THE WHY, HOW AND WHAT OF OVERHEAD PROJECTORS

Why should we use overhead projectors? Because they

- Assist us in organising our material for presentation
- Enable us to summarise and highlight key ideas
- Ensure neither we or our audience will miss vital points
- Aid audience retention of our key points
- Allow us to add reinforcing graphics to stimulate both sides of the brains of our audience, thus keeping the audience focussed on our presentation
- Enable us to work with the lights up, letting us see audience reaction and allowing people to take notes.

How should we use an overhead projectors best? By ensuring

- The screen is placed in the corner of the room at an angle. This allows us to use the projector off centre on the other side of the room without blocking anyone's view of the screen.
- We position and focus a test transparency at a break before we are introduced (using an image upside down and backwards if people are already present).
- We use the on/off switch with discretion. Turn the projector off whenever not directly talking about material on the screen. Also turn it on and off only when a transparency is in place. But if showing transparencies in succession, slip one under another as they are changed without turning the projector off.
- We **talk to the audience**, not to the screen. Always read from the transparency on the projector and from notes on its frame.
- We use a small pointer such as a flat letter opener to point to items on a transparency. Never turn your back on the audience and point to the screen.
- We reveal items on a transparency one at a time as we discuss them. Place a piece of paper **underneath the transparency** so that it will not blow away. That way you will also be able to read following points before revealing them. Also slide the transparency over the top of the projector to hide points after they have been discussed.
- We use cardboard frames. These stop light spill around the transparency and also give us a place to write notes for our presentation. If you reuse frames, put notes on white (not yellow) Post-It-Notes and stick these on the frames.

What about our transparencies? These will be effective if we ensure

- There is only one main idea per transparency.
- There are six words per line maximum on a transparency.
- There are six lines of text maximum on a transparency.
- We use a bold sans serif font and upper and lower case for our text. Headings should be at least 36 point and text at least 28 point.
- We can clearly read our transparencies when they are placed on the floor. This also enables us to **walk our talk** when practising a presentation.
- We use illustrations and colour for visual enhancement. Even without colour printing, variety can be gained with transparency sheets of different colours.

Elizabeth Wilson, DTM