Good teaching in the lecture mode: Lesson clarity
Prof. Nira Hativa, Tel Aviv University
Three-Level Hierarchical Model of Teaching Dimensions

Main Dimensions

Intermediate-Level Dimensions

Low-Level Dimensions
Classroom Behaviors/Teaching Techniques:
“Do’s and don’ts”
A model of Main Teaching Dimensions

Categories

Affective: Classroom environment
- Positive Interactions
- Care, respect, support

Cognitive: Effective communication
- Organized
- Clear
- Interesting: Promoting concentration & attention
What is the meaning of clear teaching?

Clear teaching = Students’ understanding

Teaching in a way that students construct their new knowledge so as they achieve a sound level of understanding
What are intermediate/low-level dimensions of clear teaching?

a. Facilitating input thru senses
b. Reducing cognitive load
c. Constructing new knowledge
d. Deepening the new knowledge—looking back, sharpening the meaning
a. Facilitating input thru senses

Avoiding “noise”: in hearing, visual, logical, internal/emotional
Multiple-channel communication

Communication of same information thru speech, writing, face mimics, supporting gestures, demonstration, picture, diagram, painting, videotape
b. Reducing cognitive load

- Breaking down the new information into small units
- Teaching the small units step by step
- Providing “wait time” and every so often other breaks/pauses in the material presentation
Meaningful learning is possible only when the learner relates new material to an already existing cognitive structure. Understanding develops through an active process of thinking and building networks of bodies of knowledge.
c. Constructivist learning theory

Students will learn and remember information better when they can make more cognitive associations with this information and more interconnections between the new and the already known.
c. Building new knowledge, based on the Constructivist learning theory

1. Connecting to existing knowledge
2. Creating a common base of knowledge to all students in class
3. Adapting to student diversity: Adjustment to the individual and his/her interpretation
1. Connecting to existing knowledge

- Identifying relevant knowledge and reminding it
- Reviewing relevant knowledge
- Identifying similarities and differences between new and old knowledge—comparing and contrasting
- Presenting interconnections between new and old knowledge, i.e., generalizations, special cases
2. Creating a common base of knowledge to all students in class

Starting with **examples, demonstrations, analogies, metaphors, cases, events, incidents, anecdotes, vignettes**

Starting with **visual representation: a drawing, picture, graph, two- or three-dimensional model, computerized animation, videotape, etc.**

Starting with the **main/central idea, advance organizer, end results, an algorithm for solution, a plan for action, a simulation of the process, a reduced/simplified version – more specific/concrete, less rigorous and less accurate.**
3. Adapting to student diversity: Adjustment to the individual and his/her interpretation

Identifying factors of diversity

Questioning, questionnaire, interview, exam/test

Adapting teaching to student diversity

- Reviews, repeating explanations
- Adapting the pace, pauses
- Adapting teaching methods: verbal/visual/written/built on intuition and imagery

Examining students’ understanding throughout the lesson

- Questioning (Socratic, questions to students, encouraging students’ questions)
- Analyzing homework assignments (problem solving, learning journals, asking for explanations, reflection, etc)

Examining students’ understanding outside classtime

Homework projects and assignments, exams, meeting with students, help thru email, Internet, personal discussions etc.
d. Deepening the new knowledge — looking back, sharpening the meaning

- Presenting additional examples, demos, analogies, metaphors, cases, events, vignettes, anecdotes, rule-example-rule
- Additional understanding performances in increasing level of difficulty
- Identifying potential problems and errors