

ASPECTS: Sample essay; score="3"

Imagine that you have the opportunity to use the ideas you've learned from your core ASPECTS series to develop an assignment, lesson plan, or course plan for a course in your field of study. Please select a minimum of one main idea from each of your three core ASPECTS sessions, and describe how you would integrate these main ideas into an assignment, lesson plan, or course plan in your discipline. Use concrete examples to illustrate how these ideas from ASPECTS could be applied to your specific instructional setting or subject area.

I attended ASPECTS "Leading Discussions" series and came away from that with (hopefully) a better idea of how to develop lesson plans that not only make the course material more interesting for students but that they learn so much more from it.

Comment: No clear thesis. Awkward sentence.

My mantra for teaching has always been:

{ "Tell me and I will forget,
Show me and I will remember,
Involve me and I will understand". }

Comment: Connect this to ideas from the core sessions.

During the 75-minute lessons that I'm sometimes responsible for, I like to involve my students in experiencing many of the memory tricks, learning strategies, transfer and problem-solving skills that they are learning about within the course material. Instead of the usual "death-by-Powerpoint" lecture which merely *tells* students what they need to know, my lessons (thanks to ASPECTS) are now designed to both *show* them what the various course concepts mean and *involve* them in an experience of such concepts.

I was particularly impressed by the "guided lecture" format presented in the "Promoting Active Learning" session. This links specifically to the textbook topics of memory, note-

Comment: 1st core session application; used terminology

ASPECTS: Sample essay; score="3"

taking and elaboration. My plan would be to prepare a 30-minute interactive lecture covering specific course material, during which students would take no notes but simply listen and involve themselves in what I have to say. If I **was to** do this for chapter 12 of the course textbook which covers "**Long Term Memory: Retrieval and Forgetting**," I would bring the material to life by relating it to the students' own experiences. For example, instead of using the author's filing cabinet analogy to demonstrate the importance of organization for retrieval, I would point out how much easier it is to find email that's been transferred to a Folder than to left in your Inbox. }

Comment: Mechanics

Comment: Interesting, but irrelevant to guided lecture.

At the end of my presentation the students would have five minutes in which to jot down everything they could remember. I would then integrate what I learned about Bloom's Taxonomy into this process by dividing the students into groups of three or four. Over the next fifteen minutes the groups would have an opportunity to elaborate upon their individual notes by collectively discussing what they had remembered. At the same time as the small groups are created, I would assign each one a different "higher order" question to think about while engaging in their note-taking elaboration. The ones I **larned** about in the ASPECTS session that talked about **Bloom's Taxonomy** caused me to devise questions like:

Comment: Spelling

Comment: Terminology; identify which session

"How might 'illusion of knowing' affect your ability to learn?" (Analysis level) }

Comment: Indent

ASPECTS: Sample essay; score="3"

"What differences in study strategies might you see between a student who,

epistemologically, thinks of knowledge as a set of isolated facts versus someone who

thinks of knowledge in terms of interrelated ideas?" (Synthesis).

and

"If you were advising another student on preparing notes that will facilitate retention and retrieval, what three things would you recommend they do – plus three they should not do - and why." (Evaluation).

Comment: Will this be defined?

Comment: Spelling

For the remaining 25 minutes each group would briefly share with the whole class the answer to their particular "higher order" question. I would carefully scaffold that process so they see how the discussion relates to the material in the textbook and also their own learning experience.

I've thought about five different outcomes for my lesson plan which are:

Comment: Spacing

- a) Students are encouraged to actually listen to a lecture/presentation rather than busy themselves with writing notes, given how challenging any student finds listening, writing and reflecting all at the same time.
- b) By planning the content to be as authentic as possible (i.e. related to real life experiences) I would hopefully facilitate the students' remembering what they had heard.

c) The resulting notes would be enhanced by the collective elaboration process – something that rarely happens in a traditional lecture situation.

d) Students are exposed to Bloom's "higher level" questions that encourages them to think beyond the usual knowledge and comprehension levels.

Comment: Agreement

Comment: Inconsistent spacing between items.

e) Since the amount of time for reporting back is limited, groups would be encouraged to select one spokesperson, therefore ensuring that students who prefer not to present in front of large groups don't have to do so.

Comment: Not clear that this would always be an advantage.

Comment: This is a nice summary, but you are still not connecting what you did to what you learned in ASPECTS.

In order to make such a lesson plan a success, I would need to take into account various issues that were pointed out in the "Designing Effective Discussions" session. I have

Comment: Second core session application.

found that undergraduates are motivated by earning points that count towards their final grade and I use the Blackboard Announcements page to let students know in advance that they're required to take part in an in-class activity, and to specify the advantages to them.

For example, recently I let my summer class students know they could each earn a maximum four points for taking part in a class activity, which had been designed to help them increase their scores on an upcoming online quiz. Motivated students came to the class better prepared, having given themselves an edge by reading the chapter in advance.

Comment: I am not sure which ideas came from ASPECTS and which were your own.

Also, in the planning process I would need to take into account the room arrangement to ensure it was suitable for splitting students into small groups – and then have them reconvene in a large classroom arrangement as quickly as possible.

ASPECTS: Sample essay; score="3"

Luckily, the ALD 320 course for which I'm the TA for has been designed for regular assessment. For example, the students receive points over the semester by taking part in six multiple choice online quizzes which cover two chapters each. Additionally, students engage in five 20-point note-taking assignments over specified portions of those chapters. While the feedback that students give in end-of-course surveys will be colored by their success in that course, my sense is that it's their grades for quizzes and assignments that best helps me assess the success of classroom discussions. Blackboard allows me to view user grades and see instantly how well a student has performed across each of the various elements of the course. There are therefore two quantitative ways in which I could assess the success of my classroom discussion efforts.

Comment: You don't indicate what ideas from the session informed your assessment.

Let's say, for example, that I engaged in the above lesson plan over Chapter 13 of the course textbook. Students submit a note-taking assignment over portions of chapters 12 and 13, plus engage in an on-line quiz covering this material. The quality of their notes and subsequent grades for the note-taking assignment – in terms of demonstrating an understanding of the key concepts in Chapter 13 and including examples other than those from the textbook – would give me a good indication of how successful the classroom discussion had been at enhancing learning.

In addition, I could go into Blackboard's Control Panel and isolate the quiz questions relating to material in Chapter 13 to see whether, on average, students got more of those questions correct compared with how they performed after standard, lecture-based classes.

ASPECTS: Sample essay; score="3"

[In conclusion, I could - within a very short time-frame – quantifiably identify whether I achieved my stated goal of designing effective discussions that incorporate active learning techniques and are, at the same time, more enjoyable for the students and produce higher grades.]

Comment: You didn't say how you would quantify student enjoyment.

Ends

approx. 1,200 words

The student sometimes used appropriate terminology. However, her integration of ideas was inadequate. The biggest weakness of the paper was a lack of coherence. She didn't indicate which of her teaching methods reflected information from ASPECTS sessions. Her writing also exhibited problems with organization, mechanics and spelling.

This essay would earn a "3."