



**The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning
Brown University**

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MICRO-TEACHING GROUP SESSION GUIDELINES

◆ to be distributed to all participants prior to a Micro-Teaching Session ◆

Introduction: The main objective of the micro-teaching session is to provide the participants with an environment for practice-based teaching to instill self-evaluative skills. These sessions are usually conducted with a small group (~ 4 presenters) from within a department. If there are fewer than three presenters from a department, their session will be combined with that of another department. Presentations take about 15 minutes each (including presentation, feedback and transition time). Micro-teaching sessions should be held as early in the academic year as possible. Those wishing to receive the Sheridan Teaching Seminar: Certificate I in a given year must complete their micro-teaching session by mid March of that year. Micro-teaching sessions are usually held in departments, but can be held at the Sheridan Center if necessary. The department's Faculty Liaison (FL) to the Sheridan Center organizes the micro-teaching sessions with the assistance of the Graduate Student Liaison (GSL). The sessions are attended by at least one faculty member from the department (usually the FL), the GSL and a Sheridan Center staff member. The Sheridan Center handbook *Teaching and Persuasive Communication: Class Presentation Skills* (http://www.brown.edu/sheridan_center/publications/preskills.html) is available online to assist in the preparation for these sessions.

1. Goals

- To encourage participants to think more specifically about the goals of their teaching *in terms of how students will learn the information presented*. This involves thinking about teaching style as well as content.
- To give participants specific suggestions regarding how their teaching styles are perceived by others both within and from outside specific disciplines.
- To provide an opportunity to observe and evaluate other styles of teaching and to learn how to share observations constructively with others.

2. General Format

- A scribe is appointed for each presentation.
- A participant then gives a five-minute presentation, followed by ten minutes of feedback from the audience.
- The scribe records the audience feedback, using the Micro-Teaching Group Session Feedback Sheet. The Micro-Teaching Group Session Feedback Sheet is available at: http://www.brown.edu/sheridan_center/consulting/micro_feedback.pdf
- The Faculty Liaison is responsible for bringing a copy of this form for each presenter.
- The scribe gives the completed Feedback Sheet to the presenter for his/her own reference.

3. Presenter Information and Session Preparation

- Each participant prepares a five-minute mini-lecture on any topic. The content is not crucial for this process. In fact, it is preferable to make a presentation of something outside the field, as colleagues can find themselves responding more vigorously to the content than to the effectiveness of communication. If a department prefers presentation of discipline-specific material, then the presence of Sheridan Center staff ensures that some of the feedback replicates

the possible responses of non-specialists. It is recommended that the time limit will be enforced to make sure that all participants have sufficient time. Participants with audio-visual aids (e.g. overheads, LCD projectors.) must make their own arrangements. Media Services (863-2197) provides these for a fee.

- Each participant should plan to begin the presentation with an explicit statement of goals for the presentation and the objectives by which they plan to achieve those goals. These goals can be written on a board, distributed on sheets for the audience, displayed on an overhead or slide, or stated at the beginning of the presentation.
- Each presenter should consider:
 - the style as well as the content of your presentation.
 - the methodology of your presentation
 - special strategies you may need to accommodate students who are not experts in your discipline.

4. Audience Participation:

- Group members are expected to participate actively in other's presentations. They should write down any comments they would like to make during the feedback period. Their comments should focus on evaluating how well the goals articulated by the presenter at the beginning of the talk have been fulfilled. Group members can also comment on other aspects of the presentation that they may deem important.

5. Sharing Feedback & Criticism

Associate Provost Nancy Dunbar and Professor Barbara Tannenbaum of the Theater, Speech and Dance Department have some useful tips on sharing feedback and giving criticism. Their list of suggestions is provided below.

- **"Own" your messages**

State your reactions with "I" rather than "you" as audience reactions vary. By owning your own reactions, you allow for the possibility of different responses. (You might invite other reactions as well).

Examples: "*I* appreciated the way you connected your speech to last week's class discussion."
"*I* was confused when you said.... because..."

- **Be specific and concrete.**

While it might be nice to know that someone liked my introduction, it doesn't tell me very much. Instead, one could say, for example, "I liked the concrete illustrations of the theory X.", "I liked the way you included your own background and interest in the introduction."

- **Focus on presentation behavior, not on personality characteristics and judgments.**

For example, say "I would have liked more eye contact" rather than "It's clear you're really not interested in us since you never look at us."

Also, limit comments to behaviors that are changeable. Distracting gestures can be brought under control. Calling attention to a stutter, however, is probably not helpful in a public setting.

- **Distinguish between observations, inferences, and judgments.**

All of these have some role in evaluation but they are quite different.

- Observations have to do with what we see and hear; inferences and conclusions we reach based on those observations and judgments and/or evaluative response.
- Listeners observe differently, and, more important, draw different inferences and judgments from what they see and hear. Therefore, start by reporting your observations and then explain what you inferred from them.
- Speakers can hear a great deal of feedback on observations. Inferences and judgments are better received when the observations they are based on are clear. For example, “I noticed that you made eye contact with the students, which made me feel that you were genuinely trying to engage their attention”.

- **Balance positive and negative comments.**

Try to emphasize the positive aspects of a presentation which the presenter can build upon constructively in the future to improve his/her style.

- **Invite feedback from a variety of listeners.**