

Preparing an Active Lesson

Including the following components produces a standard well-structured and active Lesson.

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| <p>1. Motivation, Bridge or Hook</p> | <p>Catches the students' attention and motivates them. Why should they care? Some strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a story connected with the lesson topic • Pose a provocative question linked to a current topic or the listeners personal life • Offer a startling statement or unusual fact, or intriguing demonstration • Link to something they know or can relate to, to the material already studied or to future learning |
| <p>2. Outcome</p> <p><i>"Tell them what you are going to teach them"</i></p> | <p>By the end of the session what should students know, value or be able to do? What message do you want them to take away? Make this very simple and clear. E.g. By the end of this instructional session successful students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain a particular model or system • Solve a particular type of equation • Apply a particular theory • Analyse something |
| <p>3. Pre-Assessment</p> | <p>What prior knowledge do the student possess regarding your topic? Some strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a question and ask for a show of hands. E.g, "How many of you are familiar with the term "cognitive dissonance". This can help you refine the level you pitch your talk for the audience. Depending on the response you can provide definitions, simplify, or proceed at a higher level. • Use a minute paper to write answer to 1-2 questions. • Post answers online in advance of class. |
| <p>4. Participatory Learning/ Teaching Active Lecturing</p> <p><i>"Tell them/involve them/teach them"</i></p> | <p>Engage your students in learning. Use active teaching/learning methods. Consider visuals, graphs, video clips, audio-clips to engage your audience. Some strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pose a question for the students to consider, or on which to respond briefly in their notes. E.g., Given the conditions I have outlined, what might you predict in this case? • Small group discussion • Pauses in lectures for think-pair-share or small group discussion. • Student reflection, role plays, case studies, scenarios, simulations. • When using visuals, explain what the audience is looking at, what you want them to notice in the visual, and what conclusion you wish to draw. E.g., As you can see from this X-ray of the ..." • When using graphs, explain what data is measured on the x and y axis. Do not assume the pattern or conclusions are obvious to students, that the students can see small print, or assume they can interpret the visual as you intend. |
| <p>5. Summary/ Closure / Connection to Overall Course</p> <p><i>"Tell them what you taught them"</i></p> | <p>Wraps things up, provides closure or indicates next steps. This is an important step. It does not need to be fancy or dramatic, but communicates a polished well prepared talk. Some strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content review. (E.g., "In conclusion, we have examined X, the applications, and limitations of X.") • Summarize main points, or the learning outcomes. • Ask for feedback. • Put current session in context of the series or purpose of the talk or seminar series. "So we have looked at topics A, B and C, three important recent developments in the field of the Alphabet." • Thank students for their attention, participation, insights, involvement...etc. |
| <p>6. Post-Assessment</p> | <p>What did audiences take from your presentation? Were your desired outcomes met? This can be difficult to determine in a single presentation, but it is possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions asked. Are there many questions asking for clarification of small points? • Can participants do something or answer questions that show they have learned? • This might sometimes be done after class in homework, tests or other assessments. |