essential in the briefing speech. By doing this, you can polish, refine and rephrase to achieve this economy. In addition, the words you choose will become yours and, if sufficiently reviewed, will, without memorisation, be recalled when you are delivering the speech. There are able speakers, no doubt, who insist that they can speak only from complete memorisation. But memory is a tricky slave, apt to desert when most needed, and momentary loss of word, a phrase or a transition sentence in a memorised speech can be disastrous. A carefully prepared, logically arranged outline, combined with supporting proof well reviewed, will enable you to speak briefly, clearly and with an impression of spontaneity and sincerity.

Introduction of the briefing speech

3.13 You must introduce your topic, your purpose and yourself to the audience in clear, brief and compelling sentences. The good introduction convinces the audience that the subject is of interest and that the purpose, and the speaker, are worth listening to. They must be convinced, in your opening statements, that you are qualified to talk upon the subject and that you will be sincere, objective, brief and complete.

3.14 It is not enough that you show your interest in the subject; identify it in terms of audience interest:

'The recent change in policy on overseas tours will affect every officer in the Command.'

will provoke more audience interest than an opening sentence such as:

'I am concerned over the recent change in policy on overseas tours.'

Certainly either opening would be preferred to:

'The purpose of my talk this morning is to discuss.....'

Begin with a strong, short, attention-getting declaration sentence or an equally short, interest-provoking question, and you'll be off to a good start.

3.15 The introduction must be brief. 45 to 75 seconds should be sufficient to introduce the 8 or 10 minutes briefing speech. Start dynamically, make clear your purpose, tie it to your audience interests, and then get into the body of the speech. This will do more than anything else to convince your audience that you are qualified to speak upon the subject and that you will not waste their time.

Conclusion of the briefing speech

3.16 The general purpose of the conclusion is to convey to the audience, in small, easily transported packages, the principal points of the body of the speech. A summary of the information, a brief statement of the problem and its recommended solution, or a quick review of the problem and the action required, will conclude your speech.

3.17 The conclusion must be brief. The usual 8 or 10 minute briefing speech should be adequately summarised and concluded in less than a minute and a half. If you will recall the effective speeches you have heard, the majority of them probably ended with a short, dynamically phrased, summing-up of the conclusions reached, the action required, or the information given. Use the conclusion to fix in the minds of your audience the things you want them to remember; phrase them in a way that the audience can carry ideas from the conference room, and your speech will be remembered.

Notes for the briefing speech

3.18 You may wish to write out your talk in full. This will enable you to rehearse it and check whether there are any flaws in the sequence or argument. It will also enable you to be certain that your timings are correct, and that the briefing or lecture fits exactly into the time allotted. Do not forget to allow sufficient time for questions or discussions.

3.19 The type of notes used on the day will vary according to individual taste, the length of the talk and the complexity of the subject. You can either write your talk out in full, or you can compose the talk in your mind and make notes to which you can refer when giving your talk. Unless the briefing contains many points of detail which need to be quoted accurately, the former method is not recommended as you will probably write the talk in a literary and too flowery style, and you will be tempted to read the script rather than give the talk 'from the heart'. Therefore, the second method is recommended at the Staff College whereby you browse over your material and compose the talk in your mind. As you do so make notes that you will use during the talk. The notes should then represent a skeleton form of the talk or should consist of key phrases or words to remind you of the main points.

3.20 Having prepared your notes you should now make yourself thoroughly familiar with them and the material on which they are based. Browse over the notes several times, each time composing the talk anew in your mind. During this process do not try to memorise the talk, for through its repetitiveness, you will inevitably retain much of your talk in your mind without special effort on your part. It will also help you to become familiar with your notes.

3.21 It is a good idea to rehearse to a critical but helpful listener who will be able to point out any flaws in the content or style of your presentation. Alternatively, you can rehearse to a tape recorder, criticising yourself and, if necessary, amending your notes when you play the tape back. If you use the tape recorder method, it is recommended that you allow an hour or two to elapse between recording and playback. In this way you listen to yourself with as fresh a mind as possible.

Preparation of material for others

3.22 You may be required to prepare briefing notes, a speech or lecture for a senior officer. In such circumstances it is essential to consider the personality, outlook and requirements of the senior officer.

3.23 A possible sequence of events for such a situation involves four steps:

- a. Consult the senior officer or staff to determine the exact terms of reference for the talk.
- b. Consult the senior officer personally to obtain his/her first thoughts on the speech, and agreement of the form of notes required.
- c. Draft the notes.
- d. The senior officer takes the notes and amends them as required. A good senior officer will never give his/her talk direct from the staff officer's notes.

3.24 For an important briefing the senior officer may require a rehearsal. They may also require some visual aids. It is your responsibility to find out the requirement for visual aids in sufficient time for them to be produced and to arrange for rehearsal facilities.

DELIVERING A BRIEFING

General

3.25 It is true that the military brief is a highly specialised type of speaking. It is characterised by conciseness, objectivity and accuracy. Does this mean that there is an entirely different set of fundamentals to be used when delivering a briefing? Not at all. With minor exceptions, the rules of effective speaking apply to the delivery of a briefing as to any other form of speaking.

3.26 The establishment of a rapport between speaker and audience is essential in any form of public speaking. This can be established by bearing in mind the factors detailed below.

Factors

3.27 **Confidence.** The first requirement is a feeling of confidence in the speaker. You must know that you are capable of giving the audience some knowledge that it needs, and you must know that you can do this in a way that will please them. Confidence comes from a thorough grasp of the subject matter, careful preparation of the talk, and a clear plan of the way in which it is to be delivered.

3.28 **Knowledge of the audience.** Audiences are quick to recognise and respond to confidence in a speaker. They are also quickly affected by obvious signs that you have taken trouble to consider them as a group, to think in advance of their average level of knowledge and of the parts of the subject they are likely to want to hear about. Such consideration, although it may need only a few minutes of thought in the planning stage, will always pay large dividends.

3.29 Eye contact. There is nothing more embarrassing than trying to carry on a conversation with someone who will not meet one's eyes. Successful oral communication demands not only the use of the vocal chords, but also the spontaneous use of the whole face and, in particular, the eyes. Natural embarrassment may cause you to avoid eyeball contact with your audience; but you must realise that the effect of studying a mark on the wall, a knot in the floorboards or one of your visual aids is to cut sympathetic communication by at least half. It is a good idea to spend a couple of seconds looking for an obviously interested and friendly face and to use this as a preliminary focal point. The establishment of communication with this one face tends to reinforce your confidence. At the same time it creates other friendly faces around the first one. By spending a few seconds on each one you will soon be encouraged to spread your visual field until it takes in the whole audience. Usually the whole audience is then ready to respond.

3.30 Use of the voice. An audience will inevitably look at you and be affected by your personality, but the success of a presentation or lecture depends on the way in which you use your voice. You must ensure that you can be heard and understood. The briefing speech in the conference room is conversation. Expanded, to be sure, as your voice must reach everyone in the room. Expanded, also, in matters of emphasis and in frequent shifts of direction so that everyone is included. But you are talking, not orating or 'preaching'. The staff conference is the official family, meeting to review family problems. You are a member of that family, the most informed person on the particular problem, and you have been invited to be heard. Remember, though, that you are speaking not for yourself alone. You are representing your organisation. There is normally only one person in the conference room who may say 'I have decided', or 'I have concluded', with any degree of confidence. That person is the senior officer present. Use the first person, singular pronoun, with caution. Your speech will carry more weight if you make it obvious that the conclusions or recommendations are group rather than individual findings.

3.31 The rate of speech. Adapt the rate of your speech to the content. If what you are explaining is complex, slow down. Normal speech ranges from 110 to 150 words per minute. Observe yourself, or friends, in informal conversation and you will recognise the importance of variety in rate as it contributes to emphasis. Make use of this variety. The 'change of pace' is as important to a speaker as it is to a major league baseball pitcher. Use variety for force and emphasis and your speech will gain in interest and effectiveness. You may discover that you have been given 10 minutes to cover 15 minutes of material. Increasing your rate of speech will not solve the problem. You can't get three kilograms of tomatoes into a two kilogram bag by putting them in rapidly. Solve the problem of how much you can say before you get to the platform by refining, combining and discarding.

3.32 Notes. Certainly no audience can expect a carefully planned outline to be followed entirely from memory. Carry your outline on notes, preferably 7 cm x 12 cm cards, in your hand. If you have occasion to refer to the outline, take a good look! Don't be subtle about it. If your speech is going well, every eye in the room is watching you. Stealing a quick glance at the notes, held close to the lower corners of your coat, will fool no one. Hold them out where you can easily, and obviously, look. When you've read them, drop your hand down to your side. Type only the minimum outline on these cards. A solid card of illegible hieroglyphics will be of no use to you on the platform. (If you are nervous at first, put fuller details on the reverse side as a 'safety net'. You will soon find that you don't really need these details).

3.33 **Personal appearance.** The best posture is an upright, alert stance. A rigid, unnatural posture should be avoided. The hands should be held in what ever position feels comfortable to the speaker but they should never be placed in the pockets. You must stand where everyone in the audience can see you. Don't feel rooted to the spot, but move only as the development of your talk allows. Avoid pacing up and down like a caged animal or aimlessly shuffling around.

3.34 **Gesture.** Audiences enjoy spontaneous and unaffected gestures, but they loathe mechanical and artificial arm jerking. It is a good idea to use gesture sparingly and only when the mood of the speech prompts or demands it.

3.35 **Mannerisms.** Most people have mannerisms of speech and behaviour of which they are unaware. While some mannerisms may be complementary to your character, they are usually both irritating and distracting. Some examples are 'chalk tossing', jingling coins in pockets, favourite turns of phrase in constant use (such as: 'OK', 'right', 'you know'), and putting on and taking off spectacles. There are many more. In time all will distract an audience and reduce communication with them. It is not easy to get out of habits acquired over many years. Nevertheless you must be aware of them and do your best to be rid of them.

3.36 **Humour.** Often it is essential to relieve the burden of a presentation, and a joke, which is well told and appropriate, is usually the answer. Humour in the right measure and the right place is valuable. Do not use the occasion merely to exercise your own comic wit and sense of theatre. An audience will resent it, and rightly so.

CONCLUSION

3.37 Although there can be no set format to a briefing, careful preparation is essential to ensure that the required amount of information is imparted clearly, concisely, and with conviction. Briefing techniques demand high speaking standards and depend on:

- a. an objective approach to the requirement for a briefing or presentation,
- b. concentrated projection of the speaker's personality, and
- c. practice.

CHAPTER 4 - VISUAL AIDS

INTRODUCTION

4.1 Visual aids serve a variety of purposes during a talk or brief. They can illustrate and clarify complex concepts, focus the attention of the audience on specific points, and complement and amplify oral explanation.

OVERRIDING FACTOR

4.2 In all of the discussion of visual aids in this Chapter, one principle is paramount: the aids you use must support your presentation, and illustrate your points. They must not be allowed to divert attention from your main theme. Unfortunately this is often the case with inexperienced speakers: badly produced aids with ambiguous messages are worse than no aids at all. Too many aids - 'death by vu-graph' - and disconcerting mixtures of aids of different types are other problems frequently encountered by students on the Course.

4.3 When planning your visual aids, keep the main theme of your talk or brief always in mind, and plan accordingly. Concentration on the aim underlies all Staff College exercises and staff work in general - every facet of activity should contribute to achieving your objectives. Using visual aids in public speaking is no exception to this rule. By taking care to prepare and present aids which enhance the message you are trying to put across rather than distract attention from it, you will avoid a trap into which many previous students have fallen. Always remember that to be effective, a visual aid must be clearly visible to all of the audience - if it cannot be seen, it is neither visual nor is it an aid.

PREPARING VISUAL AIDS

Aids available at ACSC

4.4 The following aids are provided at the College:

- a. **Whiteboards.** Electronic whiteboards are available in all venues where a presentation is likely to be given. Use only designated whiteboard markers - not permanent pens! Seek advice if in doubt!
- b. **Wall charts.** A number of wall charts are available.
- c. **Projectors.** Projectors for overhead transparencies are available.
- d. **Video.** Facilities for both recording and playback VHS videotapes can be arranged.
- e. **Vu-foils.** Vu-foils (overhead transparencies) are a popular form of visual aid. Students may wish to design their own on any computer terminal using 'Power Point'. The print room supervisor can arrange for the production of vu-foils:
 - (1) **Procedure.** Any work students wish to be done by the print room supervisor should be handed in at least 24 hours before it is required under cover of the appropriate form. Students requiring any graphic work should allow greater time, and should discuss the requirement with the print room

supervisor. Students need to be acutely aware of the Course time constraints when requesting printing work.

- (2) **Production from masters.** The print room supervisor is able to produce vu-foils from masters prepared by students. Best results are obtained from line drawings in carbon-based pen, pencil or type. Vu-graph pens and stencils are also available.
 - (3) **Acetate sheets.** Blank transparencies and Vu-graph pens are provided for students who wish to create their own vu-foils directly. Colour can be added to existing vu-graphs using these pens, or an adhesive clear colour filter that can be cut to shape and affixed to the vu-graph.
- f. **Computer slide show.** The College computer system has the Microsoft application 'PowerPoint 97' and clipart packages for producing computer slides for presentations. Computer slideshows can be projected onto the main screen in the lecture theatres and in the syndicate rooms.
 - g. **35mm slides.** A range of 35mm slides is available from the Library.

Planning your visual aids

4.5 After you have developed the body, introduction and conclusion of a presentation, talk it through and look for passages which need supporting illustration. Charts, tables and graphs can better convey statistics, percentages and proportions than the most carefully selected words. If there are area references, a map or series of maps can carry your audience with you when speech alone may leave them behind. If the content is dull or routine, or if it appeals only to a segment of your audience, illustrate it. Cartoons and pictures can focus audience attention and stimulate interest.

4.6 Determine the requirement for visual aids and make notes on what you need. Prepare any simple masters, but do not waste time preparing detailed drawings. Go to the IPC and discuss it with them. They will tell you if what you want is beyond them and may be able to suggest an alternative way of illustrating the point.

Some hints for good and power point illustrations

4.7 **Tell it in pictures.** In the first place, remember that pictures are better than words, and a simple, imaginative drawing will have far more effect than a list of headings on a vu-graph. Use drawings rather than words whenever possible. Similarly, you should try to use colour to enliven your aids. Look at any 'TIME' magazine for examples of innovative ways of representing statistics pictorially.

4.8 **Be consistent.** All visual aids used in one briefing should be the same size and shape. Lettering style of the same family will look better, and where colours are used to depict quantities in a series of vu-graphs, make sure the same colours mean the same things throughout the series. These small points will enhance the professional impression your presentation gives.

4.9 **KISS (keep it short and simple).** Do not clutter your vu-graphs with unnecessary detail. The more complicated the graph or chart, the more time you will lose as your audience

tries to take it in - or the more distracted they will become. The same goes for lists and headings. If you are talking about three ships of the RAN, do not list the whole fleet.

4.10 Make it readable. A common failing with vu-foils outside the Staff College is to use a typed or printed page from a book as a master. This can be disastrous, as you will see from the few visiting lecturers who use them. In general you should never have more than five lines of text on a single vu-graph, and these should be in bold print and well-spaced. As a simple rule lettering should be a minimum of 5 mm high. If you are using Stabilo pens to write text on a vu-foil, do not use yellow or orange - they are too hard to read.

4.11 Keep it clean. Never put your fingers on a vu-foil, as magnified fingermarks are as unsightly as they are common. Always use a cardboard frame around your transparencies, and when working with acetate use a piece of paper as a hand rest.

4.12 Don't use too many. Using too many vu-graphs is a common failing in military presentations. For many subjects (particularly when giving short talks as opposed to briefings) you will not need any, and will do better with none. Do not feel that you must fill your presentation with a series of transparencies. Use one only if:

- a. you need to clarify an idea,
- b. the vu-graph will not distract the audience, and
- c. you also discuss the point the vu-graph is making.

PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES

Whiteboard

4.13 Whiteboards/blackboards are especially suited to interactive teaching. They are less relevant to short talks and military briefings, in which their only real use is to display previously prepared tables and diagrams. Even for these it is usually more convenient to use a vu-graph.

4.14 If you decide for a particular occasion to use a whiteboard as you speak, follow these rules:

- a. Use blue, black, brown or red whiteboard markers. Other colours, especially yellow are very hard for the audience to see.
- b. Check the lighting - whiteboard surfaces are very bad for glare from overhead lights. Make sure that reflections do not obscure your writing from any part of the audience.
- c. Use large bold lettering - capitals are best - and take care to be neat.
- d. Preferably write only key words on the whiteboard, rather than long, complex sentences.
- e. Do not speak as you write because you will inevitably talk to the board. Speak, then turn round and write, then turn again to speak.

Maps and charts

4.15 Maps, diagrams, charts and graphs can be very effective if they are relevant, simple and large enough to be seen. They have more impact if they are kept hidden until the right moment. They should be covered again when they have served their purpose. Be sure to use a pointer, and to face your audience as you speak.

4.16 A word of warning is needed about using wall maps and charts. These are always finely drawn and detailed, and unless highly coloured will be difficult to see from the back of an auditorium of any size. Use them only if you address their contours in the broadest terms. Otherwise a custom drawn vu-graph is far preferable.

Movies/video

4.17 Movies and videotapes can add a touch of realism to briefings provided their use is well planned and executed. Bear in mind also, however, that they are time consuming, and gremlins (not uncommon!) can completely ruin your presentation. Two important points with movies and videos: show only the footage that is directly relevant to your topic; and make sure the film is smoothly integrated into the rest of your speech. To achieve the latter, a well-briefed operator is essential.

35mm slides

4.18 Slides are valuable when you want to show colour photographs, for example of ships or aircraft, to illustrate your speech. The most important factor in their use is co-ordination with the speech, so that the whole flows easily. Each slide should be shown only while that element is being discussed. Use a remote control on the projector if one is available, and intersperse your slides with blanks as necessary. Back projection is preferable as it is much less distracting to an audience. Use a pointer if you wish to identify any special point of interest about the slide, and make sure you speak to the audience, not to the screen.

Overhead transparencies

4.19 The overhead projector is a flexible and powerful instrument which can enhance most presentations, provided a few rules are kept in mind:

- a. Because it was built for classroom teaching, the machine is designed to be used by a speaker facing the audience. If you are operating it yourself, stand beside it to speak. Instead of using your pointer on the screen, use it on the slide - the image of the pointer will be thrown up onto the screen.
- b. Be careful to organise the screen so that you or the projector head do not obscure it.
- c. In formal briefings and presentations, use a vu-graph operator who is either well briefed or in possession of a clearly marked 'Slide On - Slide Off' script.
- d. When using vu-graphs comprising lists of headings, it can be useful to cover the slide with a piece of paper before switching on. Each heading can then be revealed in turn as it is discussed.

- e. Switch off the machine when changing slides.
- f. Use overlays to highlight important points on a slide - tape the overlay to the cardboard surround so that it lies in the right place. Up to five or six overlays can be used, but more than two can make a slide very cumbersome to use.
- g. Be sure to show each vu-foil long enough to allow the audience to read and understand it.
- h. Never simply read the words on the vu-graph to the audience. Talk around, or about, what it shows.

CONCLUSION

4.20 The use of visual aids can markedly improve the effectiveness of a briefing or presentation, provided that they are carefully planned and well-executed, and that each aid contributes directly to the expression of the main theme.

4.21 Once you have assembled a set of good visual aids, you must rehearse thoroughly with them. Doing so will ensure that your presentation is professional and well received.

CHAPTER 5 - CONFERENCES AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

INTRODUCTION

5.1 More and more, meetings are being used to provide instruction and information, to influence attitudes, to investigate problems, and to make decisions on plans and policies. Although the conduct of some meetings may justify disparaging comment, face-to-face meetings have considerable potential as a relatively quick way to achieve the mutual understanding, the pooling of problem-solving resources, and the co-ordination of action that is indispensable to the operation of an organisation. The ability to function effectively in all types of meetings and in the role of either a leader or participant is a talent that is essential in any officer.

5.2 Increasingly, policy and decisions grow out of meetings. More and more, it is necessary for staff officers to make their influence felt while at the conference table, since this is where the decision is made. The wise solution occurring after the meeting is over will seldom be of any use. Meetings cannot be readily reconvened to consider later solutions to the problem. This situation warrants careful preparation by the participants. It stresses the need for training in the art of negotiation, in the use of clear oral English extemporaneously, and in the control of delegates and advisers.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

5.3 Most meetings will be one of the four types in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.7.

5.4 **Informative.** Meetings of this type are held to provide and receive information. Discussion is aimed primarily at clarifying issues and may involve giving opinions and advice. Such meetings fulfil a communications function within and between organisations.

5.5 **Investigative.** Meetings of this type are held to investigate some problem and recommend a solution. Discussion is generally concerned with ascertaining that a problem exists, ensuring that it is adequately defined, developing and analysing the relevant facts, selecting and testing possible solutions, and making recommendations. In some instances investigative meetings may not be required to recommend a solution; for instance, an investigative meeting may be required only to establish the issues. Occasionally investigative meetings may use 'brainstorming' techniques to foster fresh ideas. However, as a general rule they adhere to a uniform problem-solving pattern of objective and systematic analysis. When the problem is complex it is frequently divided into sub-issues for investigation by a number of members of the group.

5.6 **Decision making.** In decision-making meetings typical questions are: What should be done? Should this action be taken? or, How should situations of this kind be handled? The decisions required may be general as in policy decisions or specific as in approving an expenditure. Participants may represent a single organisation as in a staff meeting or they may represent various organisations, and they may be cooperative or they may be hostile. The overriding purpose of such a conference is to decide on a joint course of action. Although matters for decision may be simple, allowing agreement to be reached without difficulty, decision-making meetings frequently deal with complex matters on which there is sharp disagreement as to issues, underlying principles, and the suitability and feasibility of courses of action. Integrity, good judgement and considerable skill are required, particularly on the part of the conference leader, to achieve the purpose of decision-making conferences.

5.7 **Training.** The training meeting or tutorial is a special type in which the objective is to instruct or indoctrinate through discussion. In such conferences it is expected that the leader will have knowledge to impart to the group and that the participants taken collectively will have sufficient experience with the subject to make useful contributions. Discussion is used to bring out the required information, clear up misconceptions, and weld new information on the subject. Depending upon the experience of the participants, and consequently the contributions that can reasonably be expected from them, the form of a training meeting can range from one closely resembling a lecture wherein the leader provides the bulk of the information to a 'workshop' wherein the participants train one another under the general guidance of a leader.

5.8 A meeting covering a number of items may be a combination of any of these types.

THE CHAIRPERSON

Responsibilities

5.9 The leader of the meeting is usually called the Chairperson. The role of the Chairperson involves a great deal more than merely sitting at the head of the table and having the participants speak. If the topic is interesting and stimulating, if the sequence is well organised, if the questions are clear and thought-provoking, if the members offer meaningful contributions, the leader should probably receive more credit than he often does. Good discussion is rarely accidental. Although each participant has many responsibilities, the leader usually has more to do than anyone else. These major responsibilities are:

- a. **Preparation.** The Chairperson must plan and organise the meeting, arranging for such items as agenda, the physical setting and the preliminary research. At meetings that do not have a formalised attendance list (such as those called to tackle a specific problem), the Chairperson is to compile the attendance list. Numbers should be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the aim.
- b. **Presentation.** The Chairperson must be prepared to make a clear statement of the problems or objectives of the group and to provide the necessary basic facts and information.
- c. **Discussion.** A good Chairperson must be able to keep discussion within reasonable limits. Skill on his or her part may be required to restrict the comments to the aim of the meeting. While the leader does not dominate the discussion, he or she must be able to revive waning interest; when convinced that all aspects of a particular point have been exhausted he or she must be ready to introduce a new item.
- d. **Productive Atmosphere.** The Chairperson must hold the discussion to the main aims of the meeting. He or she must be tactful in both heading off 'red herrings' and encouraging the more reticent to offer their opinions.
- e. **Recapitulation.** The Chairperson must be prepared to summarise the discussion and decisions not only at the end of the meeting but also at any point during the conference when such action might clarify the proceedings.

Suggestions to the Chairperson

5.10 Opening the meeting. The leader should give careful thought to the opening remarks in any group meeting, for they set the tone for the entire session. They should be brief, appropriate, and thought-provoking. They might include the timeliness, importance, and purpose of the meeting and the subjects to be covered, while trying to motivate and develop interest in the listeners and to establish a co-operative mood. The discussion should be started by posing a question to the group as a whole so as to get a spontaneous response, or to an individual.

5.11 Questions. Questions are the chief tool of the leader, along with internal transition and summaries. All questions should be purposeful, toward developing subject-matter content and working toward group goals. Questions that are vague, abstract, or too general lead to a lack of response. Broad or general questions should be avoided, or they should be followed by more precise ones that break down the general to the narrower or more specific. If this is done, members will usually respond more spontaneously, which is generally better than a response obtained by a direct question to a specific person. The direct question is valuable when the member seems eager to respond or has knowledge that the group should have at the time. Or if a member has been silent for some time, the leader should direct a question to him or her if it appears quite certain that the member would not otherwise respond. Questions raised by group members toward the leader should preferably be thrown back to the group to answer. Although the leader may occasionally answer a question, he or she should not do this continuously.

5.12 Promotion of discussion. Stimulating, guiding and controlling discussion are the chief responsibilities of discussion leaders. They stimulate interaction by their own manner and enthusiasm, and by their use of questions, examples, and other devices. They encourage all to participate. They limit the few who want to speak too much by adroit use of humour, summaries, and transition remarks. They carefully guide the trend of the discussion through an appropriate logical sequence. They do not allow too much time to be spent on any one phase of the subject at the expense of other phases. They keep the group informed and focused on a clear understanding of both the broad goals and specific points simultaneously. They intercede when an argument between two members becomes tense, and try to resolve this by according them both some credit, by tactfully turning to another member, or to another phase of the subject. They summarise frequently.

Coping with difficult personalities

5.13 It is helpful to remember that most 'difficult' people are probably not interrupting or wandering off the point deliberately. You may know people who are perfectly normal, nice human beings outside of meetings, but inside the meeting room they appear to change personalities. Their fear of groups results in long silences or excessive talking. These annoying behaviours should be seen as ineffective coping mechanisms for people with fears and anxieties about groups. Besides anxiety, a second reason for inappropriate behaviour is a lack of communication skills necessary for solving problems with a group of people. Of course, some folks may like to bully and upset the group's train-of-thought for the sheer purpose of gaining personal power, but, in the words of Anne Frank, it is best to consider that 'People are good at heart' (but bad at group skills). Nevertheless, a non productive climate occurs when people habitually behave in irritating, stereotypical ways. Some of the common types are listed in annex A.

5.14 What can you do to deal effectively with these types? Decide **WHEN** and **WHERE** to speak to offending individuals. Some problems are solved better before a meeting, during a break, or immediately after a break; others need to be dealt with in the meeting itself.

5.15 In dealing with difficult personalities, be assertive, not aggressive. That is, you should point out clearly that the behaviour is unacceptable, without attacking the individual or descending to personal abuse. For example with a loquacious type you might say: 'Do you know you have continued speaking after I twice asked you to wind up your remarks quickly', rather than: 'Stop monopolising the meeting'. Try to be positive and to gain co-operation in the first instance; if co-operation is not forthcoming, use assertive confrontation.

CONSTRUCTIVE PARTICIPATION

Responsibilities

5.16 Complementary to the responsibilities of the Chairperson are the responsibilities of the meeting or discussion member. Predominant among these responsibilities are attitude, preparation, participation, adaptation and conciliation, listening and leadership.

5.17 **Attitude.** Any group communication situation requires an attitude of respect for the information, opinions, and feelings of others. Open-mindedness and a sense of humour help maintain this attitude. One should not be too dogmatic in stating and advocating one's position, which might be in direct opposition to that of another member. If new information is presented showing the original position to be wrong, be ready to change it. If you continue to believe it, however, you should do all you can to defend and advance your position. The effective member of a discussion group maintains a happy balance of open-mindedness, patience, tolerance, and respect for others while striving to reach group goals. And these must be put ahead of personal goals.

5.18 **Preparation.** Few things can destroy a discussion faster than a poorly prepared participant. You waste your time and that of the group. The constructive participant assesses the occasion and the group, researches the problems, makes notes, and is prepared to present ideas. The normal problem solving process and indexed note cards are valuable aids; however, prepared 'statements', although necessary in some settings, can be distractingly synthetic and give a tone of inflexibility.

5.19 **Participation.** Silence is not always golden. The 'quiet learner' is not meeting a basic responsibility to contribute. Attendees are expected to have and, using the well-known principles of good speaking, express their own opinions and ideas. The 'conflicting' idea is especially valuable. On the other hand, the tendency to stray from the order of discussion must be avoided. Even so, meaningful participation can seldom be forced; it almost always flows from a constructive attitude supported by sound preparation.

5.20 **Adaptation and conciliation.** Most contributions in a small group are made in relation to something said by another member. There must be a constant striving to adapt and to integrate one's own thoughts and opinions to those of others. The principle of common ground should get much attention: the attempt to arrive at common thinking, common feeling, and common agreement. Here are some specific suggestions in replying to a point with which you may not fully agree:

- a. **Start your response with an attitude of conciliation.** Try to give some credit for the point, find some area of agreement. Avoid such statements as 'I disagree completely', 'I don't agree with a thing you say', or 'You are entirely wrong'.
- b. **Take issue with the point, not the person.** Such statements as 'You show utter ignorance of the subject', or 'If you'd only read the newspaper...' do nothing but attack the person or the speaker. Both he or she and the rest of the group will be offended and antagonised. (Of course if you really don't want consensus at all, attacking the person is the best way to achieve your aim.)
- c. **Restate the other person's point clearly and accurately.** Do not be vague and abstract regarding what you are refuting. Do not overstate or exaggerate what has been said. Do not put words in your opponent's mouth.
- d. **State your own position in relation to someone else's clearly.** First give whatever credit you can to the other's position and refer to areas of agreement. Then state your position in a strong and positive manner. You have a right and a responsibility to be persuasive at this point.
- e. **Support and prove your position.** You should make use of the principles of validation, proof, and support.
- f. **Do not extend your discussion once your point is made.** Conclude your remarks by clearly restating your position and summarising what has been said, avoiding the tendency to go on to another point.
- g. **Be tactful.** Tact involves sensing the mood and atmosphere of the group, being pleasant in manner, using judgement in the frequency and length of one's remarks, maintaining an air of modesty rather than boastfulness, and practising the virtues of refinement and culture.

5.21 **Listening.** More time is spent in listening than in any other activity in group discussion. Listening well has at least two major values: it conveys to the speaker your interest in what he has to say; and it affords you the opportunity to analyse the views of others as you develop your own thoughts toward further speaking. In a remarkable display of listening in the US Senate in the debate on the extension of lend-lease in World War II, Senator Robert Taft permitted the interruption of his remarks by six other senators, each of whom made a point of refutation at some length. He listened intently to each one, then resumed the floor and wove into his further remarks his own adaptation and refutation of the point each had made, with remarkable clarity. He had taken no notes, but he had trained his mind to do this. Good listeners are very much needed in discussion. It is unfortunate that so many discussants just sit and stare aimlessly outward or at the floor or ceiling, in apparent boredom while others are talking, giving the impression that the only reason they are there is to make the occasional comment.

5.22 **Leadership.** Although there is usually one designated leader for each formal discussion, each participant is also responsible for ensuring that the group goals are met. To do so, the leader must accept temporary leadership, especially when the discussion concerns point(s) or an area within his or her range of expertise. Also, the leader shares the task of ensuring that all related information is brought out and considered. In short, in a democratic

group, each participant must share the leadership task - if the discussion is a failure, each member must share the responsibility.

Persuading other members to agree¹

5.23 Many officers serving in Navy Headquarters or elsewhere ashore spend much time at committee meetings. It is therefore worth considering ways in which an officer can influence the outcome of such meetings. This chapter has already suggested several ways you can influence a group positively so that you can work together productively. However, when you want to persuade a group to adopt your idea, it is often not enough to be a positive influencer; you will have to double your influence by becoming a persuader. At the outset you'll have to distinguish persuasion from manipulation and coercion. Manipulation means getting people to do things by devious means, such as appealing to their guilt or inferiority or greed in such a way that they cannot resist your offer. A manipulator can calculate, dictate, bully, judge, or use an irresistible personality to get another to agree. On the other hand, one can use honest and reasonable arguments as the basis for persuading another person. In any case, it is important to identify the methods of persuasion, because even if you choose not to use them, others may, and you should recognise what they are doing.

5.24 The following are some hints on how you can legitimately sway people to your point of view:

- a. **Contact and pressure members individually prior to the meeting.** Use information, reason, and arguments to convince people one by one, not lavish lunches or presents, which look like bribes. Honest talk, face to face, with one person is time-consuming, but generally more effective than meeting everyone head-on at the group's meeting. (In a word: lobby!)
- b. **Make your proposal at the most advantageous time.** When a vote is called for, experienced persuaders delay proceedings until they have the necessary support. Delaying tactics are used until enough people have been contacted on a one-to-one basis.
- c. **Start at a level where you know you can win.** Suppose you have to go through a number of committees to gain support or approval. Approach the most positive committee first, so that you can point to its approval when trying to gain subsequent approval from another.
- d. **Have more information on the subject than anyone else in the meeting.** Before the meeting, write out all questions with reasoned answers on 4 x 6 cards. Research every aspect of the problem and know exactly how you will answer each objection.
- e. **Recognise where your support is.** During the meeting, be alert for signals from others that lend support to your ideas. Some members may comment or nod in agreement with you. Ask for their comments first, immediately after you speak, so as to build up a 'bandwagon' effect.

¹ This section has been drawn predominantly from 'Painless Public Speaking', by Sharon Anthony Bower. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1981. pp 196-197.

- f. **Refer to similar programs that have been successful.** Arguing by precedent lends credibility to your proposal. Where else have your ideas worked? The problem in arguing by precedent is that no two situations are the same, so arguing by example often is not very convincing. It helps to have many details about the other program and to have names and addresses of people whom members can contact for verifying your details.
- g. **Work on the people who are on the fence.** The die-hard opposers are difficult to persuade, but the likely abstainers are people to contact one by one. Try to discover why the abstainer cannot or will not vote decisively and attempt to overcome the apathy.
- h. **Speak in a persuasive tone of voice.** Shouting down the opposition is not recommended as a persuasive technique; rather, emphasise detail, use pauses to let ideas sink in, accent important nouns and verbs. The vocal tone should be impassioned but not emotional, that is, emphasise with force but don't let the variations in volume, pitch, force and rate get so extreme that your voice lacks a reasonable, commonsense quality.
- i. **Have a concrete proposal that is ready immediately.** Do not allow argument to go on so long that any proposal is in doubt. Introduce your solution in a detailed course-of-action approach: first, lay out the solution; second, outline the course of action; third, suggest what each member can do individually. If they agree, end the meeting quickly before dissenters start arguing all over again.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY

Agenda

5.25 The various items of business to be considered at a meeting constitute the Agenda. The Agenda is written by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson and issued before the meeting so that those attending can collect the necessary information and sort out their ideas. The items must be arranged in a logical order, and may be unrelated as in the case of regular staff meetings, or related as in the case of special meetings called to deal with such subjects as exercises. When no specific paper is under discussion a short statement of the problem may be necessary under each item heading, and it may be desirable to frame specific questions to be resolved by the meeting.

Minutes

5.26 The minutes of a meeting provide a written record of decisions made, the discussions leading to the decisions, the action required and who is to take action. Normally only the essence of important discussions needs to be recorded, so that a reader who was not at the meeting can understand the reasons for decisions taken. Seldom are the proceedings reported verbatim; when this happens a typed verbatim statement is usually made available for inclusion as an annex to the minutes.

5.27 An item in the minutes should be composed of three parts: the statement of the problem, points in discussion and decision. The decision must be clear and concise and, when appropriate, place the responsibility firmly on those who are to take action.

Annex:

A. Group member types as seen by each other

GROUP MEMBER TYPES AS SEEN BY EACH OTHER

Recommended Method of Handling:

Quarrelsome Type: Stay quiet - avoid biting reply with questions. Do not let this type over-contribute.

Positive, Co-operative type: Draw in frequently. Helpful resource.

Superior, Know-all type: Let group deal with this type's theories.

Overtalkative, Loquacious type: Interrupt tactfully. Have others comment. Overlook when questioning. Divert discussion centre. Restrict contributions if necessary. Special individual action as last resort.

Shy type: Give special attention. Make it easy for this type to build self confidence. Reinforce contributions.

Rejecting or Unco-operative type: Play on ambitions. Give recognition to knowledge and experience. Use contributions. Use contributions and examples

Uninterested, thick-skinned type: Ask about subject interests. Seek relevant examples from this type.

Highbrow type: Don't criticise Use the 'yes - but' technique

Persistent Questioner type: Direct questions to group

CHAPTER 6- HOSTING VISITING SPEAKERS

6.1 One of the opportunities offered to students at ACSC is to act as sponsor student for a visiting lecturer and to chair question and discussion periods. The duties of the sponsor student (ITO) are defined in the College Handbook. The handbook provides further advice on giving speeches of introduction, chairing the question period after the lecture, and proposing a vote of thanks.

Introduction

6.2 The introduction of speakers is a duty that is not as simple as it may seem. Too often the introduction is long and rambling, serving only to bore the listeners. Other times it is so short that it borders on rudeness. Remember that your main object is to arouse the audience's desire to hear the speaker; everything else must be subordinate to this aim. Your duty is to introduce, not to make a speech. Do not take this as an opportunity to air your own views on the subject. You are only the advance agent; your job is to sell the speaker to the audience. To do this you must:

- a. arouse curiosity about the speaker or the subject. This will make it easier for the speaker to get the attention of the audience, and
- b. make the audience either like or respect the speaker, or both. They will be then more likely to listen to what he or she says.

6.3 Here are the rules you should follow to make an effective speech of introduction:

- a. **Rule 1.** Make your speech of introduction brief. It should be as brief and condensed as a telegram. Sixty seconds is enough, but perhaps thirty seconds is all you will need. Audiences like short speeches of introduction.
- b. **Rule 2.** Announce the speaker's name clearly and correctly. Give it so that it cannot be misunderstood.
- c. **Rule 3.** Announce briefly the speaker's subject and show why the subject is vital to the interests of listeners. Don't make the speech for the speaker. Merely point out to the audience the value of the information the speaker is about to offer.
- d. **Rule 4.** Give some correct facts about the speaker. Remember we said give facts, not vague, meaningless generalities, but FACTS! Don't say he or she is 'one of the best-known speakers', that 'he has spoken to large and appreciative audiences', that 'she is well qualified to talk on the subject'. Such phrases are dull, trite, unconvincing. Give facts that prove the speaker is equipped to discuss the subject. What has the speaker done? What position does he hold? What has she written? Why is he qualified to talk on this subject? If her biographical sketch has been circulated, refer to it, but do not repeat ALL the information contained in it.
- e. **Rule 5.** Don't try to show off. Don't try to impress the audience with your ability or your importance. **The bigger the speaker, the smaller the introduction.**

- f. **Rule 6.** Don't talk about yourself. There is a great temptation to present your own views on the subject. This calls attention to you when your object is to call attention to the speaker.
- g. **Rule 7.** Use humour if it suits the occasion. Take care, however, that your humour is in good taste. Do not destroy the prestige of the speaker or run the risk of offending him or her.
- h. **Rule 8.** Restrain the impulse to turn to the speaker when you announce their name - continue looking at the audience when you say, 'I introduce Admiral Blank'. (Note that all Flag Officers are addressed as 'Admiral...', not 'Rear Admiral...')
- i. **Rule 9.** Leave the platform immediately. After you have announced the speaker's name, turn to him, and say in a conversational tone, 'Admiral Blank'. Then depart - rapidly and inconspicuously!
- j. **Rule 10.** Be alive. Make your introduction sparkle. Many speakers say to themselves, 'Oh, this is just a speech of introduction - why get worked up over it?' That is the wrong attitude. You owe it to the speaker you are introducing and to your audience to put a lot of zip into your talk. Act as though it were a real privilege to introduce this speaker - feel happy about it - talk with real animation.

Conduct of the question period

6.4 **Collecting questions.** During the 'leg stretch' between the lecture and the question period, you should canvass the audience for questions, noting the name of each questioner and their area of interest. The sequence in which these questions are taken is up to you - your preliminary study of the topic will allow you to structure the question period in a logical flow, and also to ask questions yourself to bridge any obvious gaps.

6.5 **Control of questions.** Chairing the discussion period is a demanding task that requires more than introducing speakers in turn. You must keep the discussion interesting to the audience, encourage their participation and maintain favourable lines of discussion. In chairing the discussion period, you should note the following:

- a. Group together questions on the same topic or theme
- b. Introduce each questioner to the lecturer by name. Do not mention the nature of the question, as in doing so you may put the questioner off. Use brief introductory phrases like: 'The next question is from LCDR Black', or 'LEUT John White has a question'.
- c. While the lecturer is answering the question, let your eyes rove over the audience, looking for follow-on (one finger) or new topic (whole hand) questions.
- d. Keep your eye on the clock. Once you are in the last five minutes of the discussion period, introduce the last question: 'We have time for one more question from...'

Thanking a speaker

6.6 You have a long time to think about the thank you speech while the speaker is on the platform so you can rehearse, in your mind, what you will say. As with the speech of introduction, keep it short. Acknowledge the following when appropriate:

- a. The value of the speech's content;
- b. the effort in coming to speak;
- c. the obvious efforts in preparation;
- d. high speaking ability;
- e. contribution to the studies;
- f. the entertainment value of the speech; or
- g. the manner in which he or she fielded questions.

6.7 Conclude by thanking the speaker again on behalf of the audience. Lecturers are given a round of applause, and you should preserve spontaneity by starting to clap when you are finished speaking - the audience will follow your lead. Do not use trite phrases such as: 'I would ask the College to show their appreciation in the usual manner...' They will make you sound pompous and artificial.

CHAPTER 7 - IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

This Chapter has been extracted from
CSC 401, '*Communication Skills and Staff Duties*'
of the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College.

General

7.1 An impromptu speech is given without previous preparation. People are asked to talk, perhaps to their surprise, and they must get up immediately and address the group. Usually they have the appropriate background, knowledge or facts to talk about the subject or they would not be asked to speak. Nevertheless, impromptu speakers are faced with the problem of assembling and organising their subject matter quickly and effectively.

Organisation

7.2 When you are called upon to give an impromptu talk you must quickly determine your objectives; you must decide on what you want to accomplish. With your point of view established, you should see the topic developing in an outline form.

7.3 A definite form - a beginning, middle, and an end - will help you to deliver an impromptu speech. Simplicity is the keynote: a single point of view, one or two examples or illustrations, and a brief clear conclusion. The simplest structures are, therefore, the best for the purpose. You might select any one of the following structures:

- a. state an idea and give reasons for it;
- b. state an idea and illustrate it;
- c. state a principle, illustrate it, relate it to the present situation, advocate action to be taken;
- d. state a question and answer it;
- e. offer an illustration and state the point it suggests; or
- f. state a problem and give the solution.

Such statements offer a quick introduction. One or two clearly reported reasons or illustrations make up the body of the speech. Restating the introduction gives a practical and definite conclusion.

Introduction

7.4 In your introduction you will be attempting to:

- a. secure attention,
- b. establish goodwill,
- c. orient your audience, and

- d. make clear your purpose.

In short it is obvious that not much time can be devoted to these functions of the introduction. Preferably all four can be overlapped.

Discussion

7.5 Selection of a topic is of prime importance here. It is doubtful that all aspects of a topic can be covered in a short impromptu speech. As stated before, it is preferable to pick out one important aspect or perhaps two or three aspects that have a natural link or relationship. The connecting principle or relationship between the parts must be clearly seen by the audience. In short, the discussion should have coherence.

7.6 Stress and emphasis can be given to the more important points both by voice change and location of material. Normally, the most important elements should be at the beginning or end of the discussion.

Conclusion

7.7 The conclusion provides the opportunity to reinforce the major points of your talk. It may be useful to review your purpose and summarise the major points of the discussion. However, make your finish obvious to the audience.

Other suggestions

7.8 Other suggestions that might be helpful are:

- a. Prepare yourself physically by taking several deep breaths and relax.
- b. When you begin speaking, concentrate on what you are going to say; such concentration takes attention away from yourself and helps to control nervousness.
- c. Remember that if you can relate the topic to personal experience there is a greater chance of audience interest.
- d. Don't be afraid of interludes of silence. They seem much longer to the speaker than to the audience, and silence is preferable to a flow of meaningless words.
- e. A useful method of gaining time is to summarise. This technique, if not repeated too frequently, aids the audience and at the same time gives the speaker a chance to review what has been said and what has yet to be said.

CHAPTER 8 - SYNDICATE DISCUSSIONS AND TUTORIALS

The task of the Chairperson

8.1 The Chairperson of a tutorial or syndicate discussion should introduce the subject, guide the discussion and control the activity to ensure that it achieves its stated purpose. He or she must see that authoritative doctrines and conclusions are fixed in the minds of course members. The leadership has failed when the meeting deteriorates into a discussion of details at the expense of full coverage of the subject.

8.2 At the every outset the Chairperson must ensure the interest of course members, ie make them aware that a problem exists and convince them that its solution is important to them. Throughout, the discussion must be focused towards full advantage of all group experience and discouraging irrelevant discussion.

8.3 It is the Chairperson's responsibility to ensure that all contribute and no one monopolises discussion. He or she must protect the right of each course member to be heard, solicit individual contribution and point out common elements in similar cases. After encouraging course members to obtain and evaluate all facts, the Chairperson must lead them to conclusions based on a complete and thorough analysis of the problem or subject matter.

8.4 The Chairperson's zeal and enthusiasm must be real, visible and contagious. Chairmen must have and show complete assurance in the course members and in the discussion and must earn the confidence of the group. They must get a group of individuals to work together in the solving of a common problem or discussion of pertinent issues. They must exhibit genuine interest in the opinions of members.

8.5 The Chairperson must make syndicate members feel that it is their meeting and that its success depends upon their participation. A discussion that is merely a series of short lectures by the Chairperson, or that brings into the discussion only a limited number of course members, gives evidence of poor discussion leadership.

8.6 The Chairperson must, in conducting discussion:

- a. **Be sincere.**
- b. **Be a good listener.**
- c. **Be fair.** Showing preference for certain individuals or ideas, or for a particular solution, is certain to hamper discussion. The Chairperson must be open-minded and ready to accept new ideas provided their soundness can be demonstrated.
- d. **Be courteous.** To offend a course member knowingly is unforgivable; and to do so unintentionally is unfortunate. Members of the syndicate must respect the rights of others to hold different opinions.
- e. **Be patient.** After asking a question the Chairperson must give course members time to consider it; this helps and encourages the person who has difficulty with expression. The Chairperson does not let the fast thinkers rush the decision.
- f. **Ensure participation.** The Chairperson must ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in the discussion and that no one monopolises it.

- g. **Know the topic.** Before the tutorial or discussion starts, all members must learn all they can about the topic to be discussed. They need not be experts on all phases of the topic, but they must have the overall knowledge necessary for effective contribution to the discussion.
- h. **Create rapport.** The Chairperson must develop fellowship in discussions as the group must work together. The group must accept the leadership. The Chairperson will get little co-operation from course members if he demonstrates a feeling of superiority.
- i. **Develop group confidence.** The Chairperson must earn the confidence of the group. This is done by planning discussion ahead of time and conducting it properly. Complete group confidence is essential for there will be times when the group may not understand readily why certain things are done. The participants must be willing to follow the leader.
- j. **Start on time.** Waiting for laggards penalises those who are prompt. A timetable ensures that the topic is covered and the discussion concludes at the appointed time.

8.7 If a discussion is to be successful, certain mannerisms must be avoided:

- a. **Do not be an 'expert'.** The Chairperson must not pretend to be the final authority on any subject. The Chairperson's job is to accomplish the objectives of the discussion, not to impress others with his own knowledge.
- b. **Do not dictate.** Bringing pressure on the group to agree with the Chairperson's views is wrong. The Chairperson must not change the meaning of a statement when rephrasing a course member's contribution. The Chairperson summarises the group's conclusions, not the conclusions that he or she wishes the members to reach.
- c. **Do not confuse.** The Chairperson must phrase questions and statements in clear and concise terminology.
- d. **Do not personalise.** If performance, anecdotes or visual aids are poor, course members will discover this without it being pointed out. The curriculum, course members or those in authority should not be criticised.

Techniques applicable to discussion phases

8.8 Suggestions and techniques applicable to different phases are given below.

- a. **Introduction.** There are several excellent ways of introducing a discussion. The basic purpose of the introduction is to set up a starting point for the discussion, outline the general content to be covered, give the reasons for including the subject in the Course, indicate its relationship to previous and future study, stimulate interest in the subject and provide a transition of thoughts from previous instruction. Among the specific methods which the Chairperson may use to introduce a discussion are the following:
 - (1) asking one or more course members to indicate the purpose of the discussion and the place of the subject in the Course;

- (2) presenting a brief statement;
 - (3) inviting an impromptu or pre-arranged introduction by a course member, preferably one with practical experience, a special interest or knowledge of the subject;
 - (4) posting a requirement which will serve the same purpose given above for the introductory talk; and
 - (5) checking with those who precede and follow him to ensure variety in the introductions.
- b. **Discussion.** Once the discussion has been initiated the Chairperson should continually check its progress. He must give close attention to what is brought out and determine whether the discussion of a specific point should be expanded, curtailed or re-directed.

Methods of stimulating discussion. If the Chairperson wishes to continue or expand discussion he can use techniques such as the following:

- (1) Imply by response that there is additional material on the subject. Ask a question to lead to a further discussion.
- (2) If further participation is desired, avoid replies that tend to cut off further participation.
- (3) Be on the alert for any movement by a course member, such as raising of a hand that indicates a desire to participate. Acknowledge the course member as soon as the opportunity permits.
- (4) Prepare in advance a list of questions that may be used to stimulate further discussion.
- (5) If necessary, request course members to speak louder and to the whole group.
- (6) Make appropriate use of pauses that permit course member's time to think. Let them know further discussion is expected.
- (7) Redirect questions to other course members, eg. 'Will you comment further on that point, Bob' (first name or nickname).
- (8) Be prepared to question a course member whose background may provide additional information of interest to a discussion.

Methods of curtailing discussion. The Chairperson must decide when the subject has been covered sufficiently in the discussion; ie when all important points listed under the topic have been brought out. The Chairperson then terminates the discussion of that topic and prepares for transition to the next topic. Discussions

can be terminated by using expressions that indicate that the subject is closed or by summarising the key points of the topic under discussion.

Methods of transition. The means of effecting transition from one topic to the next should be given prior consideration. The topics should be arranged so that each leads logically into the next.

Keeping discussion on the subject. The greatest task that faces the Chairperson in the conduct of a discussion is keeping the discussion on the subject and on its key points. The following techniques are useful for this purpose:

- (1) Indicate that the comment or question applies to another activity and request that it be reserved until that time.
- (2) Ask the speaker how this comment relates to the subject under discussion.
- (3) Indicate the time available for discussion of a given topic and ask that discussion be confined to the topic.

Securing wide participation. Although adherence to principles outlined earlier will usually bring out extensive course member participation, a conscious effort must be made to achieve this goal. The Chairperson must refrain from talking too much, ensure that reticent course members are brought into the discussion and diplomatically curtail those who tend to over-participate.

Reticent course members may be brought into the discussion when the Chairperson redirects questions freely; the Chairperson should be alert to any sign of readiness on the part of the course member to participate. In addition, the Chairperson may address questions directly to course members. If he or she suspects that shyness is the reason for non-participation, he or she should address an initial question in a relatively simple or particularly stimulating manner.

The Chairperson should avoid over-participation by certain course members by making a conscious effort to avoid the common tendency of calling on those who are most willing to participate.

The Chairperson should not prolong a dead discussion. If a lagging discussion cannot be revived by a change in approach the summation should be started. The summary will aid the group to organise their thinking and may bring out additional information.

- c. **The Summary.** Course members must never leave a discussion wondering what was accomplished, what they decided, or what they are going to do about the problem. A discussion should be reviewed and solutions or conclusions phrased in a few brief, clear statements. The summary should be brief and impartial. Asking the group to add any points that were overlooked ensures accuracy in the summary. Summation should not be limited to the end of the discussion. Frequent summaries aid in keeping the discussion on the subject, in giving the group a clear

picture of the discussion, in checking needless repetition and in recording areas of agreement and disagreement.