E-1: Clearly present academic content

TEACHFORAMERICA

Read the audience and respond to student engagement and understanding

How do I read my audience as I present content?

To be in tune with what's going on at all times make sure to:

Monitor student engagement
Think: What are students **doing** during my presentation?

Signs of student engagement	Signs of student disengagement
 • talking when appropriate, on topic • lots of eager participation • eyes on the speaker • nodding heads • good posture - sitting up straight • looks of interest, curiosity, excitement • actively listening when others are talking	• talking at inappropriate times and/or about topics not relevant to class • lack of participation (when you ask questions, you hear crickets) • eyes aren't on you • blank stares • heads down, droopy eyelids, zzz's • looks of boredom, disinterest, or frustration • fidgety, playing with things in their hands

Once you monitor engagement levels, consider how to respond appropriately.

Check student understanding
Think: Are students getting it?

To know if students are following your key points, you must check for understanding as you present new material. (E-3)

Figure out what students (or groups) get it and who is struggling.
Follow-up to determine the extent of understanding.

Once you know if students are getting it or not, consider how to respond to student understanding (see below).

Keep track of time
Think: How long am I taking?

To know how much time is allotted in your plans and how long you are taking, consider these tips:

• **Use a kitchen timer -** start it when you begin your presentation or have it count down and alert you when your time is up
• **Make sure there is a place where you can easily check the time** (using a clock, a watch, etc.)

If you notice you're running out of time or have extra time, consider how to adjust in the moment (see below).

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How do I respond to student engagement and understanding?

If things are not going exactly as planned, determine the cause of the problem, consider the content of your lesson, the style of your presentation, or other factors. The chart below outlines a few problems and some potential causes and solutions (but realize it doesn't cover all possibilities). Use this chart as a catalyst for reflecting on your own practice.

Note: It can be difficult to make accurate judgments about the root causes of what's going on in your classroom, especially in the moment. Read more about how to consistently reflect on your classroom using the reflective cycle discussed in the CIE section of this site.

Identify the Problem *by reading the audience and monitoring the time* →	Determine the Cause *There are many possibilities, including:*	Respond Appropriately

Students look bored, uninterested, talkative, etc.	(1) they don't get it
	(2) they already know it
	(3) there's a problem with your presentation style
	(4) behavioral expectations are not clear enough or need to be reinforced
	(5) they're not invested in your class
		(1) or (2) Check for understanding and follow-up (E-3):
		    if students struggle - re-teach in a new way, spend more time modeling, do extra problems, etc.;
		    if students understand, pick up the pace and/or challenge students to higher levels of understanding
		
		(3) try speaking up, making more eye contact, adding more energy, or soliciting more student participation
		(4) communicate expectations and respond to misbehavior (see E-4)
		(5) look at different investment strategies to target the student with the right solutions

Students are participating but are not understanding	(1) they're having trouble hearing what you're saying and/or (2) your content isn't clear, organized, or broken down to the right level for your students	(1) check your volume, speak more clearly, and don't talk too quickly (2) try explaining your key points in a different way, break down your points into smaller, more basic ideas to see where students are confused. make sure to plan for misunderstandings before the lesson

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Student understanding is all over the place some are confused, others are with you, others know everything already	(1) Your students are coming into the lesson on different academic levels (2) Your teaching methods may not address some students' learning styles or needs	(1) or (2) Make sure to develop and use your differentiation plans (P-4) Here are some possibilities: - Group students during practice to address different needs - Push students who already understand to more challenging levels - Use students who get it as tutors for those who are struggling - Present your content in different ways and utilize different learning modalities
You're running out of time	(1) students get it, but it took longer than expected (2) students aren't getting it and you're over time	(1) pick up the pace, condense parts of your lesson, use fewer examples, etc (2) determine what's causing their confusion and address the misunderstanding (E-3)
You have extra time	(1) you rushed through material and students don't get it (2) students got it more quickly than anticipated (or you went quicker than planned and students still got it)	(1) don't move on without checking for understanding and addressing student misconceptions (E-3) (2) push students to higher-levels of thinking and understanding

*Notes on adjusting your style
Different teachers have different personalities and teaching styles. You don't always have to make radical changes to your style in order to effectively adjust your presentation.
Consider small stylistic tweaks that can enhance your presentation, and review best practices for engaging students.