Giving a good classroom lecture

Help students understand, connect, and apply what they learn.



Start with the students

Decide what students should be able to do afterwards.

Check course objectives and prior teaching. Identify the knowledge students need.
Connect the topic to a relevant problem. Choose examples at the right level.

Ask: “What have you already learned about this? Where does it become difficult?”



Choose what must be learned

Leave room for explanation, examples, and practice.

Prioritize essential concepts. Move extra detail to notes or readings.
Build from familiar ideas. Explain new terms and model your reasoning.
Use a worked example. Highlight common errors.

Planning test: Does this detail help students meet the learning objectives?



Make the structure visible

Help students follow the ideas and the links between them.

Choose a sequence: a case, a comparison, or a process, for example.
Preview the route. Signpost transitions and emphasize key points.
Close each section with a brief summary. Link it to the next idea.

“We have explained the mechanism. Now let’s use it to interpret these findings.”



Reinforce important ideas

Return to key concepts in different ways.

Revisit an idea through a new example, question, or application.
Ask students to recall it before showing the answer.
Connect it to earlier teaching and to what comes next in the course.

Explain a principle. Apply it to a case. Later, test it with a different case.

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Plan what students will think about, as well as what you will say.



Make participation purposeful

Choose activities that serve the learning objectives.

Ask students to predict, decide, explain, compare, or apply.
Use a poll, short case, or paired discussion. Allow thinking time.
Discuss the reasoning. Use responses to decide what needs clarification.

> “Choose an answer. Compare your reasoning with a partner. Would you change it?”



Use slides and delivery to guide attention

Keep the focus on the learning.

Use readable text, strong contrast, and purposeful visuals. Cut clutter.
Explain graphs and describe key visuals aloud. Avoid reading slides verbatim.
Use the microphone. Face students. Pause at difficult points.

> Rehearse aloud. Include student thinking and questions when you time the session.



Plan a meaningful ending

Protect time to consolidate the learning.

Summarize the main ideas. Revisit the opening case or question.
Ask students to recall or apply a key concept. Clarify remaining uncertainty.
Leave an exit question and connect to the next learning activity.

> “How would you approach the opening case now? What is still unclear?”

STRUCTURE REMINDER: SET - BODY - CLOSURE

SET: MMUCKO

M Mood: create a welcoming climate. **M** Motivation: spark interest.
U Utility: show why it matters. **C** Content: outline what you will cover.
K Knowledge: identify what is needed. Activate what students already know.
O Objectives: clarify what students should be able to do.

BODY Explain. Illustrate. Apply. **CLOSURE** Summarize. Check. Connect.

Final check: Share accessible materials. Test technology. Check patient privacy and stereotypes.

Based on ISME’s “How To Give A Good Talk: Lectures and Beyond.” Further reading: Harbell & O’Sullivan (2022). Reviving the medical lecture. Reg Anesth Pain Med, 47, 331-336. doi:10.1136/rapm-2021-103401