



ADVANCE PREPARATION, SYLLABUS, FIRST DAY

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) Recognize SOLO steps and be able to easily discuss steps with classmates.
- 2) Recognize and recall the Nine Events of Instruction.
- 3) Describe do's and don'ts for first day of class preparation.

CONTEXT

This lesson was created for a graduate-level Communication Training course at the University of West Florida. The course was designed to educate graduate students about effective teaching practices in higher education. Students in the course were paired with a partner to facilitate a 90-minute lesson on an assigned topic. Each pair of students was given various readings related to their topic to incorporate into the lesson. Our team focused on advanced preparation for the first day of class. Subjects we discussed included: the importance of the syllabus, how to make the most of the first day of class, and methods of instruction and understanding that can be used when teaching.

TOPICS COVERED

Mini-test – We started our lesson with a five question mini-test that reviewed the assigned readings. Students took the test individually, and then took it again in groups.

Warm up activity – This was a short activity meant to liven the class for our lesson. We had them separate into two groups. On a handout, one group drew an example of a good first day of class outfit and one group drew a bad outfit. The activity was used to remind them of what attire is appropriate for educators, and was also used to illustrate a proper use of a first day of class icebreaker, both of which were topics in one of the assigned readings.

SOLO Taxonomy – During this activity students were given an overview of the SOLO Taxonomy model that was addressed in the readings. Students were given a handout created by our team that visually explained the model, and we worked through each of the model's five levels. To wrap up this section we engaged in discussion about the importance of the SOLO Taxonomy model and how we could incorporate it as educators.

Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction – At the beginning of this activity students were given a brief overview of Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction, which were detailed in one of our readings. Students were then shown short video clips that corresponded with each of the nine events. Students were asked to identify which event was being shown in each clip. The video was used to help students recall each event.

First Day Jeopardy – The final assigned reading focused on do's and don'ts for educators during a first day of class experience. To aid in recall and end the class with a competitive activity, students were once again separated into two groups to choose and answer questions about first day of class suggestions.

Discussion and Wrap-up – We closed our lesson with a discussion. We asked students to think about our learning activities and to share what they had gained from them. We also discussed how these ideas could be applied in our futures as leaders and educators.

Initially, the mini-test questions revealed confusion about the SOLO learning taxonomy in particular, as well as specifics from the other readings. The activities provided opportunities for review and recall practices, as well as a forum to ask additional questions. The final activity, Jeopardy, revealed a mastery of the first day of class suggestions from the final reading. However, students illustrated their true meeting of the aforementioned learning objectives during the end-of-class discussion, where they applied the lessons from class instructions both to our future workshop plans as well as their own teaching strategies and philosophies.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The seven students in class prepared feedback, ranking different elements of the session from 1-5, 5 being the highest. 4 of the 7 gave the class a review of "excellent," and the remaining three rated the session "good." When asked if the session generated critical thinking, 5 of the 7 gave the class a "5", while the remaining two granted a "4" and a "3." When asked to give written feedback, students reported that they generally enjoyed the activities and the competitive aspects, but would have liked time to go into more depth with the different reading topics and were confused by the wording of some of the minitest questions. Additionally, they felt the discussion was helpful, but a bit awkward when we asked everyone to participate. Overall, students enjoyed the learning experience!