

The Practical Professor

No. 24

Quick and easy tips, questions, and suggestions for improving teaching and learning.

Lesson Beginnings and Endings

Student Feedback Technique Series #7

As instructors, sometimes we forget that the two most important parts of a lesson are the beginning and ending. We focus on the middle – the content, yet we know that initial interactions affect everything afterward. Similarly, we know that people remember for a long time how an experience ends, especially learning experiences.

How can we **know** what kind of closing helps the students you are working with in a particular course? What if your typical initial approach to beginning lessons confuses some students, or somehow gets in the way of their learning? Alternatively, what if the way you typically end a lesson leaves things dangling or even confuses students?

This week's Student Feedback Technique (SFT) helps identify ways that either your approach to beginning lessons or the way you wrap things up helps or interferes with student learning. You may be surprised to discover that something fairly insignificant either helps a number of students or actually interferes with their learning.

Process:

- ❖ Ask students to fill out this SFT individually in 5 – 6 minutes and to be as complete as possible in their responses so you can target your teaching to help them learn
- ❖ Reiterate that this is not a quiz – emphasize that there are no “right answers” – that you are merely gathering information so that you can tailor your teaching
- ❖ Tell students you will report back to them quickly and show how their input has affected your teaching. **Then do this.**
- ❖ Mention that if another instructor does something that particularly helps them, you would appreciate it if they would share it on the form

Do some of your students need a personal connection before a lesson – perhaps talking informally, or a question about their life? Perhaps some need to be reminded about the last lesson, or maybe some need to know why this new subject is important? What about the end of a lesson? Do some need practical applications, or a summary, or ...?

In the next *The Practical Professor*: Tip Series #7

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Lesson Beginnings and Endings

I need your assistance to see if the way I introduce lessons and wrap up lessons is helpful to you. Please do not put your name on this – I only need this information to target my teaching in ways that are helpful to you. You can be brief with your answers, but please write enough so that I will understand what you mean. If nothing particularly stands out in your mind as either helpful or not helpful, feel to write “nothing specific”. ***Thanks for your help.***

Consider the way I typically **begin** a lesson. How is this helpful to you? What do you like most about it?

Again considering the way I typically **begin** a lesson, is there something I do that confuses you, or gets in the way of your learning?

Now, please consider the way I typically **end** a lesson. What do I do that helps your learning?

Again considering the way I typically **end** a lesson, what do I do that gets in the way of your learning?

Also available!

Teaching

A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty

The Top 10...

- No. 1 – The All-Important First Day of Class
- No. 2 – Ways to Make Your Teaching Life Easier
- No. 3 – The Crucial Second and Third Classes
- No. 4 – Ways to Show Students that You Respect Them
- No. 5 – Promote Effective Student Study Skills
- No. 6 – Components of a Well-Planned Class
- No. 7 – Observe Your Teaching Tendencies
- No. 8 – Ways to Keep Your Students Learning
- No. 9 – Ways to Get Feedback on Teaching from Students
- No. 10 – Using Short Writing to Assess Learning
- No. 11 – Getting More (and Better) Student Questions
- No. 12 – Mixing Things up Mid-Semester
- No. 13 – Engaging Different Input Preferences
- No. 14 – Helping Students Stay the Journey
- No. 15 – Ways to End Your Course
- No. 16 – Resources for Learning and Teaching
- No. 17 – Create a Memorable AND Functional Syllabus
- No. 18 – Ways to Build Your Students' Self-Efficacy
- No. 19 – Practical Study Tips to Share with Your Students
- No. 20 – Laddering Thinking Skills
- No. 21 – Learning Based Ways to End Lessons
- No. 22 – Ways and Reasons to Be Vulnerable While Teaching
- No. 23 – Using Student Groups
- No. 24 – Components of a Complete Learning Experience
- No. 25 – Ways to Use Visuals for Learning
- No. 26 – Students' Locus of Control
- No. 27 – Help Students with Rigorous Writing Assignments
- No. 28 – Ways to Shake Up Your Teaching
- No. 29 – Teaching to Inspire
- No. 30 – Paths to Mindfulness

Back issues of *The Teaching Top 10* and *The Practical Professor* can be found here:

<http://gwcc.libguides.com/c.php?g=57736&p=709634>

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