

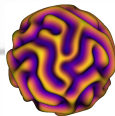
Planning your (first) section

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Learning objectives

You will be able to...

- Introduce yourself?
- Foster a sense of belonging among your students
- Review the course syllabus
- Utilize learning objectives to guide your planning
 - That's what these are!
- Craft effective and achievable learning objectives
- Decide what gets covered during a section, and plan for it



Help students to feel that they belong

- Students who belong are better learners
- Don't assume that everyone knows what section or office hours are for
- Review the syllabus and how your section supports the class mission
- Build an equitable classroom climate
 - Set down rules/norms for participation explicitly
 - Consider soliciting feedback from students on those rules/norms
- Introduce yourself, talk about your experiences and who you are
- Talk about your teaching philosophy (foster metacognition)
- Consider giving your students an ice-breaker



What should your students learn?

This seemingly simple question can help you plan your sections



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- Learning goals
 - Big picture
 - Long term – could apply to entire quarter
- Learning objectives
 - Specific concepts
 - Should/could be measurable
 - Shorter term – could apply to single session



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Caveat: Not everyone uses this distinction, and some use goals/objectives interchangeably



Learning objectives as a planning tool

- Explicitly choose objectives for a single session
- Make your objectives measurable, even if you don't intend to measure them
- Let these objectives motivate activities, sample problems, etc.



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Learning objectives as a learning tool

- Consider sharing your objectives at the start of section
- I've been doing this all day
- Possibly improved student engagement when they know where the section is heading



It's all about those action verbs

- Anchor each objective on a particular action
- A few that I like are
 - Apply
 - Describe
 - Evaluate
 - Differentiate (not just as a calculus word!)
 - Analyze
 - Investigate
 - Verify
- Action verbs translate directly to section activities
- Action verbs translate directly to measurable outcomes
- Choose objectives that span a few levels of understanding

What to actually cover in section



- Sample problems
 - Demonstrating examples is useful
 - Don't exclusively do this
- Content review
 - Ensure that you are adding to the presentation of material
 - Consider mixing in predictions and retrieval exercises
- Activities
 - You now have a few at your disposal
 - Preparing activities doesn't take more time than preparing examples
 - Be sure to maintain observability
 - Provide feedback as you go



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More passive content is not inherently bad, but should be used carefully. Strive to keep your students engaged. Doing sample problems and reviewing content is fine, but keep your students in the conversation.



Recall “Unpacking assessments” from earlier

- Do all of the sample problems you intend to show or build activities around
- Pay attention to what the explicit and implicit tasks are
- Decide what additional content you might need to address
 - E.g. Do you need to share the quadratic formula?
 - Maybe you mention they might need it, and prompt them to try retrieving that knowledge
- If you decide not to cover something explicitly you should still be ready to discuss it



What does one hour of content look like?

- This is a common question with no solid answer
- Releasing students early is not ideal, but neither is running over
- It really just takes some practice to see how long an activity or set of sample problems will take
- Start by preparing one more than you think you need
- Try to invite discussion, and deliberate on a concept as needed
- Learning activities can be easier to time out



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- <https://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching-resources-graduate-teaching-assistants>
- All of today's material will be posted online shortly