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Lesson Plan for Dissection

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Prior Lessons: Day 1 – Course Design process & SLO  
Day 2 – Checking for understanding using CATs


Note: The introductory activities, including the Big Ideas, have been omitted in order to make the lesson plan sample more printable.

9:20 a.m. Slide 8. Introduce Classroom Facts of Life. “Fact 1, what students learn is always less than what we teach. It’s a brain-based fact. Our working memory has a limited capacity, and it takes repetition, repetition, and practice, practice to develop long-term memory. Much of what students learn is determined by the native ability, background in course content, motivation for taking the class, match between their preferred learning style and the instructor’s preferred teaching style. When there is a mismatch, both need to learn to adjust in order for learning to take place. In a college classroom, the typical method of learning is lecture or auditory. What percentage of students are auditory learners? [Accept all responses.] What percentage of professors are auditory learners? [Accept all responses.] In general, 80% or more of professors are auditory learners while students are about equally distributed between auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. We simply can’t do anything about students’ abilities, backgrounds, motivations or learning styles, but unlike Level 1 Teachers who classify students as ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ Level 3 Teachers understand the in order to maximize student learning, we can use target teaching strategies to ensure that all students learn.”

9:30 a.m. Slide 11. “Now that you’ve seen an ineffective lecture, revisit your list of effective lecture characteristics and make any needed revisions. [Pass out Sentence Rating Sheets while participants are referring to their lists. When done handing out sheets, continue . . . ] Now that you’re seen how not to lecture, I’m going to demonstrate a more effective form of lecturing by conducting an experiment. Since there are so many different disciplines here, I can’t lecture on a topic you’re likely to teach, and I’ll be using a series of silly sentences to represent two ways in which you might lecture on any topic. Now I’m sure you know that lecturing is auditory based and therefore you must enunciate clearly so that students can repeat what you say.

For the first simulated lecture, I’ll read 10 sentences. After I read each, rate the sentence on how clearly I pronounced by circling your rating on the sheet I provided. Are there any questions before I begin? [Read sentences 1-10 slowly and clearly, passing between each to allow participants to circle a response.] Now I’m going to show you another way to lecture, again using silly sentences but as I read the next set, please form a vivid mental picture or image of the action and then rate the sentence on how easily you were able to form the image. Are there any questions?” [Read sentences 11-20 slowly and clearly, in the same manner as the first set was read.]
And because we’re trying to develop an understanding of learning-centered teaching, I’m going to give you a short quiz to see how much you retained. Turn the sheet over. On the other side you will see a space you can use to answer each quiz question. The first questions will be about the first 10 sentences you heard. Are you ready?” [Read the first 10 questions, providing enough time for participant to right a response.] Next I’ll ask you questions about the second set of sentences. [Read questions 11-20.]

This time, as I read the first questions again, if you think you know the answer, call it out. [If no one knows can answer, the question, or given an incomplete or incorrect response, give the correct answer. Poll the participants to obtain their scores for the number of questions answered correctly for the first 10 questions. For example, *Now many answered all ten correctly? Nine? Eight? Etc. Write results on the board.*] Now I’ll read he second set of questions, once again, if you think you know the answer, call it out.” [Again poll the participants to obtain their scores for the number of questions answered correctly and write the results on the board.]

**Think-Pair-Share.** Have participants get into pairs or small groups and discuss the following questions:

- “Did you retained information better auditorily (sound/pronunciation) or visually (vivid pictures)? What might account for this:

- Would you have learned more about lectures if I had lectured about lectures? [During the debrief, accept all responses. Get at the idea that, not only were participants DOING something in the second set, they were also using multiple sense—both auditory & visual.]

- What are the implications of this experiment for teaching and learning in your target class?” [Encourage additional discussion.]

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**Slide 12.** “I hope this little experiment helps you to better understand the first Fact of Classroom Life, ‘What students learn is always less than what is taught’ even when content is interesting to the listener. For example, many studies show that

- Viewer who just watched the evening news could recall only 17.2% of the content. As a citizen I find that shocking and I used to wonder why. Now I know that, based on of 40 plus years of educational research . . .

- We speak at about 125-175 words per minute while

- We can listen at up to 450 words per minute—a 75% time differential which allows our minds to wander and, in all to many cases, draw pictures in the margins of our lecture notes, text a friend, check out FaceBook and engage in countless other modern day distractions

- Did you know that the spoken words account for only 30-35% of transmitted meaning, and the remaining 65-70% is transmitted through nonverbal communication, things like our tone of voice, gestures, posture and facial expressions. When I stand in front of a class in a ridged posture, arms crossed, silent, dour faced and possibly tapping my foot impatiently, I can communicate my displeasure with students’ behavior without saying a word. So how we say something is often more important than what we say.

What, then, can we do to increase our students attention so that you won’t constantly hear, ‘What did you say?’”

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**Slide 13.** “When you are planning your lessons, think back to the video we saw the first day. Recall that Level 3 teachers are the gold standard and the more you can be like a Level 3 teacher, the more your students will learn. Level 3 teachers understand that both Robert and Susan learn best and most deeply in a ‘critical learning environment’ where they . . .

- try to answer interesting questions or intriguing solve problems about things they find important, attention-grabbing or perhaps beautiful

- try, fail, receive feedback & try again before their work is judged

- face repeated challenges to their existing fundamental paradigms—they must care that their existing paradigms do not work—that’s where knowledge-type probes and CATs help by giving students the opportunity to speculate, even before they know anything

- feel in control of their own learning because you’ve given them some choices—for example, by asking students what percent the quizzes or class participation should count in the final grade scheme

- value what they are learning because you have shown them to purpose of what you are asking them to do—the WIIFM ‘what’s in it for me’ factor

- believe their work matters & will be considered fairly and honestly

Above all, remember that ‘talking without learning is just talking!’”

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**FYI:** This lesson plan is a segment from Day3 of the Introduction to College Teaching series, which included the Lesson Planning component that is an online module. The lesson plan for the three hour session is 24 pages long or 8 pages per hour.