

TEA 5 Stage Structure To putting your first Session together

When teaching your first class you need to have a structured plan of what you are going to do throughout your sessions. The main reasons behind this are that it gives you confidence, you know exactly what you are going to do and when, and it instils confidence in your students as they will know what they are going to learn and instils a feeling of wellbeing and comfort with the way your session is going to go. It will also aid their motivation and their interest.

In this guide, I'll show you how to plan your first lesson and give you a skeleton structure and template to help you with your first session. There are 5 Stages:

 **Introduction**

 **Entry Levels**

 **Your topic**



 **Student activity**

 **Assessment**

 **Session Conclusion**

Stage 1 – the Introduction

You need to start with an introduction. This is really important, as if it is the first session of a longer course, or the only session of a course, you will need to:

-  introduce yourself,
-  discuss housekeeping arrangements, including when the breaks are and of course health and safety and where the fire exits are and so on

- ⚡ familiarise your students with the course by share the course aim and outcomes.
- ⚡ define the ground rules for your course.

You could then need to introduce an icebreaker, so that students get to know each other, or get to know each other better, and for the group to start gelling. I like to do this because it will relax the students and they will learn better. It doesn't have to be a long icebreaker, but one where all can join in and where you can learn about your students, so that you can use this information later in your teaching - if you have a student who loves animals, you might be able to use animals as a 'hook' in your teaching. For example, say you are teaching photography or art or creative writing, you may use dogs or tigers as a theme in your session.

There's a lot to go through in this first stage, but each part is important. It puts students minds at rest and it informs them of the structure of the course and it gets students comfortable with each other and you, and supportive friendships start to grow.

Stage 2 – Entry Levels

You need to understand what your students' entry levels are. By this I mean what do they already know. You don't want to be teaching them something they already know or they will get bored. But on the other hand you also don't want to teach them something so advanced that they struggle. In both cases students may not return to your classes!! So start the session by finding this out. You could go with an activity, such as a light hearted quiz or ask them to do something like. For example in a Creative Writing Class you might ask them to write a paragraph about a particular topic, or in a language class you may ask your students to count to 10 in the target language, for example. You could always use the icebreaker to glean information about your students too. You could of course ask them to fill in a form which asks them questions about themselves too. Even better still, send the form to them to complete and return prior to the course starting so you can plan before the lesson starts. This will really aid your planning. You could also use a mixture of all of these ideas to find out your students' entry levels.

Stage 3 – Your topic

Once you have a general idea of what students do know and what they don't, you can introduce your topic or subject specialism. Use your lesson plan so that you have the planned structure of the session. Basically, you need to start teaching by giving them something that leads them from something they already know into something they don't know. From something simple to something a bit more complex. Nothing too difficult but something that stretches them. Make it fun and interesting. So imagine you are going to teach Social Media, for example, start by asking who know what social media is, and then taking your cue from what your students answer, you can then explain and start teaching from there.

Stage 4 – Student Activity

The next stage is to let your students have a go at what you have taught them. Don't spend hours and hours talking, with your students just listening. Most will get bored. Encourage your students to take part in activities which will show their progress and achievement, however small. Tour the room and give good feedback and advice. Praise your students' efforts as this will help to motivate them. So, again, if you were teaching social media, move the students to the computers and teach them how to login to the computers and set up their accounts.

Stage 5 – Assessment

You will need to check that learning has taken place in your class. Assess your students by asking what can they do now that they couldn't do before they came to your class? This is really important because, when they return to your class for the next session you will know exactly what they do know and what they need to know. This makes writing your lesson plan so much easier.

Stage 6 Session Conclusion

Finally when the class is drawing to an end, you need to summarise what you have taught and during this summary ask your students questions to make sure they understand. A good way to do this is to return to the aim and learning outcomes of your session and ask your students questions on this. Don't forget to remind them of what they will be learning in the next session and about homework if they need to do it and its applicable.

The TEA 6 Stage Spine to put together your first session

Stages	What you need to do	Done?
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Introductions 📄 Housekeeping 📄 Course Aim and student Learning outcomes 📄 Ground Rules 📄 Icebreakers 	
2. Entry Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 What do your students know? 📄 What do your students want to learn? 	
3. Your topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Introduce your topic 	
4. Student activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 What are your students going to be doing to learn your topic 	
5. Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Have you checked they have understood what you have taught them? 	
6. Session Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📄 Summarise your lesson 📄 Explain what your students will be doing next lesson 📄 Give out handouts for next course 	