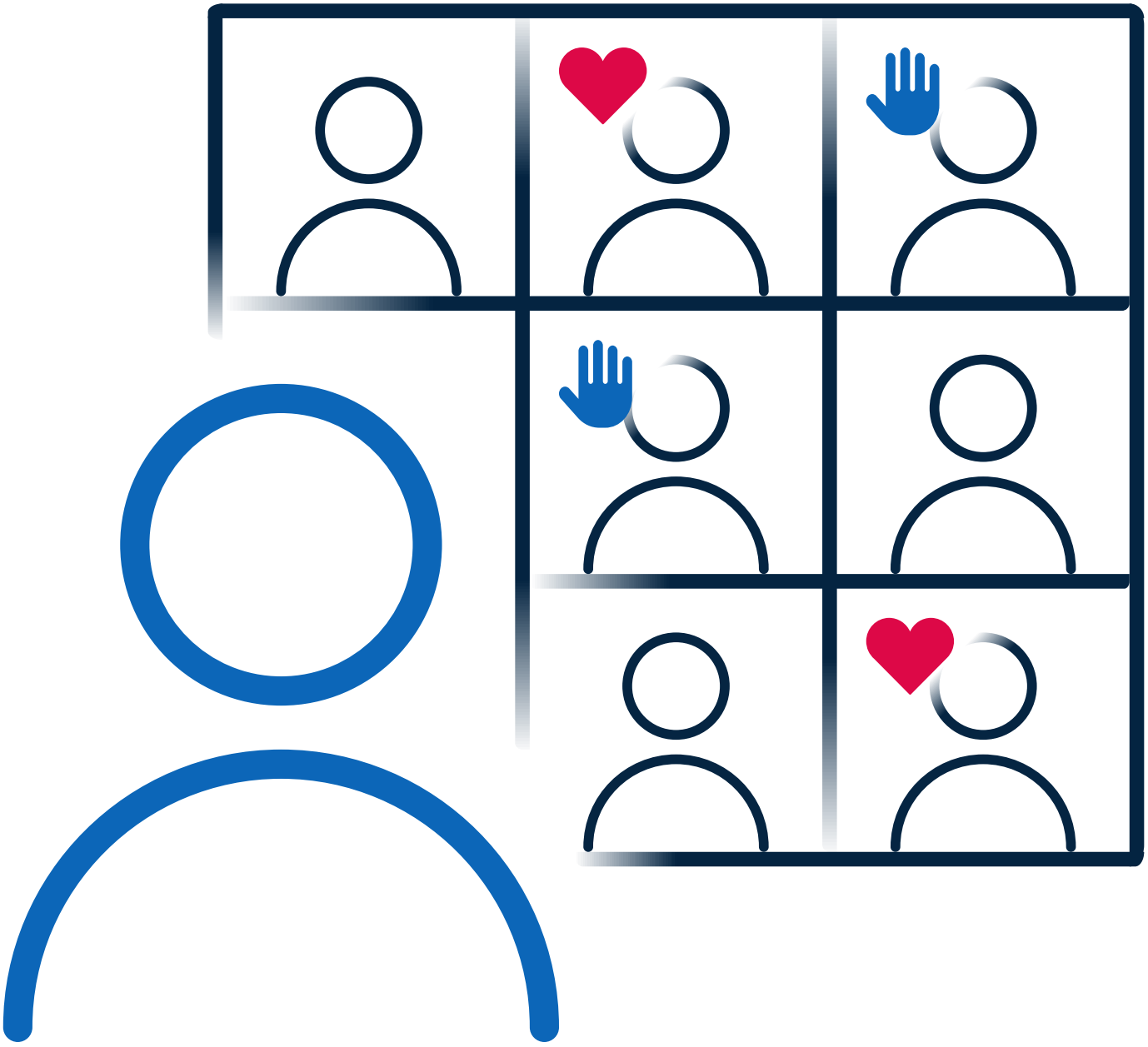
Wharton INTERACTIVE

SO, YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO TEACH A CLASS?

A GUIDE FOR NEW TEACHERS AND GUEST LECTURERS



This guide is a companion to the Teaching Game and will give you some hints and tips to make your first teaching experience impactful and valuable.

And you'll get a checklist for setting up and running your class!

GETTING STARTING

DECIDE ON A TOPIC AND GOAL

As you think about what and how you'll teach, consider this: *What is your goal for the class? By the end of the class, what do you want students to know or understand, or be able to do?*

Tip: Focus on a key idea you want students to understand by the end of your class. You don't have to be ambitious, just practical. This is about one key idea that you want students to remember.

For example, if you are a chef giving a guest lecture to a business class, you may want to communicate the idea that restaurants work just like any other business.

FIGURE OUT WHAT THE CLASS KNOWS AND WHERE THEY WILL MAKE MISTAKES.

As you plan consider:

- **Where does your topic fit in?** You can review what the class has learned so far and get a general idea of what the class is about and what students already know.
- **What should students know?** If you are covering a complex topic, consider what students know before you teach. If this isn't the first time students are hearing about a topic, they may be ready for a more sophisticated presentation; students encountering a new topic will need more initial guidance.

Tip: You c an decide on a brief pre-class assignment to find out what students know (if possible) and then tailor your class. If this isn't possible, plan on asking questions and then adjusting you lesson. You may need to fill in the gaps or review material or if you're using new terms students are unfamiliar with, discuss these terms and provide concrete examples.

For instance, *if you're teaching a digital marketing class, and plan on using a case involving running social media ads, you can ask students if they have heard of this type of advertising. If they have, you can probe further and find what they know. Bringing in their personal experiences and relating it to your topic will help make the lesson concrete and memorable. If students are unfamiliar with the term, you can e xplain how social media ads work and provide some examples, before moving on with the lesson.*

- **What mistakes are students likely to make?** Before you teach the class, think about what common mistakes students might make or questions they may have. Spend a little time thinking through how you can clarify points. The best way to do this: explain it to yourself and, ideally, to someone unfamiliar with the topic.

Tip: Students usually make the same errors when first learning about a new topic, and they tend to ask the same sorts of questions. Consider what you might have asked when learning about the topic. This will help you anticipate the kinds of questions that might come up in class and what sorts of mistakes students might make. The key is to try to step into the shoes of someone new to the topic: What might be confusing? What might help clear up that confusion?

For instance, *if you're teaching the class about how to design an app, you may want to think about whether students understand the difference among types of apps and programs. You might also consider how they might be confused between the apps they use on their phone and other types of software. They could ask questions about the technical requirements needed to get started. You may want to clarify this material up front.*

PLANNING THE LESSON

PLANNING TO GET ATTENTION.

Before any lesson, it's important to get students' attention, and you can do this by:

- Telling students a story. The story may simply be a personal anecdote that can lead into the topic. It can also help you establish your expertise.
- Presenting a problem. The problem could be something you have experienced, or others have faced. This can lead students to consider how they might have solved the problem, and they'll be interested in your solution.
- Asking students a difficult or unanswered question. The question could be something that is hard to figure out, a puzzle, or a dilemma. This can be a way of getting students to offer up some initial guesses and have them consider their own knowledge.
- Telling them about a conflict between two viewpoints or sides. The conflict sets up a tension, and students might take sides, which you can explore in class.

Each approach gives students a hint about what is to come and makes them more likely to pay attention.

Tip: Starting with the unexpected gives you and edge; you have invoked their curiosity. You don't have to plan anything elaborate, but start with something a little flashy - a video clip, an experiment, an unexpected question or opinion, a personal story – to get their attention.

For instance, *if you are teaching the class about poetry, you may want to start by showing a video clip of a poetry reading ad ask students how they feel about it.*

OUTLINING THE TALK.

Consider:

- What main points do you want to communicate?
- How will the parts of your talk connect? Outline how you will address the points and in what order so that each flows logically and the connection between points is easy to track.
- What kinds of examples will you use in your talk? Students benefit from many and varied examples so that they can get a better understanding of a concept.
- How will you organize your talk? How will you let students know where you are in the talk?
- How will you summarize your talk?

Tip: Students benefit from organizational cues that let them know how ideas are connected. They are more likely to remember an idea or a fact if it is connected to something else or is part of a larger topic.

For instance, *if you start with a premise (today I'm going to discuss how to perform exploratory data analysis and there are several steps to this analysis including looking for common errors, duplicate data, and missing data) as you lecture, circle back to the main idea and point out which part of process they are at now by giving them verbal cues to help them organize information (Now that we've looked at duplicate data, let's move on to looking for missing data).*

Connect the dots for students with clear cues.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES.

Consider how you will break up the talk with activities that encourage learning and engagement. Some activity types you might want to think about:

- Group activities, where you break students into groups to discuss a question and then bring them back for discussion
- A demonstration, experiment, or lab, either done live or recorded
- A dedicated question-and-answer period
- A discussion of a real or fictional case
- Pair and share activities in which students turn to their neighbor after a discussion and try to solve a problem or explain a new concept
- A simulation or game that gives students an opportunity to practice skills
- A hands-on experience, where students put something you taught them to the test

Tip: Vary your activities and connect them to the main idea. Don't spend too long on any one activity. If you're starting with a lecture, move on to a class discussion, a group exercise, or a reading. Keep students on their toes and focused by mixing up your approaches. And make sure that, for any fun activity you have students do, you can connect what they've done to the main idea you're trying to teach. If you're covering a topic in a lecture or a reading then the activity should connect to that topic – tell students why they are doing the activity and then reinforce the main idea after the activity.

For instance, *if you're giving a lecture introducing students to the job interview process you may want to then have students pair up so they can interview each other for a hypothetical job. To make sure this activity helps students learn you can focus students' attention on the fact that they are practicing a skill you taught; after the interview ask people to describe what happened and how they felt about it.*

TO PREPARE ACTIVITIES:

Write out directions for each activity:

- What will you tell students before they begin the activity?
- How long should students spend on each activity?
- How will the activity end? Will it end with a report-out, a critique, a discussion, or something else?
- How will you monitor student performance and help students during the activity?

Tip: While it's always good idea to start with the facts and make sure students have some content knowledge, if you're beginning your class with a lecture, make it an active lecture. You can include questions in your lecture that ask students for personal experiences, use a variety of real-world examples, or break up students into teams and have them consider a question and then report out to the full class. If you gave students a pre-class assignment, make note of who said what in that assignment and then bring that into your lecture. Students will know that you're paying attention and that they have personal stake in what you're teaching.

For instance,

1. *If you're teaching students how to create a pitch deck, rather than simply going over the elements of a successful pitch deck, you could give students examples of slides and ask them their opinion – what is right and wrong about this slide? What message does it send if you're an investor?*
2. *If you are teaching about advertising, show a set of ads and ask the students to break into teams for 5 minutes, reporting out which they like best.*
3. *If you're teaching students how to analyze data, show how you addressed a similar problem, and then take a step-by-step approach, asking questions as you go.*

CONSIDER TRANSITIONS.

Jot down some transition points between activities. How will you move from one exercise to the next? Announce a transition in advance (You have 5 more minutes in your group). *Briefly introduce the next activity so that students know what to expect and what to do.*

BE PREPARED TO IMPROVISE.

Teaching a new class is always an experiment. You could get more or less interaction and questions than you expect. You could find that your class is drawn into a different topic or runs short or long. One way to prepare is to plan additional activities.

PLAN BUFFER ACTIVITIES.

While you may not need any additional activities, it's a good idea to be prepared. Consider planning an additional activity in case students finish early. And plan a different activity for students who need more challenge.

Tip: In any class, some students will be more familiar with a topic than others. And some activities may take a little longer or take less time than you think. Creating buffer activities to have in your pocket help you help students who need more or a challenge or help students who might need a little more guidance.

For instance, *if some teams finish a group project early, ask them to help other groups with their project, or write a reflection about their experience to present to the class.*

PLAN YOUR RESOURCES.

You may not require more than a whiteboard or computer but check your equipment ahead of the class. Make sure you have everything you need for your lesson. If you are doing a demonstration, make sure you have what you need. Make a list of what you need, visit the room if you can, and check that everything works as expected.

REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE THE CLASS.

At the end of the class, you can summarize key points or ask a question that students can now answer or think through. If you began the class with a story, you could return to that story and let students know what happened. If you started the class with a puzzle, revisit that puzzle and have students solve it. If you initially posed a problem, summarize how to solve the problem and how students can use what they learned outside of your class. Give students a sense of completion.

A 9-STEP CHECKLIST

Below is a lesson plan checklist to help you as you plan your first class or guest lecture. These tasks are flexible; you don't have to complete them all before your class. Depending on what you've been asked to do, you may simply need to conduct a demonstration or tell students stories about your experiences and give them a chance to ask questions. Whatever the circumstance, this list may be a starting point to help you think through what you might need.

Happy teaching!

#	TASK	CHECK
1	**Decide on a topic and a goal for your lesson:** What should students know or be able to do after your class? *Note: If you have taught this topic before or guest lectured previously, review what happened the last time you taught. What went well and didn't go well?*	
2	**Consider what students know:** *Where does your topic fit in? Is there anything that students should already know before your lesson?*	
3	**Plan the beginning.** *Get students' attention with a story, surprise, or question.*	
4	**Create an outline or overview of your explanation or introduction.** *What main points do you want to communicate? What kinds of examples will you use in your talk?*	
5	**Consider what common mistakes students might make or questions they may have.** *Spend a little time thinking through how you can clarify points. The best way to do this is to explain the material to yourself and, ideally, explain it to someone unfamiliar with the topic.*	
6	**Activities.** *Create an outline of different activities or exercises for the class and plan a buffer activity (an additional activity in case students finish early).*	
7	**Consider transitions.** *Consider how you'll move from one part of the lesson to the next.*	
8	**Check that you have the resources you need.** *Check for equipment and that any technology you'll need works in the room as expected.*	
9	**Review and summarize the class.** *Give students a sense of completion and summarize and extend key points.*	

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