

# THE ART OF PRESENTING: LECTURES

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## THE ABC'S OF DELIVERING A MEMORABLE LECTURE



So you have to give a lecture! How are you going to prepare? What content will you include? How can you make your lecture stand out? How can you convince your audience that you're enjoying this? When planning a lecture

there are three basic components which you can apply to any lecture, namely the **set**, the **body** and the **closure**. Collectively, these elements make up the **instructional plan** and we tease out the key components in the following section. When it comes time to present your lecture, selecting appropriate teaching methods is key to delivering an engaging, effective lecture and how you present

the lecture also impacts the learning experience of your students. This guide includes some common mistakes presenters make and a few presentation tips which may help you feel more relaxed, confident and may actually allow you to enjoy yourself the next time you have to give a lecture.



### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

1. List 5 factors to consider when designing a lecture
2. Describe the 3 main components of the instructional plan
3. List 6 components of the instructional set
4. Identify appropriate body language to engage your audience
5. Identify 5 points to consider in relation to the organization of your presentation

## The Instructional Plan



**Part 1 The Set** is the beginning of the presentation when the presenter introduces the topic and focuses the attention of the audience on the session ahead. An important consideration here is to employ strategies that motivate your audience and stimulate interest. For example,

you could play a short video, ask questions from a related session or integrate the topic into an interesting anecdote. Once you have the audience attention, state the objectives for the session and inform the participants of what methods you plan to use to achieve those objectives. This is an opportunity for the audience to appreci-

ate what level of interaction is expected of them. When clarifying your objectives, try to relate them to preceding objectives, if relevant, to help learners build on previous knowledge. Now is also the time to inform your audience of when is the appropriate to ask questions. Of course, for a learning encounter, this is during the active engage-

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## *The Instructional Plan*

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ment section of the session which we call the body. **Part 2 The Body** describes the main content of the lecture. A common mistake that many presenters make is to include an overwhelming amount of content to their lecture. This is indeed a rookie mistake! When you are tasked with teaching a topic area to students you should think of this task in terms of the lecture, yes, but the lecture should not be the only educational format that you offer. Students of the 21st century are very hands-on and are prepared to take responsibility for their own education. As educators we should be encouraging independent learning to instill the skills for lifelong learning. Therefore, take advantage of this and prepare your educational material to include student-centered learning formats to parcel out some of the content. So, how do you select the content for your lecture? Content should be selected based on three levels of need: 1) what the participants **MUST KNOW**—this is the essential take-home information and should be limited to five or six points, 2) what the participants **SHOULD KNOW**—this detail supplements the essential material and should only be included if you have time, and 3) what the participants **COULD KNOW**—this is the relevant stuff but really, not essential. How do you decide what is essential lecture content versus could know content? Here is one approach; maybe you could think of another one based on your own area of expertise. Look at the list of behavioral objectives that you have prepared for your lecture (or, write the behavioral objectives for your lecture, remembering to use active, measurable verbs). As a content expert, you will be very familiar with your topic area, therefore take a minute to think about the material you will need to cover in order to teach your list of objectives. Highlight content which you consider is particularly challenging or difficult to grasp, possibly requires a lot of explanation and first hand knowledge. This, in essence, should form the content of your lecture. Refer back to your list of objectives and place an asterisk next to those objectives which you will cover in the lecture. Using another

method, maybe a different font colour, highlight the remaining objectives which you will not cover during lecture and assign an educational method for each one. The method you choose could be to list a book chapter that students should read with some accompanying practice exam questions, to prepare a study guide which covers the topic area or schedule tutorial or practical sessions. Careful forethought and preparation needs to be undertaken because content for which you assign to students may form the foundation for your lecture and they will need to come to your lecture prepared! A natural bonus to this approach is that the student-assigned material can provide an excellent ice-breaker for the introduction to your lecture. For example, as part of the 'set' you could include an interactive question session pitching questions to your learned audience about their assigned activity. Once you have identified content for your lecture next consider what educational strategies you will use to deliver it. Lectures are easily made ineffective and sleep-inducing if you spend the whole hour lecturing to a passive audience. Try to limit your lecturing to 10-min blocks with active sessions inserted in between to break up the session. Your students will really appreciate it. The 'active' component could be as simple as showing a video clip, demonstrating a procedure or role-play, posing questions with i-clickers or having your audience work in small groups. If you feel you are unable to offer a varied format, then do try to at least engage your audience throughout. Identify junctures between slides where you can take a few minutes for a Q&A session. Audience response systems (i-clickers) are perfect for this because they inform both audience and presenter on how well the material is being received. Once you have delivered the content, you should think about how to end the lecture; this is **Part 3 The closure**. At the conclusion of your lecture the key points of your lecture should be re-stated and related back to the objectives. This is also the time to provide learners with a sense of achievement by asking "What did you learn today?" Students are motivated to remember content and will be encouraged to learn more.

## *Educational Strategies*

<b>EXAMPLES OF TEACHING METHODS</b>		
To Enhance Knowledge (cognitive domain)	To Develop Skills (psychomotor domain)	To Change Values/Attitudes (affective domain)
Assigned reading	Case studies	Role plays
Multi-media	Demonstration & practice	Case studies
Visual aids (charts, graphs)	Experiments	Critical incidents
Reflection & discussion	Role plays	Debates
Research	Drills	Games
Brainstorming	Models	Journaling
Lectures	Games	Learning contracts
Small groups		Field projects
		Reflection

Table 1. Educational strategy options to match the type of learning to be achieved based on the respective learning domain.

### *Common Fears and Helpful Tips*

Looking out upon your audience, heart thumping, adrenaline-infused butterflies flying out of control.....we've all been there. Speaking in public is genuinely scary for most people, including many whom outwardly seem very calm. So how do you settle the butterflies and get them all flying in formation? Preparation, planning and practice go a long way to increasing your confidence which is key to you being relaxed and in control. If you are confident about your presentation, your body language will convey this to the audience and they will respond accordingly which in turn will make you feel more relaxed and you may even begin to enjoy yourself. Good presenting is about entertaining as well as delivering your message. You don't have to be a natural stand-up comedian but by injecting some appropriate humour into your lecture you will help your audience retain the information you are conveying; people tend to learn more if they are relaxed and enjoying themselves. So at the beginning of your lecture, take a few deep breaths and walk off some of those butterflies before entering the theatre. Prepare and rehearse your introduction, ensuring that you build your own credibility and take control of the presentation. Engage your audience by making good eye contact, smile, stand so that you can be seen. Don't distance yourself by hiding behind a podium. Scan the audience and select a few friendly faces that say to you "I want you to do well" and if you feel those butterflies return, look at one of those friendly faces to help settle

*"An important goal in health education is to encourage cooperation among students in order for them to work as effective team members"*

*Genn & Harden 1986*

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*"Some people will  
like me and  
some won't.  
So I might as well  
be myself,  
and then at  
least I'll  
know that  
the people who  
like  
me, like me."*

*-- Hugh Prather.*

***Common Fears and Helpful Tips*** continued from page 3

your nerves. There is usually an audience member sitting with arms folded tightly with a look that says "go on then, impress me". Well, just don't look at them! Once into the flow of your lecture you will find that you begin to relax and your audience will too. To maintain this connection, inject variety with the use of diversions, like a media presentation, a demonstration, an interesting anecdote or some audience interaction. A person's attention span for any single item is between 5-10 minutes, so if you spend longer talking about one item you will run the risk of sending your audience into the MEGO state (**My Eyes Glaze Over**). So the key is to use a suitable blend of media and movement to maintain attention and interest. If possible, even include activities which help to stimulate as many senses as possible, not just visual or auditory; perhaps use props and pass them around. Maybe incorporate content which could stimulate emotion, memory, feelings and even physical movement. Make use of analogies and themes and reinforce them with images or props. The more your audience can connect with the information you are conveying the better they will retain it and they will enjoy themselves in the process which can only heighten their learning experience. At the end of your lecture offer a strong review of the material just covered and relate back to your objectives. The law of primacy and recency says we'll best remember the first and last things we hear, therefore have a strong opening and a strong closing in your lecture. So points to remember are, smile, well-rehearsed opening set, preparation and practice, impact, interest, entertainment, use of body language, humour, confidence, variety, props, audience connection and most important, enjoy the experience and have fun!

***Your notes....***



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