

A microteaching workshop brings together four to six graduate students and a seasoned MIT instructor to facilitate. You will be asked to present a brief (*no more than 10 minutes, please*) lesson in your own field with other workshop members playing your students. When you are finished presenting, you will receive feedback from the audience. This handout explains the goals of a microteaching workshop, how to prepare, responsibilities during the workshop, and how to give and receive feedback.

### 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 provide insight to participants 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.

### Presenter Information and Session Preparation

- Each participant prepares an 8- to 10-minute sample of his or her teaching. Presenters can give the first few minutes of a lecture, teach a topic that would take that length of time to present, or do an interactive exercise. Please choose the format based on what you want the students to learn from you.
- Each participant should plan to begin the presentation with an explicit statement of goals for the presentation and the objectives by which she/he plans 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 her/his presentation
  - the methodology of her/his presentation
  - special strategies she/he may need to accommodate students who are not experts in the discipline.

### Audience Participation

- Group members are expected to participate actively in other's presentations in two ways:
  - Playing "students," asking questions of the "teacher" if material is presented they don't understand, or answering questions the "teacher" asks.
  - Writing down any comments they would like to make during the feedback period. 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.

## Sharing Feedback & Criticism

- *"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 explained topic X," or "I was confused when you said . . . because . . ."
- *Be specific and concrete.* While it might be nice to know that someone liked your introduction, it doesn't tell you very much. Instead, one could say, for example, "I liked the concrete illustrations of the theory X," or "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 importantly, 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 that the presenter can build upon constructively in the future to improve his/her style.