

PART 3—THE INSTRUCTOR

Notes



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section *The Instructor* 3.8.

3.8 Preparation

You must connect your knowledge with your students' needs, and they must realize that what you're saying will work for them. If there are any gaps in your knowledge or if you lack confidence in the training material, you'll find it more difficult to accomplish this. Be sure you're totally prepared.

Visualize a successful presentation to help you prepare and build your anticipation prior to a class. Success begins with a vision of your goal. Spend time the night before the class to mentally experience your student's responses to your presentation.

Sometimes you may feel like you're "faking it" or you're a "pretender." Don't worry; all great instructors often feel this way. Confidence will grow with time and with successful presentations.

Personal Preparation. An ill-prepared instructor sends a dramatic message to the student: "I don't think you're very important, because if you were, I'd be better prepared. I don't have time for you." Be honest, if you don't have time to adequately prepare, then perhaps you should consider taking a break from teaching. Students will know if you aren't prepared.

Students develop perceptions about instructors that affect their attitudes about the class and their receptiveness to learning from that person. They might have loved the topic, but the instructor wasn't prepared and enthusiastic, which resulted in a poor presentation.

Preparation helps you develop confidence in the training material. Review any PowerPoint slides before class begins and make any necessary notes. Visualize a successful introduction and presentation.

Teach new and different things on occasion to provide variety and to keep from becoming "stale." Consider "reinventing yourself" every five years.

Make sure to prepare yourself both physically and mentally. If your goal is to be a "great" instructor and not just a good one you will want to improve the way you eat, assign a high priority to getting enough exercise, and read something new that challenges you mentally. Be sure you get enough rest, because the students will know if you are tired. Take some time before your program for reflection and to refresh yourself.

In order to provide a well-rounded training program, it's important for you to maintain balance in your life. Keep your own spiritual, mental, and physical needs in perspective. Set your life priorities to include time for your spiritual needs, family relationships, work commitments, recreation, and physical well-being. You'll be better prepared to provide a great educational experience for your students if your own life is in balance.

Plan. To help save time preparing for your lesson you want to have a plan which allows you the time to get your work done and maintain your sanity and health. First, write down what you want to accomplish with your presentation. Fill in the blanks:

1. My objective for the talk is _____.
2. Key messages I want to get across are _____.
3. The underlying theme of my talk will be _____.
4. I want my students to say _____ when I'm done.
5. I want my students to feel _____ when I'm done.
6. I want my students to do _____ when I'm done.

Don't work problems on the board "off the cuff." Too often, you'll think you can work a calculation easily and then have no clue why you have an incorrect answer. What do you think that might do to your credibility? Be sure you have examples worked out in advance so you're prepared and can include the slides in your PowerPoint presentation. If students ask questions on the fly, take those problems and work them outside of class to present at the next class. You don't want to confuse students by making errors while working through it quickly in class. It is better to wait and do the presentation correctly with all of the steps mapped out to share with all of the students.

Plan for the possibility that you'll finish your presentation early and prepare additional slides that can be used to "fill in" that time. Advance planning will help you feel more confident and less like a "pretender." Another option is to review summary slides of that day's presentation. This will fill in the time while reinforcing what you have taught the students up to that point.

Supplies. Be prepared. Create a checklist of all of the teaching materials and supplies you'll need and be sure you have them with you:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class Textbook | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Code</i> Book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Jump/Flash Drive (back up files) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Projector | <input type="checkbox"/> Cables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Pens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint Backup | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microphone if you are a traveling presenter | |

Notes

Flyer. Preparation actually begins the day you produce the flyer announcing the seminar. Be sure you clearly describe how students will benefit from the program. Let them know what they need to bring: papers, *Code* book or other references, calculator, and so on. Include a picture of the instructor, and maybe a picture of the office personnel who'll help with registration and information on the class location.

Confirmation Letter. Send students a confirmation letter that reminds them of what to bring to the class such as books, calculator, jacket or sweater, and/or any other items they'll need. Include the location and time to check in as well as information on the class/seminar hotel location and host city if pertinent.

Handouts. Use professionally prepared material and be sure each student has a copy of the class textbook.