

Principle: Be transparent and clear with your intentions.

If you create thoughtful structure, students will create lasting knowledge.

- Frame your class with a clearly worded question that clarifies the purpose of the class, prompts investigation, and is open-ended.
- Offer specific instructions, and present them in multiple formats (eg. verbally, on a Powerpoint slide, and on a handout). Make sure students understand what they are supposed to do, what they will share with the class, and how long they have to work.
- Begin the class by describing how the time will be structured.
- Point out specific things to attend to in the lecture portion of the class, so students recognize what is most important.

Principle: Students learn most when they actively engage, not when they passively absorb.

If you speak less, students will speak more.

- Powerpoint may not always be the best way to communicate your knowledge.
- Small group work can be less intimidating than participating in a full class discussion or activity.
- Arrange your room (form pods with the chairs, etc.) to facilitate the activities you have designed.
- Brief lectures are often necessary to provide context for more hands-on activities, but it can be difficult for students to pay attention for more than ~20 minutes.
- Even when lecturing, you can engage students by proposing case studies (e.g. “How does lemonade affect teeth?” in a class about organic chemistry) or asking open-ended questions and asking students to discuss in small groups.

Principle: Each student should have an equal opportunity to engage.

Splash students come from a wide variety of educational and personal backgrounds, and may need different forms of support in order to engage.

If you value students’ knowledge, experiences, and impressions, students will learn from each other.

- To make people feel valued, ask students to introduce themselves at the beginning of class and give responses to a low-stakes question (e.g. “What’s the most recent superhero movie you saw?”). This will also help engage students early. Try to remember their names! A map of the room with name labels can be helpful.
- When students offer responses to your questions, write them down on the board to make people feel that their contributions are heard.
- Think about the key concepts of your class in terms of concrete or personal applications. What does each student have at stake in the conversation?
- In small group work, consider assigning each person a defined role (e.g., note-taker, synthesizer, presenter, etc.) to encourage less talkative students to engage.
- Be *patient*, give people time to think and respond. You may have a few students who are more eager to participate than others. If you give the quieter students time to process the information and formulate a response, they may open up.
- Plan for ways to continuously assess your students’ learning in real time (e.g. through the ideas that they share after engaging in small group work). Be ready to be flexible, and adjust your plan to respond to student understanding. In addition, eliciting student feedback about what worked and what didn’t work in your class can help you strengthen the class for next time!

Sample class plan:

Choice of activities will vary depending on the goals of your class.

- Introductions (5 minutes)
- Mini lecture (10 minutes)
- Class debate
 - In four-person groups, prepare to debate a topic, with two people arguing in favor and two against each resolution (10 minutes)
 - Each group presents their resolution and arguments to the class (15 minutes)
- Group reflection/discussion, and instructor take-aways (10 minutes)

Active learning activities:

- *Solo writing*: Give students 2-3 minutes to respond to an open-ended prompt in writing, so that they can articulate a position before large-group interaction.
- *Polling* (works well for large lectures): Ask a question with multiple choice answers. Give students a few minutes to consider the question, then hold up a number of fingers to indicate their response. Revisit the concept if many students are wrong. If there is a mix of answers, ask students to discuss with their neighbor and vote again.
- *Think-Pair-Share* (works well for large lectures): Ask an open-ended question, and have students think independently for a moment. Have students discuss their response with their neighbor. Then, ask each pair to tell you what they came up with. This helps shy students feel more comfortable by giving them a chance to validate their answers with a peer.
- *Debate*: Assign students to teams and give each team a position to defend. Give time for preparation, presentation of arguments, and rebuttals. Reflect as a group on the experience (e.g. how students felt defending a point they may not agree with).
- *Jigsaw*: Divide students into groups and have each group become experts on a different topic. After 5-10 minutes, form new groups with one representative from each earlier group. Each member of the new group should be responsible for teaching their new group about their area of expertise.
- *Simulation*: Assign students or groups of students a role within a larger process, then have them act it out. For instance, in a class on foreign aid students could be assigned the role of donor country, recipient country, aid organization, etc., then ask the students to work to devise a solution for a particular situation by working together & representing their own interests.

Last but not least, have fun! Enthusiasm and passion are contagious :)

Remember: the goal of Splash is to get students excited about learning! They should leave wanting to find out more about something and/or thinking hard. The goal is not to get across some amount of information or gain mastery of an advanced topic.