

# **Preparing a Presentation/Lecture: The How-To's**

*“Lecturing can be a vibrant teaching method, if you are well prepared.”*  
*--J. & J. Murray*

## **Objectives**

At the end of this session participants will be able to

- Explain the purpose of lecturing.
- Identify characteristics of effective presentations/lectures as they relate to principles of adult learning and presentation/lecture preparation.
- Apply the “preparation” step of the A.P.E.S. model to their presentations/lectures.

### **Principles of adult learning:**

1. Adults want to use what they've learned soon after learning it.
2. Adults want to problem solve and learn principles and concepts; adults do not want to memorize facts. Application is key.
3. Not even the most motivated learners can listen to a presentation/lecture for longer than 15 minutes before their attention wanders.

### **So why lecture?**

Effective lecturing expands upon or clarifies material and provides opportunities to increase students' understanding. This is accomplished based on the instructor's fidelity to the objectives, organization of material, and appropriate amounts of material per presentation/lecture.

### **Murray A.P.E.S. Model for Presentations/Lectures – An Overview**

#### **What is the “Anticipation” Step?**

This is the time to take stock of the context in which the presentation/lecture is being presented. Consider the curriculum, course goals, pedagogy, learning styles, and student's level of preparation. Also, be sensitive to the time of day and physical set-up of the classroom. Next, consider the students' prior knowledge and experience. Finally, the most important component in the “Anticipation” step is to design learning objectives to identify desired instructional outcomes.

#### **What is the “Preparation” Step?**

This step involves decisions regarding selection, acquisition, design, and construction. Selection requires the instructor to prioritize the content to be included and thereby through implication, that content which is to be cut. Acquisition is to attain those resources needed to present content. Remember to consider changing the pace of the presentation/lecture to overcome waning attention spans. Design and construction refer to the format of the presentation/lecture including the four parts: pre-opening, opening, body, and closing.

#### **What is the “Execution” Step?**

This step is where you deliver the presentation/lecture considering timing, speech habits, demeanor and body language. Although commonly overlooked, these impact effective teaching and learning.

#### **What is the “Support” Step?**

Consider evaluating the presentation/lecture via self-reflection, audio- or videotape, peer collaboration, student surveys, and student focus groups. After collecting feedback through any of these means, make the appropriate adjustments. Some problems related to execution can be resolved immediately, while some may have to wait until you do the presentation/lecture again.

## How is Murray “Preparation” step applied?

1. Look at the objectives and figure out what content needs to be covered to meet the learning objectives.

### Activity 1: Use objectives to guide content

1. Individually, list all of the content that needs to be taught in order to achieve the learning objectives.
2. With your partner, exchange the learning objectives and the list of content to be covered in your lecture. Is there a match? Was a concept/term overlooked? Is there “extraneous” content or content that is too detailed?

2. Review the content again. This time categorize the material into the following three areas:
  - a. Prior knowledge/experience that the students already have
  - b. Knowledge that can be *reasonably* acquired through student’s preparation (reading assignments)
  - c. Content that must be expanded upon, illustrated and/or clarified.

Although #1 and #2 are briefly addressed in your presentation/lecture to remind the learners of the importance of that material, #3 is the main focus.

### Activity 2: Categorize and select content to cover in lecture

1. Categorize the content into the three areas:
  - a. Content that students should already know through prior knowledge/experience.
  - b. Content that students can learn through class preparation (definition of terms and concepts)
  - c. Content that the instructor must expand upon, illustrate, or clarify.
2. With your partner, exchange the content that belongs in each category. Evaluate your partner’s categorization. Is the content in each category reasonable/appropriate?

3. Review the content of your presentation/lecture in terms of time constraints. Consider including *only three to four points* in a 50-minute period, cutting out topics rather than condensing them, and allowing time for questions.

### Activity 3: Consider time constraints

1. Individually, decide if the material to be presented fits in the time given. Are there too many points to be covered? Is there time for questions?
2. With your partner, exchange your outline and evaluate whether the content to be covered is too ambitious. Is it reasonable? Can a topic be cut-out? Or can a concept be reasonably acquired through the learner’s preparation (i.e. reading assignments)?

4. Think about your presentation/lecture. What is the most logical way to organize the content that must be expanded on, illustrated or clarified (Category 3)?

**Activity 4: Organize the lecture**

1. Individually organize the content into the order in which the material is to be presented.
2. With your partner, exchange your outline and evaluate the logic behind the order. Is there anything that seems out of place?

5. Review the presentation/lecture to ensure that the content will be explained clearly. Consider the following questions when evaluating the clarity of the content to be presented:

- Are the concepts couched in the larger context of the course/program?
- Are general statements followed with one or two specific examples?
- Is the material stressed through repetition?
- Are new or technical terms defined?

**Activity 5: Clearly explain the content.**

1. Individually evaluate the lecture to see if the material will be presented clearly. Consider the above bulleted questions.
2. With your partner, exchange your outline and evaluate whether the content to be covered will be explained clearly. *Think of yourself as a novice rather than an expert.* Keep in mind the bulleted questions posed above.

## References

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- Johnstone, H. & Percival, F. (1976). Attention breaks in lectures. *Education in chemistry*. 13(2), 49-50.
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