

Ms. Mott's Crash Course in Pedagogy

The Basics:

So to prepare for your mini-lessons, I am going to give you a brief online-lecture and an introduction to pedagogy. We will go over this again in class, while we discuss the place of both STEM and Arts education in a changing world.

The most important thing to know about teaching and education in general is that learning is different for everyone. Every student learns a skill or task differently, whether a child, a teenager, or an adult. For this reason, when you teach a lesson it is best to incorporate many different kinds of learning and learners into your plan.

It is key to understand that in this assignment you are not actually teaching a specific objective. I.E. *How to use prepositional phrases in argumentative academic writing*. You are NOT I repeat, NOT doing that. What you are doing is leading a class discussion. You still need to have an objective, but it will be a little more broad, such as *have all students actively participated in each activity, and demonstrated understanding and fluency of the subject discussed?* Therefore your methodology will be different as well. You will focus on activities which inform and explain your position, but whose incentive is to propagate a riotous class discussion.

Here are the different kinds of learning:

Visual: Visual learners learn best by looking. They enjoy reading (and often prefer to see the words they are learning) and seeing pictures.

Auditory: Auditory learners learn best by listening. They work well with spoken instructions and learn quickly by listening to stories and songs. They will not need to see written words to learn.

Tactile: Tactile learners learn physically by touching and manipulating objects.

Kinesthetic: Kinesthetic learners learn physically by moving around.

Analytic learners focus on the details of language, such as grammar rules, and enjoy taking apart words and sentences.

Global learners focus on the whole picture and do not care so much about specific details. They do not want to get bored with slow moving lessons and enjoy interesting and attractive materials.

Your Thesis: One of the most important things to do in a discussion is to figure out your position on the topic. Let me stress that this isn't necessarily your opinion. More so, this is the focus of the discussion in an extremely broad way. A thesis is not a question, and it is not a fact, it is **an argumentative statement** based on the theme or topic you are discussing. A thesis must be able to be argued with.

Non-example: *Ida is a Polish film which came out in 2014.*

- Can you argue with that? Nope.

Example: *The film Ida portrays Poles during the Second World War in a controversial way.*

- Can you argue with that? Absolutely. Is the author's opinion evident in the question? A bit. Can we establish what the kind of controversy is? Why? How? Not without a discussion.

Formulating Essential Questions: Your essential questions will be the questions you want the class to answer. To formulate meaningful essential questions which the class will have a lot to say about, you simply break apart the meat of your thesis and branch out a bit. For instance, if we were having a class discussion on the above mention thesis about the film *Ida* some of the essential questions would be:

- After a major event like the Second World War, and Holocaust occurs, who is allowed to talk about it?
- In a life-threatening situation, what makes some people help, and some people complicit?
- After a national tragedy like the Second World War, how should a country and its citizens heal?
- Is it better to forget a national tragedy, or continue to learn about it so it is not repeated?

Class Activities:

Project-Based Learning:

This looks like you developing a thorough project which tests skills of the students, and sets out to answer the essential questions you have formulated your lesson around. This more creative approach requires planning and most often, an exemplar (this is where you show students what a 5 looks like on this assignment) It is usually done in pairs or groups, and requires many working parts. A play, a skit, a travel brochure, a political campaign, a news broadcast, a job interview, etc. Really ANY situation can be one of learning, if you, as the teachers, just set it up as such.

Roundtable Discussion: Provide the group with several questions which are derivatives of your main essential question. For instance, if your essential question is *how does technology impact our lives and identity?* You would ask several questions around this topic.

- How has technology impact your relationships with friends and family?
- Have you ever found something out via technology that made you upset, angry, or generally feel negative?
- Do you see younger generations as increasingly dependent on technology, or do they understand the place of such devices and can compartmentalize?

Group Questions: This appears to be one of the most boring formats, but it's actually not. It works well to allow your students to speak to one another in an environment not charged with the pressure of being instructor-centric.

Ask A Question: This is one of my personal favorite activities, but it is one of the most difficult. This format is geared towards visual learners, and centers around the ability to ask, analyze, and form a thesis. Three of the most important skills not just in the classroom, but in life in general. Without the ability to question and analyze, we are no different than iPhone Siri. Okay, maybe that's a little dramatic, but it's true. This activity requires you as the instructor, to focus on picking out material and extra-curriculars for the class to see, read or view, which will provoke a question. There are again, two ways to do this. One is to simply put a standard image, cartoon or video which you want students to analyze. Another, is to try and get people talking by picking a purposefully controversial image.

Here is an example.

Option #1:



Option #2:



Think-Pair-Share: Often embedded in the text of a lecture, this activity is used as a way to break up the monotony of a lesson, and also serves as a CFU or, a “Check for

Understanding.” For instance, if you are lecturing or discussing the value of technology in the ability to create artificial intelligence, or in manufacturing prosthetics for amputees you may want to, instead of saying “Technology is valuable though, right guys? For producing prosthetics for amputees?” Don’t say that, remember you are leading the discussion first, participating in the discourse second. You would instead ask, “Okay guys, with a partner, brainstorm three ways technology can benefit the lives of individuals.” No doubt, each partnership will come up with some great and original ways, and then the discussion will not only center on something as specific as prosthetic limbs, but on the score of information students have just provided for you. This is also a collaborative activity.

Write-It-Out:

Generally, focus on this at the beginning, middle, and end of class. If your topic for discussion again, is technology, you would ask a question like- “Do you long to go back to a time without cell phones? Maybe you remember when life was a little simpler? If so, describe why, and if you are comfortable living in this day and age, why is it better than the past?” Ask students to write for 10-15 minutes, and then not only have they reflected on the topic you are about to lecture on, but you may require them to read their answers aloud as well.

Lecture Vs. Seminar

The Harvard Crimson

Key difference: A lecture is when a professor or teacher stands in front of a large class and just gives the information that is required by the students. A seminar, on the other hand, is a more discussion oriented lesson.



Seminars and lectures are forms of education that take place in college and at times even after. Essentially, a lecture is when a professor or teacher stands in front of a large class and just gives the information that is required by the students. A seminar, on the other hand, is a more discussion oriented lesson.

According to Dictionary.com, a seminar is “a small group of students, as in a university, engaged in advanced study and original research under a member of the faculty and meeting regularly to exchange information and hold discussions.” It is “any meeting for exchanging information and holding discussions.” Whereas, a lecture is “a speech read or delivered before an audience or class, especially for instruction or to set forth some subject.” For example: a lecture on Picasso's paintings.

The term ‘lecture’ dates back to the 14th century and originated from the Latin *lectus*, pp. of *legere* ‘to read.’ ‘Lecture’ means the ‘action of reading, that which is read.’ In the 16th century, the term came to denote an “oral discourse on a given subject before an audience for purposes of instruction.”

The modern lecture is an oral presentation intended to present information or to teach people about a particular subject. The lecture can be by a university or college teacher or professor, a politician's speech, a minister's sermon, or even a businessman's sales presentation. The lecture aims to convey critical information, history, background, theories and equations to its target audience.

Lectures are often criticized as a teaching method, claiming that most students are not able to pay attention and absorb the required knowledge by listening to a professor drizzle on about a topic for an hour and a half. However, lectures are cheap for the universities or colleges, as one professor can lecture around 100 to 200 students in the same hour and a half. However, many claim that in this form of learning, there is: no hands on approach; no practical knowledge gained; minimal professor – student relationship; and no special attention on the students learning needs. Due to this many support or sponsor a learning environment similar to a seminar.

A seminar is “a form of academic instruction that has the function of bringing together small groups for recurring meetings, focusing each time on some particular subject, in which everyone present is requested to actively participate.” Basically, it allows a small group of students, such as anywhere between 10 and 40, to discuss the relevant topic or lesson on hand. They are often supervised or guided by a professor, teacher, seminar leader or instructor. Students may discuss the topic, or do an individual/group project or research and present their findings. In a seminar, assigned readings can be discussed, questions can be raised and debates can be conducted.



This form of teaching incorporates all the factors that the lectures tend to miss out on. As they are more hands-on, students tend to learn more and remember more, as they learned by doing instead of just half listening to a professor and memorizing facts and figures. It is relatively informal, as compared to the lecture system of academic instruction. The word seminar is derived from the Latin word seminarium, meaning "seed plot".

Normally, in universities and college, especially in countries, such as the US and Canada, the lectures are conducted for entry level students to acquaint them to the subjects and topic in the particular field of study. Whereas, seminars are reserved for upper-class and advanced students, who are required to learn more and are expected to be knowledgeable in their field of study. However, in UK and Australian universities seminars are often used for all years, entry-level as well as advanced.