



Structuring Lessons

Effective teachers plan and deliver structured lessons which incorporate a series of clear steps and transitions between them, and scaffold learning to build students' knowledge and skills.

Strategy overview

Hattie (2009) found an effect size of 0.53 for scaffolding.

What is it?

A lesson structure maps teaching and learning that occurs in class. Sound lesson structures reinforce routines, scaffold learning via specific steps/activities, and optimise time on task and classroom climate using smooth transitions. Planned sequencing of teaching and learning activities stimulates and maintains engagement by linking lesson and unit learning.

How effective is it?

The way teachers structure lessons can have a large impact on student learning. Some research shows student achievement is maximised when teachers structure lessons so that they:

- begin with overviews and/or review objectives;
- outline the content to be covered and signal transitions between lesson parts;
- call attention to main ideas; and
- review main ideas at the end (Kyriakides et al, 2013). A 2013 meta-analysis found an effect size of 0.36 when lessons are structured by summarising main points, gradually increasing the difficulty level, and connecting to previous



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lessons (Kyriakides et al, 2013). There is no specific measure of the effect size of structuring lessons. However, a sound lesson structure contributes to effective scaffolding of student learning, which has an effect size of 0.53.

Considerations

It is useful to integrate structuring lessons with other High Impact Teaching Strategies. By coherently organising teaching and learning, sound lesson structures create synergies between the strategies, cumulatively enhancing their effectiveness. Teachers must also consider sequencing and the pace of the curriculum.



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Personal reflection on my teaching practice

Reflective practice provides a means for teachers to improve their practice to effectively meet the learning needs of their students. Brookfield succinctly describes the advantages of reflective practice to teachers as:

- It helps teachers to take informed actions that can be justified and explained to others and that can be used to guide further action.
- It allows teachers to adjust and respond to issues.
- It helps teachers to become aware of their underlying beliefs and assumptions about learning and teaching.
- It helps teachers promote a positive learning environment.
- It allows teachers to consciously develop a repertoire of relevant and context specific strategies and techniques.
- It helps teachers locate their teaching in the broader institutional, social and political context and to appreciate that many factors influence student learning.



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This strategy is demonstrated when the teacher:

- explains to students the steps in the lesson, including presenting learning intentions, explicitly presenting new knowledge, identifying planned opportunities for practice, outlining questioning techniques the class will use, and describing the assessment formats

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- makes clear connections between the learning goals, activities and assessment tasks

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- creates transparent, predictable and purposeful routines for students

Personal reflection on my teaching practice...



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- identifies clear transitions between each step in the lesson

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- plans the sequence of steps to scaffold student learning

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- monitors student understanding and provides feedback.

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This strategy is not demonstrated when:

- lesson structures keep changing, producing unhelpful unpredictability in the classroom environment.

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This strategy is demonstrated when the students:

- understand the learning goals and success criteria

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- understand the lesson routine and confidently negotiate the sequence of steps/activities.

Personal reflection on my teaching practice...



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Continuing the practice

The teacher identifies the learning goals, sets learning activities, and assesses student understanding. The teacher explains the lesson structure, including timeframes for learning activities.

The teacher plans and delivers structured lessons that include reviewing previous lessons, signposting new content to be covered, explaining learning activities, and checking for understanding at the end of the lesson.

The teacher ensures the lesson's steps are clear transparent and predictable for students.

The teacher assesses prior knowledge, signposts new content, and clearly explains the learning goals of the current lesson.

The teacher designs sequenced learning activities that scaffold the learning. Teaching is adapted during the lesson in response to students' understanding.

The teacher ensures all students understand the learning intentions and success criteria. The teacher reinforces routines, scaffolds new learning via specifically selected steps/activities, and uses smooth transitions to optimise time on task and classroom climate.

The teacher spontaneously adjusts instructions during a lesson to increase learning opportunities and improve students' understanding. In closing the lesson, the teacher reviews, clarifies and reinforces key points, and assesses student understanding.



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