

# Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Centre for Excellence in Teaching  
and Learning, The UWI Mona



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## Special points of interest:

- The Teaching Tips Newsletter is a publication of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at the UWI, Mona.
- The newsletter is published three times during each semester and once during the summer. It provides tips for improving teaching and learning in higher education and is available online (<http://myspot.mona.uwi.edu/cetl>) as well as in the office of the CETL.
- If you need additional teaching tips on specific classroom practices, please contact us.

## Welcome to the New Academic Year and a Special Note

As we commence the new academic year, the CETL welcomes you all back to the UWI and we wish for you a very productive and fulfilling semester. We trust you will participate in the faculty development sessions we have developed for you and that together we can find ways to truly advance learning in our classrooms.

In this issue, we are providing some tips that might be useful to you as you contemplate planning your teaching sessions. We are aware that lecturing continues to be a preferred pedagogical approach. Accordingly, whilst some of these tips are focused on the lecture approach, please be reminded that there are other pedagogical arrangements that offer greater returns to the university teacher in terms of advancing learning. The CETL would be happy to work with you to implement other teaching strategies.

## The British Broadcasting Corporation's 20 Tips on what makes a Good Lecturer

These teaching tips will help new lecturers to organize and deliver an effective teaching and learning experience.

### 1: Engage from the beginning

As a new lecturer, the first five minutes of your lecture provides a golden opportunity to get your students to sit up and pay attention. Start with the obvious – introduce yourself, explain your objectives for the lecture and outline learning outcomes. If you begin with passion and enthusiasm then your students are more likely to engage from the outset.

### 2: Spark Curiosity

Your introduction needs to engage, excite, challenge and create expectations, so add in interesting or little-known facts to spark curiosity from the very beginning. Scanning the room after the first five minutes will give you a good indication of how engaged your students appear to be.

### 3: Consider your framework

When preparing the framework of your lecture, consider the sequencing of your material and make sure that it's presented in a clear and logical manner. The pace should be well controlled so that you are able to move through the material keeping students engaged throughout.

### 4: Organization is everything

One of the crucial elements to a successful lecture is the planning process. You need to be fully confident about the content, structure and delivery of the material before you begin, so organization is a key part of successful lecturing.

### 5: Use visual aids to maintain interest

Lecture content has been revolutionized with the rising age of technology. With visual aids, lecture material can be broken up with visual stimulation such as educational videos, which are particularly effective in conveying information in a powerful manner, Keynote or PowerPoint.

### 6: Avoid jargon

There's nothing more likely to disengage your audience than endless jargon and abbreviations. If you are lecturing on a specialist subject, don't assume that your students will understand jargon from the outset – making your lecture accessible and clearly understood is critical.

### 7: Work on your presentation style

Good lecturing is a process of continuous improvement, so always strive for best practice with your presentation style. You can be animated without being theatrical – after all, you are not putting on a show – but you need to keep your students' attention. Avoid fidgeting and keep body language strong and confident.

### 8: Passion and enthusiasm goes a long way

Don't be afraid to show your genuine passion and enthusiasm for your subject. Conveying lecture material in an enthused and passionate manner will instantly attract attention and will help students to focus and endorse your point of view.

### 9: Watch your tone of voice

Make sure that you vary the intonation of your voice when presenting lectures. Use humour and conversational tone to help maintain attention. It can help to record your voice before your first lecture or ask friends and family for feedback.

#### **10: Pace the lecture well**

Try to pause at regular intervals to ensure that your students are still engaged and attentive. Ask questions to see if they are keeping up with the pace; this will help you to organize future lectures effectively.

#### **11: Include rarely-obtained information**

As an authoritarian on your specialist subject, there's no better way to impress students than to come up with new facts or information that your students can't easily get access to. This will spark their curiosity and maintain interest.

#### **12: Test engagement half way through**

Keep the lecture interactive with a break half way through in which you can ask questions, ask students to tackle a problem or create a think-tank process.

#### **13: Record your lectures**

It might feel a little uncomfortable at first, especially as a new lecturer, but by filming your lectures and watching them back you can learn volumes about your presentation style, content, delivery, tone of voice and also monitor the engagement of your audience.

#### **14: Strive to remember names (This is not always possible with large groups)**

This may be a challenge, but remembering your students' names will help to build relationships when asking questions or engaging in interactive sessions.

#### **15: Feedback and evaluation**

Proactively seek opportunities for feedback at the end of sessions – this is one of the greatest ways to learn and improve for the future.

#### **16: Respect your students' learning style**

Your group of students will learn differently, so listen to their feedback and respect their varied learning styles. Some will prefer a more interactive approach, while others will respond best to visual aids such as educational videos or images. Place your students' learning needs at the heart of your future frameworks.

#### **17: Achieve a polished finish**

Achieving a structured finish is a key part of a successful lecture. Bring the material back to the original questions posed at the beginning, refocus attention and confirm what you will be covering in the next lecture.

#### **18: Choose a compelling exit question**

In the same way that you need to start the lecture by sparking curiosity, finish with a compelling exit question that furthers students' learning and introduces a new perspective. If your students leave the room actively engaged, then you've succeeded.

#### **19: Strive for continuous improvement**

Lecturers should be continuous learners; strive for improvement, ask for advice and be excited by the opportunity to learn something new about successful lecturing.

#### **20: Comment on successful engagement**

As a new lecturer, take every opportunity to praise your students. If your students are clearly engaging with your material then acknowledge this and show your appreciation. Positive feedback is a key aspect of building good relationships with your student audience.

#### **Reference**

British Broadcasting Corporation (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.bbcactive.com/BBCActiveIdeasandResources/Whatmakesagoodlecturer.aspx>



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