

## Educational Support Cell (ESC)/TLDE Tips & Strategies

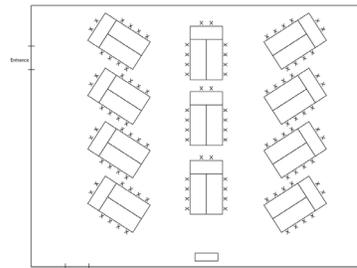
### ***Tips for preparing for large class instruction***

When asked to give a presentation as a guest speaker recently, I was thrilled by the invitation. But when hearing that it was for a group of 120+, I must confess that I panicked a bit. While some told me that I should ask to split the group in order to make it more interactive, I was reminded by my own words that good presenters can make learning interactive for any size group. Therefore, I took on the challenge, rolled up my sleeves, and began planning for a two- hour presentation. For me, this was the opportunity to practice what I preach! For years, I have been promoting the idea that student engagement and interaction are critical for student retention and learning. I have been critical of classes that simply go through slides and rely on PowerPoint presentations with little or no interaction from the participants. Therefore, this opportunity to give a presentation to this large group was critical to my pride and reputation. Obviously, I wanted to succeed with the task and not walk away a fraud.

Luckily, I felt very comfortable with the content but, I knew that I needed to plan a presentation that would interest and engage the large group. Nobody likes to hear a Subject Matter Expert ramble on and on so it had to be interactive and give the students the opportunity to use their own experiences and to apply the content to their own lives.

Before planning my presentation, I took a look at the space provided. Luckily, it was a rather large classroom filled with tables that I could arrange so that students were able to sit in groups of 10. In addition, I arranged them so that they were angled to give

participants both a view of the front of the classroom in case I needed the screen but also made it easy to work as teams. The picture to the right illustrates the classroom set up of tables to facilitate groups in the large classroom. After feeling good about the room arrangement, I started planning. As all good instructors know, the more you plan, the more you rehearse, the



better you are at leading an interactive and engaging presentation. Since I never know

how the technology will be when I serve as a guest presenter, I usually shy away from it and rely on good old-fashioned paper, pencil, and movement with hands-on activities and a hand-out. Knowing that it was going to be difficult to keep 120+ actively engaged for two hours, I made a plan which included a variety of instructional activities designed to encourage discussion, movement, reflection, listening, and writing. By incorporating a variety of activities, the plan was sure to connect to the different learning preferences of the participants. The plan also incorporated appropriate chunking so that students had the opportunity to “do something” with the material every 10-15 minutes. In addition, it included group presentations, a KWL chart, carousel brainstorming, and plenty of questions.

The ESC provides support for the uniform application of USAJFKSW CS educational processes across the Institution to include:

-Support to Curriculum & Instruction [Courses and Instructors];

-Support to Leadership & Professional Development Initiatives;

-Support to the development and implementation of program evaluation

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I started the class with a brief introduction and the objective for the day followed by a few ground rules regarding expectations for the two hours. With all the business out of the way, we started with our hands-on motivator in which participants moved around the room to complete a chart which connected to their different learning styles and preferences. This motivator was then used as a springboard into the actual presentation. Throughout the presentation, I provided some material or explanation either through verbal lecture or hand-outs. However, as explained earlier, the presentation was “chunked” so that participants did something after each segment of new information. In order to give everyone an opportunity to answer questions, the “Think, Pair, Share” strategy was incorporated. I would ask a question, tell students to “think about it,” and then discuss with the person beside them and then expand the discussion to the table group. Once these discussions were generated, I randomly called on different tables to share what they had discussed. Since discussion is one of the most powerful learning tools out there, this strategy is effective in encouraging everyone to share their ideas and thoughts about what they are learning. As the presenter, I roamed among the table groups to listen and provide immediate feedback to either correct or incorrect information.

### Tips for Engaging Instruction

1. **Chunking:** For every ten minutes of instruction, allow the students two minutes to process and respond to the instruction (i.e. quick writes, Most Important Point, open-ended questions for discussion).
2. **Movement:** Incorporate movement during the presentation (i.e. Stand up and pair up, Carousel Brainstorming, Gallery Walk).
3. **Think-Pair-Share:** Students share and compare possible answers to a question with a partner before addressing the larger class.
4. **Summarize:** Use a 3-2-1 closure or simply ask, “What did you learn today?”

In addition to the discussions, opportunities for movement were incorporated into my plan. When people sit for too long, they can lose interest. Therefore, it was important that movement was used frequently throughout the presentation. One method I chose to use was the Carousel Brainstorming in which participants had to rotate among the room and read different scenarios which were taped on poster board. This information could have been on a PowerPoint but instead of asking them to passively read PowerPoint slides, they actually had to get up, read the information, record their thoughts, and move around the room. This strategy is an effective tool to promote engagement and participation.

Finally, the presentation concluded with a summary in which I asked participants to complete a 3-2-1 chart. I asked them to list 3 interesting facts they learned from the presentation, 2 things that they would use in the future, and 1 – the “Most Important Point” they learned from the presentation. After asking them to discuss their charts at their table, we concluded the day with a few sharing some of their thoughts about the presentation to the entire group.

What did I learn from the event? Well, I totally reinforced my belief that you can implement small group interactive strategies in a large group, but I was also reminded that in order to make a presentation or lesson engaging, it does take **planning, planning, and more planning**. Will I change anything if asked to give this presentation again – yes- there are always ways that we can do things better!

If you are interested in learning about some of the techniques used in the presentation or others, contact the ESC. We have workshops that explain how to plan and implement these and many more engagement strategies. Just let us know – we stand by to assist.