

## Course Planning Tools

# Training Tips for Certified ServSafe® Instructors



Welcome to the world of food safety! For someone who is new to the subject matter, food safety can seem like an overwhelming topic to understand as well as try to teach. Like anything else, it can be accomplished with good planning, preparation, and a guide to lead you along the way.

We have designed the ServSafe® program with its most valuable asset in mind: You! We have considered all the things that you need to know to prepare for and teach a ServSafe class, and we have created some recommendations and guidelines to help you become acclimated to the program components. As with anything else, the more time you put into preparation, the better your results will be. The information in this section will make your preparation process easier. You will find tips related to these areas:

- Presenting the material
- Leading group discussions
- Teaching the adult learner
- Teaching a ServSafe class
- Preparing for the class using a training-day checklist

Only a Certified ServSafe Instructor or an individual with Dual Role status is allowed to instruct the ServSafe Food Safety Manager training course. Only a Registered ServSafe Proctor or an individual with Dual Role status can proctor the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination. If you are unsure of your status, please call the Service Center at 800.765.2122.

### Presentation of Material

As a Certified ServSafe Instructor, you play a key role in the program's success. Your enthusiasm and expertise will enhance your ServSafe presentation. At the beginning of the session, explain the importance of studying food safety. Give examples of real-world incidents, including businesses that have lost customers and food-handling errors that could have been prevented. Stress the positive side. Tell participants about employees and managers who have handled difficult situations with confidence and skill because of their training.

### Leading Group Discussions

Be friendly, but professional. Remember that you are in a position of authority and must enforce policies. Before the session, prepare some general questions to begin the discussion. Allow time throughout the training session for participants to ask questions and discuss the topics in the latest edition of the *ServSafe Manager Book*.

### The Adult Learner

The adult learner brings a number of practical and applicable experiences to the classroom. Even the youngest member of a class has had invaluable experiences. It is crucial to recognize these experiences and use them to involve your learners when you present material. As a Certified ServSafe Instructor, you want to evoke respect. Recognize that your learners are also looking for respect. Actively seeking to involve them in the learning process is an open indication that you value them.

## Who Is the Adult Learner?

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An adult learner is usually a highly motivated person attempting to improve his or her skills. This is an incredible advantage for you as an instructor! It is important to keep that motivation alive by directing it into a positive learning experience.

While your class may be a highly motivated group, they are also going to demand more from you. Be prepared to face a learner's challenge to your experience and expertise. Your confidence with the topic of food safety is your edge in meeting this challenge successfully.

Another consideration is the group's cultural diversity. The restaurant and foodservice industry is filled with the riches that various cultural groups bring to it. Draw on these different experiences during your presentation and recognize that you may need to adapt your teaching to meet every learner's needs.

Current research on adult learning shows that:

- **Adults need to know why they should learn something.** They need an answer to the question, "What's in it for me?"
- **Adults need to be involved in determining what they will learn.** Ask them what they expect to learn or gain from the course, and then follow up on those expectations.
- **Adults typically bring more life experiences to the classroom than younger learners.** They usually will want to contribute their experiences during discussions.
- **Adults are motivated to learn when they have a need to know something or they want to be able to do something.** A prep cook will be motivated to go to food safety training if he or she aspires to become a manager for which this training is a requirement.
- **Adults take a task- or problem-centered approach to learning.** For example, a chef goes to a pastry workshop to better develop his or her baking skills.
- **Adults are internally and externally motivated to learn.** Some people are driven by the self-satisfaction they get out of doing something, while others are driven by the promise of reward or recognition for doing something.

When training adult learners, you should consider the following:

- Be concerned about the learners.
- Be knowledgeable about the subject.
- Relate theory to practice.
- Show confidence.
- Be open to different learning styles—stay flexible.
- Be genuine.
- Be willing to go beyond course objectives.
- Create a good atmosphere for learning—make it fun.

## Preparing to Teach Food Safety to the Adult Learner

### Knowledge of Food Safety

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Knowledge of current food safety information is essential. Stay informed of the latest developments in the science of food safety. This information will provide you with case studies and topics for class discussions. Select information you know will pique your learners' curiosity. Most learners enjoy case studies on foodborne illnesses because there are questions to answer and pieces of information that can be put together to solve a puzzle. Case studies are available on *ServSafe.com*.

### Flexible Teaching Methods

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Build flexibility into your teaching methods. Keep in mind that while one individual may prefer to learn better by reading a textbook, another may learn the same information more easily by watching a video. If one activity does not work well with the group, it is unlikely a similar activity will be effective. Have a variety of activities available to use interchangeably. It is recommended that a combination of teaching tools and techniques be used if you are going to reach the majority of your participants. This includes demonstration, games and competitions, role-plays, case studies, and videos.

#### Demonstration

Often, you will be required to teach specific tasks by demonstrating them, such as calibrating a thermometer. Demonstrations will be most effective if you follow the Tell/Show/Practice model.

#### Tell/Show/Practice Model

- ① **Tell them how to do it.** Explain the overall steps using written procedures, diagrams, forms, etc.
- ② **Show them how to do it.** Go slowly so they can see the process.
- ③ **Have them practice how to do it.** Correct the process if necessary.

When demonstrating a task, remember the following:

- Demonstrate tasks in manageable chunks. Demonstrating the whole task at one time can overwhelm the learner.
- Provide the learner with specific, immediate feedback about his or her performance.
- Demonstrate the task again, if necessary. Allow the learner to practice.
- Be patient. Expect questions.
- Ask questions if learners do not. This will help ensure they comprehend what you have shown them.

## Games and Competitions

Games and competitions can be used to practice previously learned content. They often create excitement and get the learners' attention, especially when material is difficult or mundane. Games should be simple, short in duration, and provide some type of reward for all participants. For example, you might develop:

- A quiz-style game in which you test learners on their food safety knowledge
- A contest to see which department's employees wash their hands the most throughout a shift

To use games effectively, you should:

- Explain how the game relates to the information presented.
- Explain the rules carefully.
- Have a practice round.

Make sure the competition does not allow learners to lose sight of the purpose of playing the game.

- Debrief the game.
- Wrap up game with feedback.
  - Positive feedback to all participants (verbal, tangible, bragging rights, etc.)
  - Constructive feedback to fill in any gaps.

## Role-Plays

Role-plays can be used to allow learners to try out new skills or apply what they have learned. They can be set up in many ways, but usually the participant is confronted by another person and must answer questions, handle problems, provide satisfaction, or respond to a complaint. For example, a role-play can be established in which participants practice handling food safety complaints or safe receiving and storage techniques.

When conducting a role-play:

- Prepare a script in advance.
- Be prepared to act as a coach and keep participants on track.
- Control the amount of time participants are given to plan and make their presentations.
- Make certain new content is understood before beginning a role-play.
- Provide participants with detailed instructions and a script for performing the role-play.
- Explain and model the role-play situation before letting participants begin.
- Create a safe environment to ensure that everyone participates.
- Point out the benefits of doing the role-play.
- Keep role-plays simple—participants should model no more than four to seven chunks of information.

## **Case Studies**

Case studies can be used by learners to apply what they have learned. Give them information about a specific, real-world problem similar to one they might experience on the job. Next, ask them to apply what they have learned to solve the problem. Provide feedback regarding how they handled the problem and discuss other ways the problem might have been solved.

You might want to:

- Clip food safety-related articles from newspapers. Share a story's circumstances and ask learners to determine what may have happened.
- Discuss a problem situation in your learner's operation. Ask the class to determine what happened. Have them decide what could have been done differently.

When conducting case studies:

- Provide clear instructions—this is critical.
- Make sure learners see the case study's relevance.
- Facilitate the discussion carefully.
- Make sure learners identify a realistic solution to the case.

## **Videos**

Videos can be used to introduce information, reinforce it during the session, and review it at the session's end. Videos can be a great teaching tool if used properly. However, simply playing a video for learners, without your direct involvement, will be less effective.

Videos should never replace your involvement in the training session; rather, they should supplement and enhance it.

To use videos effectively:

- Be familiar with the content.
- Prepare learners for what they will learn in the video. Tell them what they will learn and why it is important to a foodservice operation.
- Select stopping points in the video where learners can discuss concepts or practices you want to emphasize.
- Ask questions after showing the video to reinforce content presented.

## **Practice**

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The old saying that practice makes perfect is never truer than when planning to teach a group. Take the time to familiarize yourself with all the materials and activities you will use. At all costs, avoid reading large portions of the text to learners. They will immediately assume you have very little knowledge of food safety—even though the exact opposite may be true. Besides, adult learners will feel shortchanged if they are not actively involved in the learning process.

Activities, demonstrations, and exercises require timing. Practice is the only way that you will become completely comfortable executing them. In addition, you may find a better technique for using these methods that works to your advantage. If this is your first time teaching food safety, conduct your presentation (or an important segment of it) for someone you trust to give objective feedback on your performance. This may help prevent the stage fright normally experienced when speaking before a group. It will also help you discover if there is any technical information needing clarification.

## **Assessing Learners**

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It is very important for you to assess the knowledge level of your learners. This will help you decide what activities to use and what to emphasize during your presentation. It will also help you determine the amount of time to spend on a particular concept or item.

There are many ways to assess your learners. One of the most successful in any situation is having them introduce themselves, state the job they do, and explain what they would like to learn in the class.

A pretest, such as the Diagnostic Test, can also be used to gauge the food safety knowledge level of your learners. A quick group exercise using a case study activity can also provide a quick gauge.

## **Types of Learners That May Be Encountered**

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It is important for you to be on the lookout for certain types of learners who may be present in the classroom. The more you know about your audience, the more effective you will be. The types of learners you may encounter include the following.

### **Vacationers**

These learners are just there as a day off from their regular jobs. The instructor will have to encourage their participation and attention.

### **Repeaters**

These learners are back to take the course as a matter of recertification. They may feel they already know the material and can often be a challenge to you. Use them as a resource. Ask them to share past learning experiences with the group. Make them feel that their comments, ideas, and suggestions count.

### **Mandatory Audience**

These learners wonder why they are in class at all. They may have been told to attend the program by their boss. They usually do not want to be there and cannot wait for the day to end. This may be a challenge for you, but make them feel welcome. Draw them into participating. Asking questions, assigning role-plays, and encouraging contributions will help promote their participation.

## Learners

These participants are the instructor's best friends and greatest allies. Learners are excited, happy to be attending, and motivated to learn new methods and approaches to food safety. The instructor should use them to assist in getting the entire class involved.

## Challengers

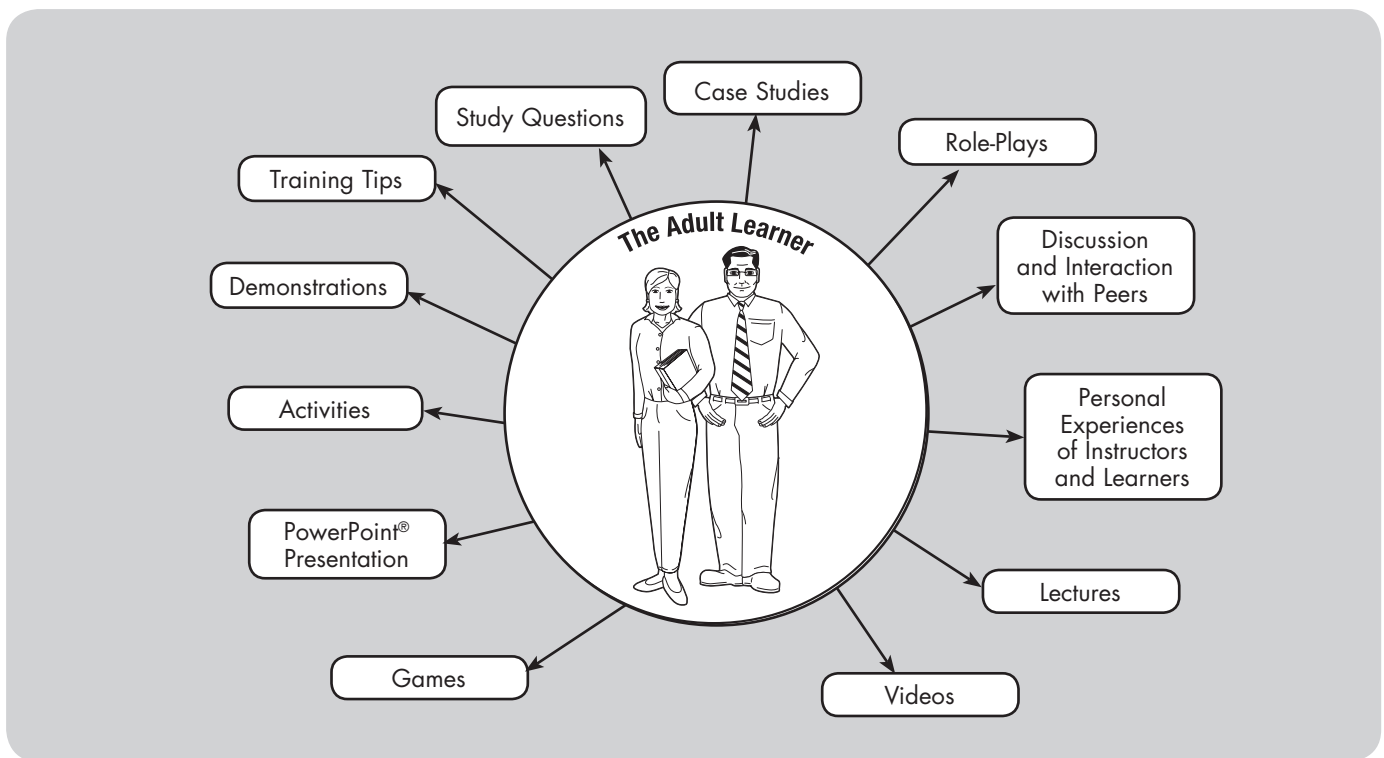
These learners are individuals or groups who may challenge your expertise. One of the best ways to overcome this situation is to ask them directly about some of their personal experiences. For example, ask them how they felt about what happened and how the situation was resolved. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved—the challenger feels his or her experience counts and other learners may be able to relate to his or her stories.

## Unanswered Questions

If you are asked a very technical question and are unsure of the correct answer, do not try to bluff your way through it. Bluffing damages your credibility with an adult learner. If you do not know the answer, tell them so—and add that you will get back to them with the answer.

## Keep Your Sense of Humor

Most important, no matter who you are teaching, maintain your sense of humor. Usually what can go wrong will, but a sense of humor often eases even the most awkward situations. Just as adult learners can be tough on you, they also can be generous.



To successfully teach the ServSafe program, use a combination of these tools when presenting the material.

## Preparing to Teach a ServSafe Class

### Six Weeks Before Class

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- Secure a facility for your course.
- If you plan to use a new facility, visit it to be sure it has the features you need.
- If you have dual role status and will be administering a ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination after the course, the room must also meet the standards listed in the *ServSafe Examination Administration Handbook*. The room should have the following characteristics:
  - Accessible for disabled participants
  - Quiet and secluded
  - Lights that are bright enough and can be dimmed if necessary
  - Enough movable tables and chairs for learners
  - Table for instructor materials
  - Table for registration
  - Sufficient wall or floor outlets for audiovisual equipment
- Advertise the course.
- Order books, instructor materials, and examinations.

### Four Weeks Before Class

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As course registration starts, ask about any special needs (disabilities, foreign language, etc.) your learners may have so you can prepare to make proper accommodations for them, if necessary. This may involve ordering textbooks and/or examinations in a particular language or format, or completing the Request for Exam Accommodation document. Additional information about examination accommodation is in the *ServSafe Examination Administration Handbook*.

To help prepare examinees for the exam, it is recommended you either refer examinees to the *ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination Examinee Handbook* available at [ServSafe.com](http://ServSafe.com), or provide them with a copy.

### Three Weeks Before Class

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- Send all learners a welcome letter (available on [Servsafe.com](http://Servsafe.com)), a copy of *ServSafe Manager Book 7th Edition*, and the Diagnostic Test and Answer Key. This is a critical step in preparation for the course and the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination. This is especially important when using *ServSafe Manager Book* in a one-day format.



- Begin preparing to teach.

## Ten or More Business Days Before Class

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- Order ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examinations.
- If needed, submit a Request for Exam Accommodation.

## One Week Before Class

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- Order audiovisual equipment.
- Gather needed supplies and equipment.
- Make copies of activities, if needed.
- If administering a paper-based ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination, check to see that they have arrived and are accurate.
- Confirm the facility reservation.

## Day Before Training

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- Create class list and seating chart.

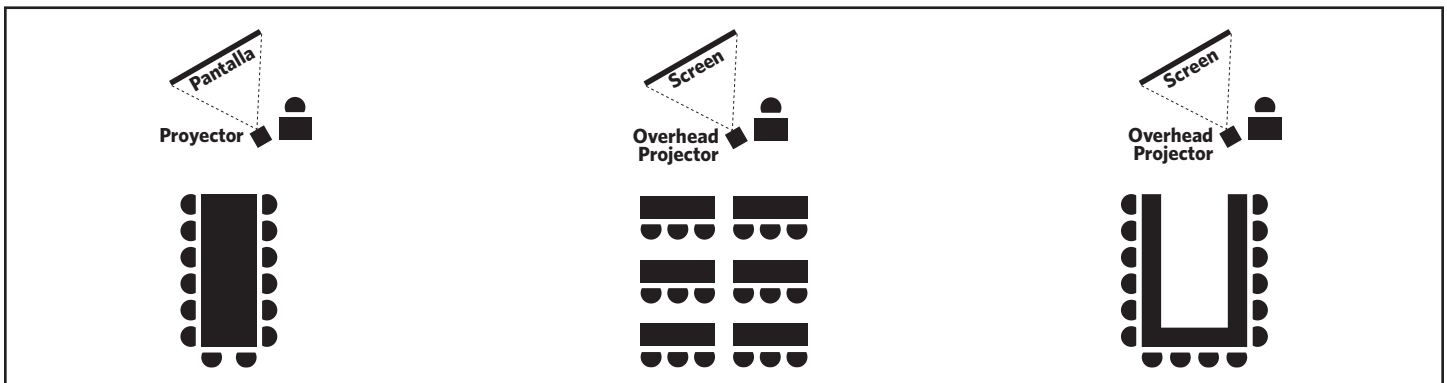
## Training Day

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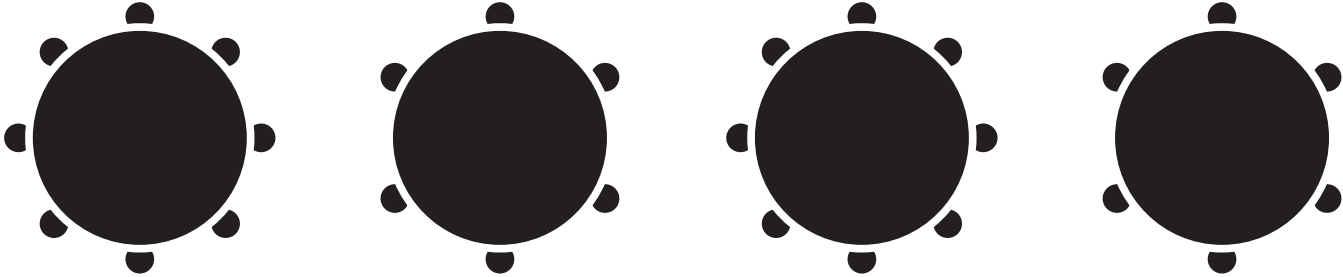
- Arrive at the course site at least one hour before the course starts.
- Check in with the course-site host or contact. Ask if all audiovisual equipment is present, and determine if there have been any changes from original plans.
- Learn logistics of the facility: phones, restrooms, light switches, thermostat, etc.

## Classroom Setup

- Arrange the seminar tables and chairs according to one of the drawings below.
- If using a Video-Based Approach, use one of these room setups.



- When using an Activity- and Video-Based approach, arrange the room in tables of six or eight learners, depending on class size. This arrangement makes sharing in pairs or larger table groups easy to do. Round tables, as shown below, work best, but square tables can also be used.



- Make sure there is a table for instructor materials in the room.
- Set out learning materials.

### **Audiovisual Setup**

- Make sure you have all accessories (e.g., extension cord, computer connections, mouse for computer).
- Check working order of all audiovisual equipment:
  - TV/VCR/DVD (check volume)
  - Computer and projection system, with extra bulb
  - Microphone (if necessary)
  - Projection screen
- Cue up DVDs.
- Test-run ServSafe PowerPoint® presentation.

### **Beginning of Program**

- Introduce yourself and welcome every learner.
- If you are providing lunch, ask learners if they have any special dietary considerations.
- Make sure everyone is comfortable.
- Make sure everyone can see the projection screen or TV.
- Discuss your background.
- Conduct an icebreaker activity.

## During Program

- Schedule breaks. Give learners an incentive to return on time.
- Be available to answer questions and further explore content during breaks. Take your own breaks while showing DVDs.
- Make sure you are in the room to answer questions during activities.
- Stay on schedule, but be flexible.

## End of Program

- Review content in time remaining. Answer questions.
- Follow examination procedures as identified in the *ServSafe Examination Administration Handbook*.

## Equipment and Supplies

### Classroom Equipment

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- Tables and chairs for learners
- Registration table
- Table for instructor's materials

### Audiovisual Equipment

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- Extension cords
- Multi-outlet surge protector
- Microphone, if necessary

### Using DVDs

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- DVD player or laptop with DVD player
- TV or LCD projector with video capability
- Projection screen

### Using PowerPoint® Slides

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- Computer
- LCD projector, with extra bulb
- Projection screen

## Supplies for Instructor

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- Flip chart
- Flip chart markers
- Tape or poster putty
- *ServSafe Manager Book*
- *ServSafe Examination Administration Handbook\**
- Props
- ServSafe Video-Based Leader's Guide or ServSafe Activity- and Video-Based Leader's Guide\*
- Extra pencils
- ServSafe PowerPoint® presentations\*
- Icebreaker
- Activities and games
- Examinations

\*The latest version of these items can be found under the Instructor Resources Section of ServSafe.com

## Supplies for Each Learner

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- Number 2 pencil
- Paper
- *ServSafe Manager Book 7th Edition* with answer sheet
- *ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination Examinee Handbook*
- Name tent card
- Activity handouts