

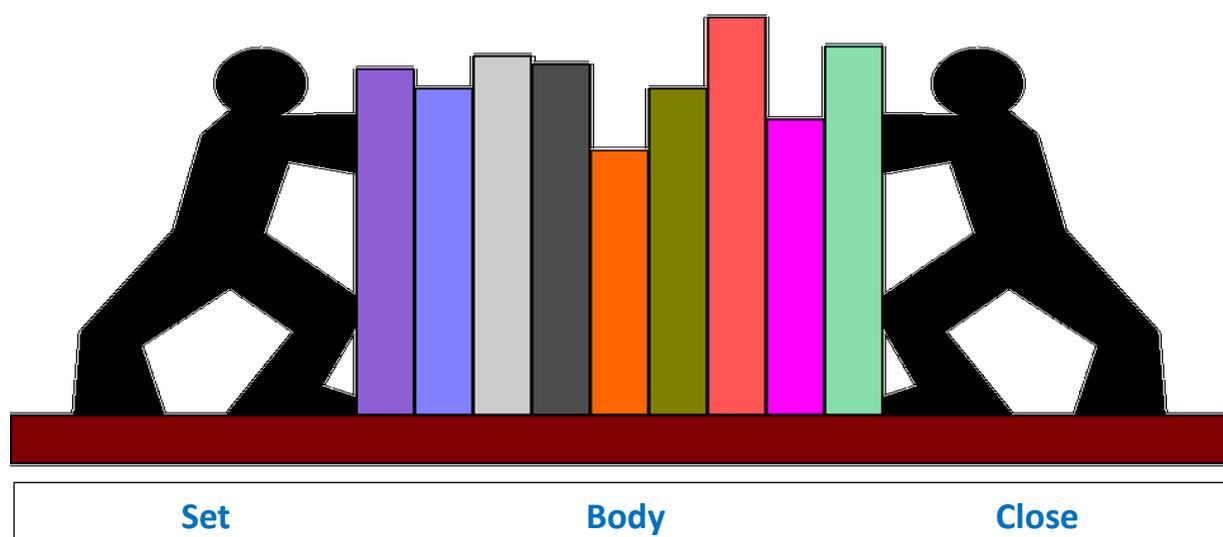
Structure

We recommend having a structure for all types of teaching. Many people, subconsciously or otherwise, have a “set, body, close” (“beginning, middle, end”) for classroom-type sessions. However, any form of teaching, including impromptu clinical teaching, can benefit from having a structure. The “body” is where the majority of content is included, however, the learning can be enhanced if the body is bookended by a “set” and a “close”.

The “set” gives you an opportunity to create the tone you want for your session. The right tone can result in increased learner engagement, better retention and recall of learning and a more positive student experience. It can help to start with a round of introductions, a display of warmth for your learners and by communicating enthusiasm for your subject. We also recommend using the “set” to try to find out what your students already know about the subject, to describe what the session will involve, and what they will be able to do by the end of the session as a result of their new learning, (ie the [learning objectives](#)).

The “body” can follow almost any format. We recommend being mindful of the principles of adult learning, (eg that adults generally learn best when they feel ‘self-directed’), and of active learning, (ie that being involved in something helps people learn), so try to put your learners in the ‘driving seat’ at times. It is also good to break up your material and to do something different every so often, because people generally learn best when material is broken down into chunks with periodic recaps, and their attention is maintained by varying the stimulus.

A lot of teaching ends abruptly, so be sure to formally [close](#) teaching sessions. This could include a summary of key points, finding out where the students feel they are ‘at’ now, and making links to future learning opportunities. It can be helpful to revisit your learning objectives during the “close”, because this helps give your students a sense of achievement.



With all of this in mind, it’s worth remembering that a 60 minute teaching session shouldn’t equate to 60 minutes of content. Building in time for a [set](#) and a [closure](#) is likely to make your session more meaningful, and your key points more memorable, than if you cram in as much information as you can within the allotted time.

Now let's try to put this into practice by putting yourself in your students' shoes for a moment. Consider how you think they feel when they attend your teaching. Think about a recent session you taught, or a session you are due to teach in future. What do you do, or could you do, that would motivate students to engage with you and your session? Develop a list of reminders of what *you will actually do* as part of your "set" in future.

Points to consider when planning your 'set'
What mood will you set and how?
How will you motivate the group?
How will you help them see why the session is relevant to them? (ie that it has 'utility')
How will you make reference to, or establish, their level of prior learning ?
How will you make sure everyone's expectations are clear? Consider what you expect from the group, what they can expect from you, (ie what the 'contract' between you is).

An important aspect of the learning 'contract', and expectation management hinges on the **learning objectives**. Do you have objectives, and how do you communicate them, (if at all)? Perhaps you've attended Planning and Evaluating Your Teaching or Effective Supervision workshops, where we discuss objectives. How do you currently write learning objectives?

Top tips for writing learning objectives
Start with a verb . Choose it very carefully, based on what should the student should be able to do after teaching that they didn't, or couldn't, before the session.
Be mindful of what level of knowledge or competency a learner should be able to function at for their stage in training.
Keep it simple . Where you use the word "and", you could potentially have two separate learning objectives.
Be realistic about how many objectives are actually achievable within the timeframe.

The SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) mnemonic can be useful in developing learning objectives. Below are some rather vague and ambiguous objectives. Have a go at making them SMART-er, by using the tips in the table above.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to...

- Understand reasons for missed GP appointments.
- Know how to take a patient history.
- Cannula insertion and infection control measures.