The Principles of Effective Teaching

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Session Outline

This session outlines four fundamental principles of effective teaching, which include:

• Brief tips for developing curriculum from course outcomes
• Tips for preparing and presenting content and materials (and)
• Interacting and engaging with students.
How to prepare and present course content?
Guide for Designing your Lessons

• LECTURE/PRESENTATION
  • information and content.

• DEMONSTRATION
  • How will you see the skill/outcome in your students

• An opportunity to PRACTICE the skill/outcome
  • receiving feedback from peers, instructor, or both.

• Then, the ASSESSMENT of that skill/outcome.
  • Testing the student
Differentiated Learning

• When you are preparing course content, keep in mind the value of differentiated learning.

• Differentiated learning (DL) is a framework/philosophy which calls for providing students various avenues for acquiring learning materials, processing and applying them.

• In brief, (DL) calls for variations in how instruction and content is provided and how content is assessed/measured.
Methods of Presentation

• Most default to *LECTURE–based* styles of presenting
  - PowerPoints

• There are differentiated presentation styles, such as:
  - SMALL GROUP
  - LARGE GROUP
  - STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION

• Giving Quizzes before the class
  - See what your students already know
  - This will help you see what areas maybe you should focus on
Preparing & Presenting

• Ask yourself the question, “What am I trying to accomplish?”
  • What do you want the students to learn
    • What are the main concepts

• Keep your audience in mind and their ability levels:
  • Undergraduates and their rankings: freshman vs. senior
  • Graduate vs Undergraduate Students
  • Masters vs PhD students
Keeping Your Lecture Focused

For example, build your lecture around major points

- Give students a “roadmap” of your lecture to follow, so they know what it is leading to.
  - Outline on the board what will happen during class before class starts

- Limit your main points to five or fewer
  - ensure you’re covering as much as you need to in the time allotted
Keeping Your Lecture Focused

Keep in mind: structure and clarity

• The way you organize your lecture depends on your topic:
  • You can base your lecture on points/sub-points
  • Use examples or arguments to build your lecture
  • Explain the important terms (and)
  • Repeat information if necessary
Other Presentation Methods

Small & Large Group Discussion

- Low-risk setting for brainstorming and discussion topics, tasks, assignments, and/or concepts
- Work collectively to apply skills and concepts
- May facilitate understanding and comprehension
- Groups/group leaders then contribute to a larger-group discussion with instructor contribution and feedback

Student-led Discussion

- Divide lecture topics into small groups
- Have Students prepare a presentation
  - Video/visual handout or display to accompany lecture
  - Creative demonstration of concept through play, skit, or other creative means
  - Prepare/facilitate discussion question for before and/or after lecture
- Promotes understanding, comprehension, and accountability
Using PowerPoints

• General formatting and style tips for Power Points:
  • Don’t fill the slides with text; white space is good for the brain!
  • Watch your font size! No smaller than 16/18!

• Make PowerPoints available on-line (blackboard) for students or bring copies to class
Differentiating Your Materials

• **Video/visuals**
  - Prezi, Power Point, Google Slides, etc.
  - Remember: provide outlines of slides for easier note-taking!

• **Use video platforms** like YouTube or TEDTalks

• **Kanopy** – like netflix

• **Use Swank** – free videos
  - [https://libguides.library.kent.edu/videos](https://libguides.library.kent.edu/videos)
If you are teaching higher-level courses:

• Get them physically involved with their learning
  • Create or use models together
  • Create timelines, graphs, posters, pamphlets, or other 3D objects etc.

• Have students give presentations as demonstrations of their understanding/application of course content
Assessments of Learning

• Differentiate your assessments, too!
  • Vary your kinds of test questions

• Give quizzes periodically on lecture objectives.
  • You want to be able to assess if they are getting it

• Avoid lengthy in-class exams.
  • Work through the test yourself (remember you may finish more quickly than your students)

• Working with Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
  • https://www.kent.edu/sas
How to interact and engage with your students?
Ice Breaker: 5-Minute Discussion

• With the person(s) next to you, introduce yourselves and discuss the following questions:

  • Why are you attending this session?
  • Do you have any teaching experience?
  • If so, what would you like to work on in your teaching practice?
  • If you have never taught before, what are you most concerned about?
Engaging with Students

• Work on building your “community” from the first day

• Use creative ice breakers, games, and other activities to facilitate early interaction.

• Encourage this community building throughout the semester by using group-based activities and projects, creative games, etc.
• Take the initiative to learn their names, their interests, and their concerns.

• *Link new material to students’ prior knowledge, such as common experiences or previous coursework.*

• Be aware of what you are communicating, both verbally and non-verbally.
Tips for Effective Communication

• Watch your tone, speed, and projection
  • Try for a relaxed, conversational tone; maintain eye contact.

• Use open and expressive body language
  • Be “happy” to ‘make’ “happy”; confidence is key!
Tips for Effective Communication

• Pay attention to your language use itself

• Avoid using obscure language
• Provide “snap shot definitions” for specialized language use
• Don’t assume students “know” – ask for volunteers to define/explain, and then hedge their definitions appropriately
• Be aware of cultural boundaries and “gaps” in American-based references, clichés, or common expressions
Tips for Effective Communication

• When asking if there are any questions, don’t simply ask “Any questions?”

• Try to rephrase it as: “What parts of this are still a little unclear or confusing for you?” or “What do I need to explain again?” or “What are you wondering about that I haven’t yet addressed?”

• Make sure you understand the student’s question before launching into a long explanation. Restate the question and let the student clarify, if necessary.
Tips for Effective Communication

• Finally, if you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t bluff.
  
  • You can let the student know that the question goes well beyond what you can address in lecture
  • Volunteer to find the answer and report back
  • Ask the student to investigate and report back to the class
  • Or, consider trying to work out an answer with the students
Provide Opportunities for Feedback

• Conduct midterm teaching evaluations or simply ask the students for suggestions and comments at the midpoint of the quarter.

• Office hours: come out from behind the desk, keep candy on hand, and consider requiring every student to come in once early in the semester.
Provide Opportunities for Feedback

• Check for understanding and comprehension

• Use the “minute paper” or other assessment techniques. Ask students to respond in one or two sentences to the following questions: What stood out as most important in today’s lecture? What are you confused about?
Time Management

• Balance your time both as a graduate student and as an instructor

• Always prioritize your research even if you are teaching

• Always remember to talk/email your advisor and/or mentor at least once every month
• If you are teaching a large class, remember to use resources like microphones, clickers, and blackboard

• Always remember to balance your personal and professional time

• Practice self-care
Final Thoughts

• Show *enthusiasm* for the topic and information. Remember, you are *modeling your discipline*.

• *Respect* them as not only your students, but also as *individuals*. Take an interest in them. Care about them.
• Confront your hidden bias’s about students.
  • *It can be easy to assume a student is just “lazy,” “unmotivated,” or “disinterested”.*

• Avoid “locker-room” talk.

• Lose the ego and be human.
Other Relevant Breakout Sessions

- Contact Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) for further resources

- Other helpful sessions might include:
  - **First Time TA**
    - 12:30-1:10p or 1:20-2:00p in KSC 315
  - **Grading and Syllabus**
    - 12:30-1:10p and 2:10-2:50p in KSC 314
  - **Blackboard Design and Blackboard Grading**
    - 1:20-2:00p and 3:00-3:40p in KSC 315
    - 2:10-2:50p and 3:50-4:30p in KSC 315
Questions?

Feel free to contact us:

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References

• Differentiated learning. (n.d.) Wikipedia, Wikipedia, retrieved from https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Differentiated_instruction. (Offers a good introduction to the concept and provides a great beginning list of resources and references for more information about concepts and strategies.)

• http://ctl.yale.edu/teaching/ideas-teaching/preparing-lecture

• https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/teaching-resources/teaching-strategies/checklist-effective-lecturing/lecturing-guidelines


• https://cft.vanderbilt.edu//cft/guides-sub-pages/lecturing/

• https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/first-day-of-class/

• https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/teaching-resources/teaching-strategies/checklist-effective-lecturing/lecturing-guidelines