

Apply Your Skills:

Creating Good Practice Activities



1) What makes a good instruction for activities?

** To complete this activity, review the additional resource "Step2_Instructions" in the previous lecture. See bottom of this worksheet for correct solution.*

Take a look at this sample audio transcript from an instructor teaching a course on novel writing:

Now we're going to take that first chapter you wrote and make some edits. The goal of this activity is not for you to have a polished manuscript ready for the publisher; it's just a first pass at tightening up your story before you continue writing. Later on the course we'll work on making more of those final edits. Print out your first chapter--it's easier to make edits this way--and do the following 3 things:

- ▶ Cut wordy language.
- ▶ Circle passive verbs.
- ▶ Underline cliché words and phrases.

Questions

Based on what you learned about writing good instructions, what information should be added to these instructions?

- A) More ways to edit your first book chapter
- B) The difference between passive and active verbs
- C) The number of cliché expressions students should find in their writing
- D) Suggested time to complete this activity

Which sentence should be cut from these instructions?

- A) Now we're going to take that first chapter you wrote and make some edits.
- B) The goal of this activity is not for you to have a polished manuscript ready for the publisher.
- C) Later on the course we'll work on making more of those final edits.
- D) Cut wordy language.

2) Write good instructions:

** To complete this activity, review the additional resource "Step2_Instructions" in the previous lecture. See bottom of this worksheet for example solution.*

Now it's your turn to try your hand at writing good instructions. Let's say you want your students to practice making a sandwich. Write instructions so that someone who has never done the activity before can follow along and succeed. Remember to use clear and concise language when writing your instructions, and include the following information:

- ▶ Goal of the activity
- ▶ Time needed to complete the activity
- ▶ Any materials or preparations needed for the activity
- ▶ Description of the steps to create the final outcome for the activity
- ▶ How students can evaluate the outcome

3) How to give feedback

** To complete this activity, review the additional resource "Step4_Evaluation" in the previous lecture. See bottom of this worksheet for correct solution.*

We covered 4 different ways to give feedback. What are these:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

For students to most effectively self-evaluate their work or give peer feedback, you can provide (at least) two things to help them out. What are they?

Solution for Activity:

1. What makes a good instruction for activities?

Based on what you learned about writing good instructions, what information should be added to these instructions?

D) Suggested time to complete this activity

Which sentence should be cut from these instructions?

C) Later on the course we'll work on making more of those final edits.

2. Write good instructions

Ideal instructions example:

Goal: Make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Duration: About 5 minutes to prepare and assemble your sandwich.

Materials needed:

- ▶ 2 slices of bread
- ▶ Peanut butter
- ▶ Jelly
- ▶ knife for spreading

Directions: Wash your hands and gather your sandwich making materials. Start by using your knife to scoop jelly from the jar and spread it on one side of one of your slices of bread. Spread the jelly thoroughly over one side of the bread, adding more jelly as desired. Next, use the knife to scoop peanut butter from the jar and spread it on one side of your second slice of bread. As you did with the jelly, spread the peanut butter evenly over the surface of the bread and add more peanut butter if desired. When you have spread the peanut butter and jelly over two slices of bread, assemble your sandwich by placing the slice of bread with the peanut butter on top of the piece of bread with the jelly, making sure that the side of the slice of bread with peanut butter on it is touching the side of the other slice of bread with jelly on it. Align the slices of bread so that no peanut butter or jelly is exposed. Your sandwich is now complete!

Evaluate: To evaluate your sandwich, take a bite! If it's delicious, you did a good job.

3. How to give feedback

We covered 4 different ways to give feedback. What are these:

1. Instructor feedback
2. Self-evaluation
3. Peer-to-peer feedback
4. Automated feedback

For students to most effectively self-evaluate their work or give peer feedback, you can provide (at least) two things to help them out. What are they?

- ▶ Good and not-so-good examples for students to compare their work against.
- ▶ A rubric or checklist with the important feedback criteria