



Texas Secretary *of* State  
ELECTIONS DIVISION



# Effective Trainings: Reaching Your Target Audience

*37th Annual*  
Election Law Seminar  
for Cities, Schools, and  
Other Political Subdivisions  
*December 1-3, 2025*



## Brainstorm

### Prompt:

- How do you train your staff at your entity to interact with candidates?
- How do you train your judges and clerks?

*We have in-person training for judges and clerks twice a year for a full day session*

*For judges and clerks, our entity directs people interested to take the course on the SOS website*

*We train new staff in practical skills as they progress through working in the entity elections office/team*

*We have a mentor for new hires in the office walk them through processing or receiving a candidate application.*

You will have  
**5 minutes**  
to brainstorm.



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you. Each person should share a complete answer to each question.

Ensure that everyone has a turn to share their thoughts, ideas, or perspective.



## Table Share

### Prompt:

- What are two things that go well with your current methods of training?
- What is one area of improvement?



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you. Each person should share a complete answer to each question.

Ensure that everyone has a turn to share their thoughts, ideas, or perspective.

You will have  
**7 minutes**  
to share with  
your table.



# Texas Secretary of State

ELECTIONS DIVISION



**POLL**

**RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU ARE FROM A CITY.**

**SCHOOL?**

**OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION?**



## Know Your Audience

### AGE

- When teaching adults, you have to take the following factors into consideration:
  - More developed habits;
  - Tend to be more confident in what they know;
  - Learning from another adult can be difficult if the person learning believes themselves to be more knowledgeable than the teacher; and
  - If there is condescension or speaking down to another adult, they will stop listening.



## Know Your Audience

### ATTENTION SPANS

- Holding someone's attention through training is HARD. You have to engage people learning to keep their attention and retain content.
- Ways to hold attention include:
  - Inflection of your voice;
  - Addition of rhetorical questions;
  - Professionally appropriate humor; and
  - Variety of ways that show content.



## Know Your Audience

### AUDIENCE MAKEUP

- The make-up of your audience could contain a vast variety of experience levels from persons.
- Meet people where they are when teaching.
- Requires balancing basic information that new people need and also keeping focus of experienced learners that you re-train.



## Know Your Audience

### PRE-EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

- It is incredibly valuable to know what learners already know so you can tailor your content.
- To do that, there are multiple approaches:
  - Evaluating pre-existing knowledge;
  - Questions you ask at the beginning of a training; and
  - Documents you can give beforehand for a foundation prior to the training.

*Ask yourself:  
How can you  
address the  
different levels of  
knowledge in  
your audience?*





## Modalities of Learning

### Visual



- Graphics or images related to the content
- Color coding
- Presenting content in a infographic

### Auditory



- Recording explanations and playing them back
- Teaching or explaining what you are learning to a colleague
- Creating mnemonic tools to remember details

### Reading/Writing



- Reading over and summarizing content
- Taking visual information from a chart of graph and describing them in writing

### Kinesthetic



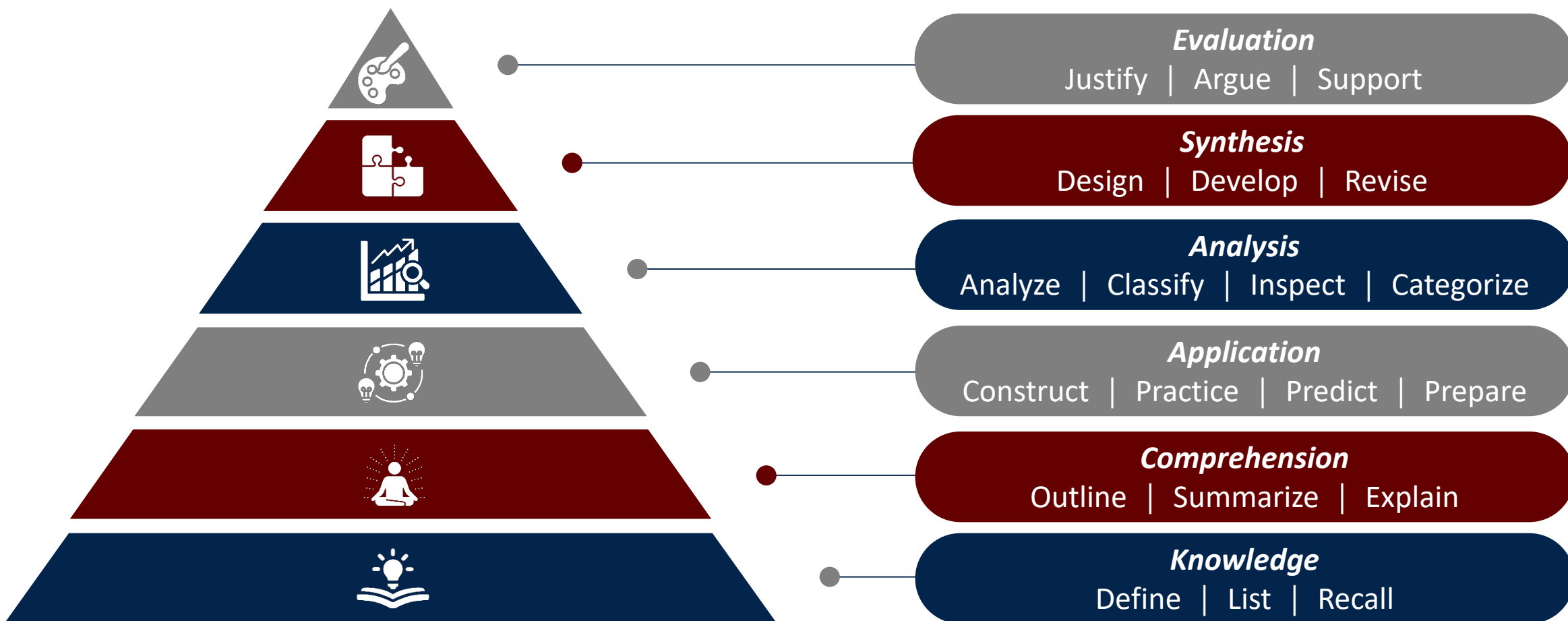
- Acting out a situation
- Thinking up real-life examples to illustrate a concept
- Imagining ways content plays out in real life

Non-verbal communication and paralinguistics

Multimodality



## Levels of Objectives





## Active Learning Strategies

### Think-Pair-Share

Think  
individually  
about the  
topic

Then

Pair up to  
share ideas  
with a  
partner

Then

Share with the  
whole group

### Group Discussion

Work together  
to analyze  
concepts and  
share your  
understanding

Then

Share ideas  
with the  
whole group

### Peer Teaching

Teach others  
the concepts  
or skills

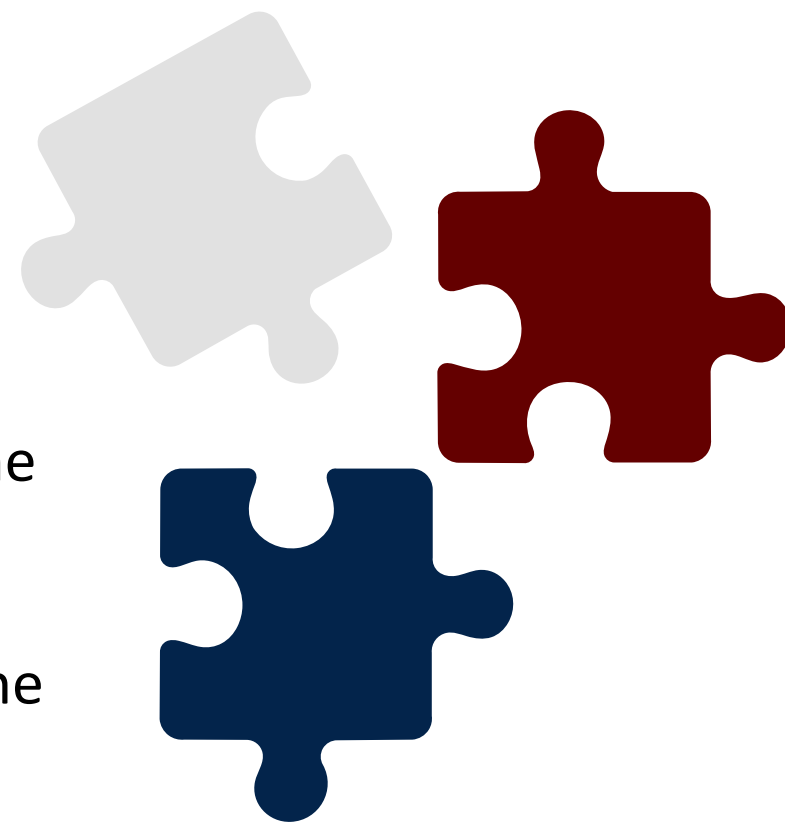
### Role-Play

Work in  
groups to  
complete a  
task while  
playing a  
specific role



## Teaching for Understanding

- The experiences and perspectives of the people you teach are among some of strongest resources available.
- Require learners to think, analyze, problem solve, and make meaning of what they have learned.
- Learners problem solve if they understand, that is not the case if someone is just memorizing a process.
- Teaching for Understanding sets the goal of **APPLYING** the information someone learns to situations that they encounter.





# Collaborative Learning Environment

- The experiences and perspectives of the people you teach are among some of the strongest resources available.
- To create training content that is relevant and has real-world applications, integrate the ideas and perspectives of your participants by using:

**Levels of Objectives**

**Active Learning Strategies**

**Teaching for Understanding**



# Collaborative Learning Environment

- If you can facilitate and encourage collaboration, you can build a deeper understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving.
- Ways that you can facilitate this discussion and sharing of information on a regular basis will:
  - Improve your trainings;
  - Increase engagement; and
  - Increase the understanding of your learners.



## Key Goals for Every Training

#1



Present information  
in a variety of ways.

#2



Learners interact and  
discuss content with  
each other.

#3



Learners can apply  
what they have learned  
to a real-world situation  
and problem solve.

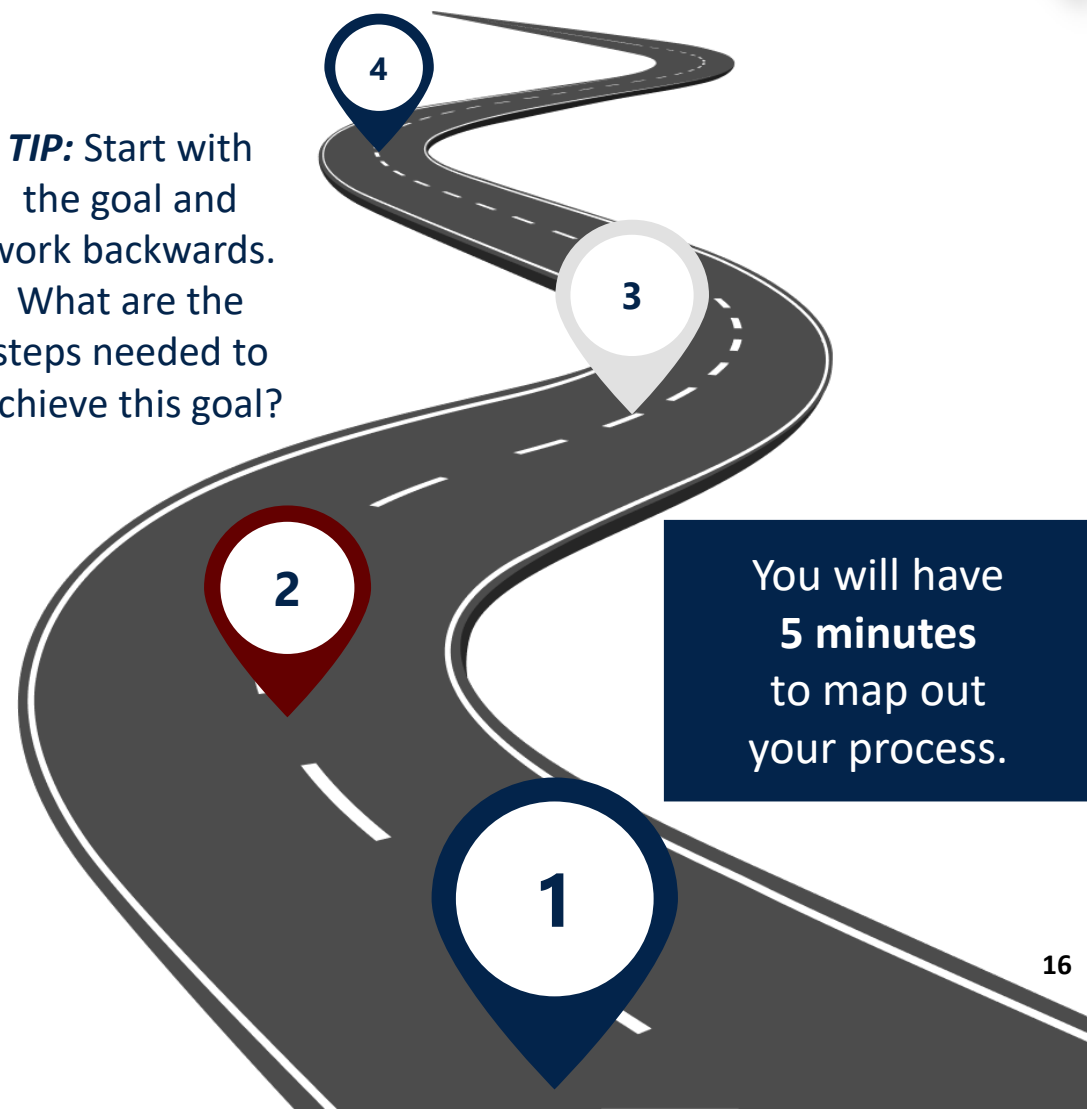


## Mapping it Out

### Prompt:

- Choose an area that you know needs more training in your entity/office.
- Map out how you can incorporate at least two components you have learned from this presentation into your training on that topic to improve your trainings.

**TIP:** Start with the goal and work backwards. What are the steps needed to achieve this goal?



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you.





## Available Support



**WEBINARS**



**TRAINING**



**RESOURCES**

[elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov)

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

[sos.texas.gov](http://sos.texas.gov)