THE K. PATRICIA CROSS ACADEMY

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Teaching Technique 02

3-2-1

ACTIVITY TYPE

- Active/Engaged Learning
- Graphic Organizing
- Reflecting

TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Low Motivation/Engagement
- Surface Learning

LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL

- Application: Analysis & Critical Thinking
- Learning How to Learn

3-2-1

In *3-2-1*, students write about 3 things they learned in the lecture, 2 things they found particularly interesting from the lecture, and 1 question they still have about the lecture content.

1 Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for *3-2-1*

2 Identify the learning task's underlying problem and craft the prompt

3 Set assignment parameters for completing the prompts

4 Develop a plan for learning assessment or grading

5 Communicate assignment instructions to students

6 Implement the technique

7 Reflect upon the activity and evaluate its effectiveness

Step-By-Step Instructions

In this section we provide you with guidance on each of the seven steps involved as you consider this technique.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

3-2-1 is a graphic organizer assignment that challenges students to consider what they have just learned, what they found interesting about it, and what they think they still need to know. It is a flexible technique that can be used across many different disciplines and fields. It could be used after a reading assignment, a lecture, a group activity, or other activity. It could be completed in or out of class. Moreover, while students most often complete the *3-2-1* template as a graphic organizer, it could also be modified and used as a discussion technique. In this modified form, the instructor can use the *3-2-1* key questions as discussion prompts. Finally, *3-2-1* could be used as a prompt for a research assignment.

As students summarize, evaluate, and question key ideas and information, *3-2-1* provides opportunities for instructors to use the activity as is or adapt it to accomplish specific goals. It helps students consolidate and reformulate information they have just learned. It also provides scaffolding for support for thinking through new information.

By design, this technique helps students connect what they already know to what they will soon learn. This connection prompts them to draw upon their existing mental schema. Moreover, the technique also prompts them to connect course content to their own interests, which many students will find motivating. Consider your key learning goals for using this technique.

3-2-1 is also a useful approach for assessing learning. The handout that students complete are easily collected and easily scored. They provide clear evidence of what students have taken away from a given activity or assignment as well as where they feel they need additional information. Moreover, it provides clear evidence of what aspects of the topic students are interested in learning more about. This information can help you to tailor your instruction to best meet their instructional needs and interests. It also provides students with a glimpse into their learning, thus serving as an instrument of self-assessment.

Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

Because *3-2-1* can be used in many different ways and to accomplish many different goals, it is critical to develop a specific prompt that helps students accomplish their goals. You may want to focus the prompt on a particular reading, lecture, or other activity. Or you may want to focus on a specific topic. For example, in teaching behaviorism, you might ask for the following:

- Explain three types of behaviorism

- Identify two ways of conditioning

- Provide one way to reinforce good behavior, punish bad behavior, and encourage extinction of bad behavior

The prompt is what will direct the learning.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

While *3-2-1* has built-in guidelines, you will want to consider and specify how students respond to the prompt. For example, consider whether they should respond in complete sentences or whether a list of bullets will suffice. You'll also want to consider other parameters, such as time allowed for the activity, the deadline, how students should submit responses, and so forth.

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

3-2-1 responses are relatively easy to assess, and the responses can help you target future instruction. Simply look across responses for each prompt to identify areas of commonality and to gauge whether students met the instructional goals. For example:

- **Look at all the responses and identify 3 things most students just learned.** Consider the top 3 things you hoped they would learn and consider the following question: did most students learn what you hoped they would? If not, where were the gaps? How many students didn't learn what you hoped they would? How might you fill the gap?

- **Next look at the 2 things students found interesting.** When you look across student responses, where are the highest areas of interest. What might you do to capitalize on that interest and engage students?

- **Finally look at the 1 thing they still need to know.** Does a common theme emerge? Is there something you can do to fill the gap?

If you want to use as a grade, consider whether it would best work as part of a participation or engagement grade. To score the *3-2-1*, you can use a simple plus, check, or minus to gauge for completeness.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

Because assignment instructions are built into the activity itself, it is best to create a handout. Your handout should not only provide the template for the *3-2-1* but also communicate how students should respond.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

- Announce the *3-2-1* activity, and share a handout containing the following prompts:

  › 3 things you just learned.

  › 2 things you found particularly interesting in what you have just learned.

  › 1 question you still have about the information.

- Give students time to complete the handout.

- Collect student responses and review them. Consider whether you need to review concepts, in particular the questions students still had, and if so, how you will do so.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

When reflecting on the activity and how effective it was, consider the following questions:

- Did the technique match the course learning goals and objectives?

- Did it meet my goals for this learning module?

- Was it appropriate for the students?

- Did the technique keep the students engaged?

- Did it promote student learning?

- Did it provide me with information about student understanding?

If you answer yes to all or most of these questions, next consider how you might improve the activity for the next use.

Support Materials

The materials in this section are intended to help you with the process of implementing this technique.

SAMPLE HANDOUT

Consider the following sample handout on page 7 to help you implement, review, and assess student responses to *3-2-1* in your classroom.

VARIATIONS

- **Compare and Contrast *3-2-1***
  Ask students to record three similarities between two items, two differences, and one question they still have about them.

- **Reading *3-2-1***
  When completing a reading assignments, ask students to record three of the most important ideas from the text, two supporting details for each of the ideas, and one question they have about each of the ideas.

- **Pyramid *3-2-1***
  Create a handout with a triangle divided into three sections horizontally. In the bottom section, ask students to record three things they learned for the day. In the middle section, ask students to record two questions they have. In the top section, ask students to describe how the information learned is applicable to their everyday lives.

3-2-1

Respond to each prompt in complete sentences.

3 NEW THINGS I LEARNED FROM THE LECTURE:

1.

2.

3.

2 THINGS IN THE LECTURE I FOUND PARTICULARLAY INTERESTING:

1.

2.

1 THING FROM THE LECTURE THAT I STILL HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT:

1.

Name _____

Technique Template

Following are two templates to assist you as you think through how you might implement this technique in your own class. The first is a completed template, providing an example of how Claire Major adapted *3-2-1* in her course, *College and University Teaching*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.

Technique Template

Sample *3-2-1* Completed Technique Template:

Content from Claire Major

College and University Teaching

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

> My course is a graduate level seminar, and it enrolls approximately 25 students per semester. These students are diverse in terms of their preparation for this course, but many of them are working as Teaching Assistants at my university but have had no formal training in education generally or college teaching specifically. The course is blended; we meet onsite once monthly and have weekly online discussions and activities in between session that student complete through a learning management system. They typically read one book focused on college teaching prior to each class session.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

> I am looking for an activity that will help students with class preparation. In particular, I want them to go beyond skimming out-of-class reading assignments and consider how the text can inform their teaching. My hope is that going deeper in the assignment will not only help them deepen their understanding but also improve participation in class discussion.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?

> When I assign a reading topic, I will ask students to identify, three things they learned from the assignment, two things they found interesting, and one thing they still want to know.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?

> For each reading assignment, students will be asked to complete the 3-2-1 prompt. I will share a handout through the learning management system that students can download and fill in. Prior to each onsite meeting, each student swill use the handout and respond to each prompt in complete sentences. Students will turn in the completed handout to the course learning management system on the Wednesday before our Saturday class meeting.

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?

To assess learning, I will review responses before our meeting, looking across each prompt for common themes. I anticipate that students will identify key points from the reading, and if not, I will address any gaps in knowledge in the onsite class session. I hope that they will find some things in common that are interesting and use those as a prompt for discussion. I will look for what they feel they still need to know as an opportunity to add that information into the class; when students are onsite. Then, I can address their questions and concerns directly. As far as grading goes, I will use their responses as evidence of participation/engagement in course content and will use it in determining a participation grade (which I refer to as an engagement grade).

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?

I will describe the assignment for weekly reading and 3-2-1 in the syllabus, and I will also include it in the assignment's instruction pane of the online learning management system.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

> My plan is to follow the procedures as listed, with the exception of having students do the work outside of class rather than in class and responding through an online management system instead of physically turning in a handout.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.
Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?

> To reflect on the technique, I will consider the process and the products the students submitted. I will try to determine whether the activity met the goals that I had for it and if so how I might improve the activity going forward.

Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement *3-2-1* in your class. Fill in the blanks below, and use the information provided elsewhere in the Instructor's Guide to assist you in your thinking.

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

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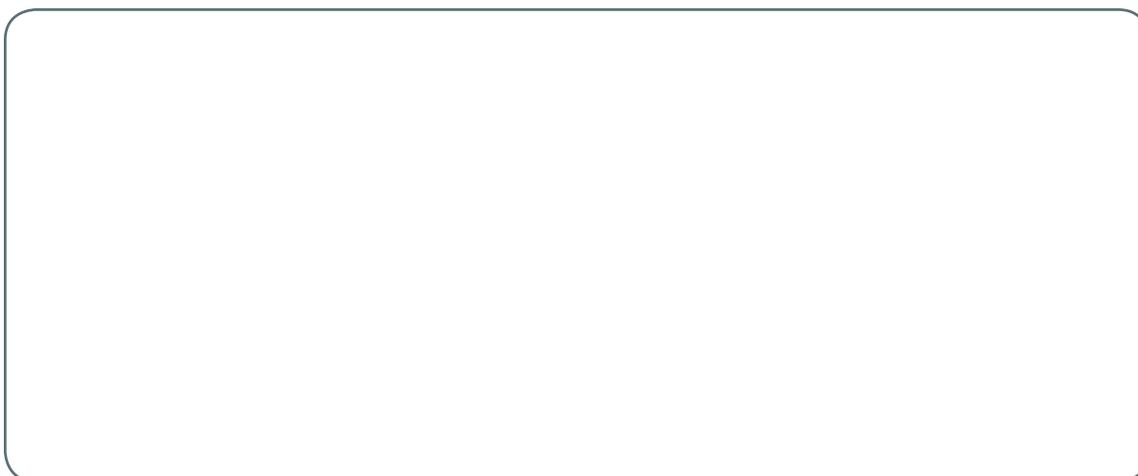
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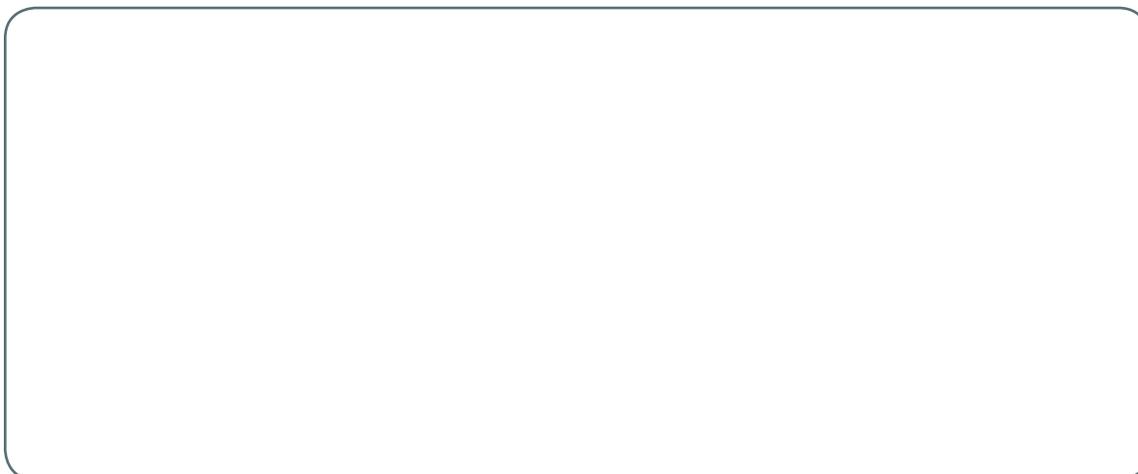
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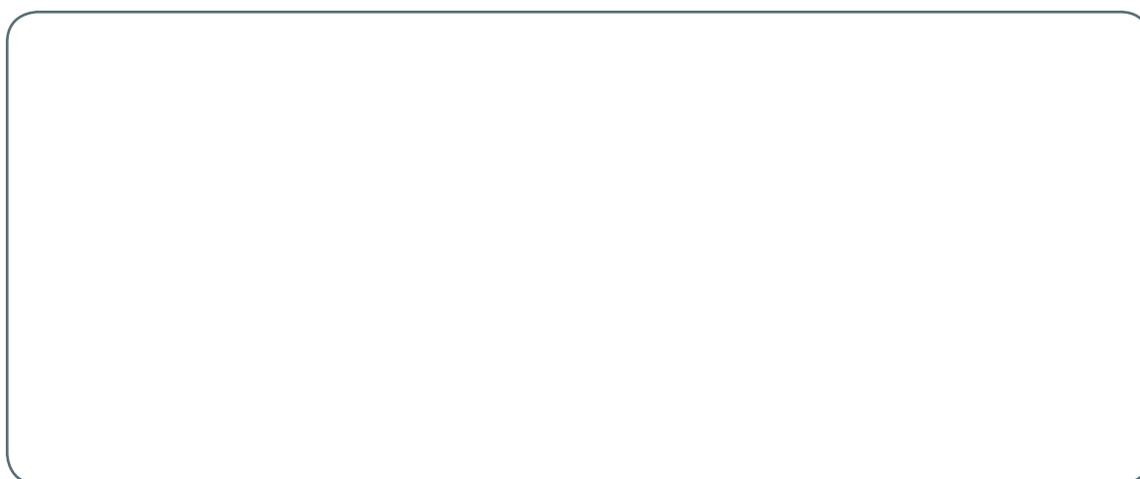
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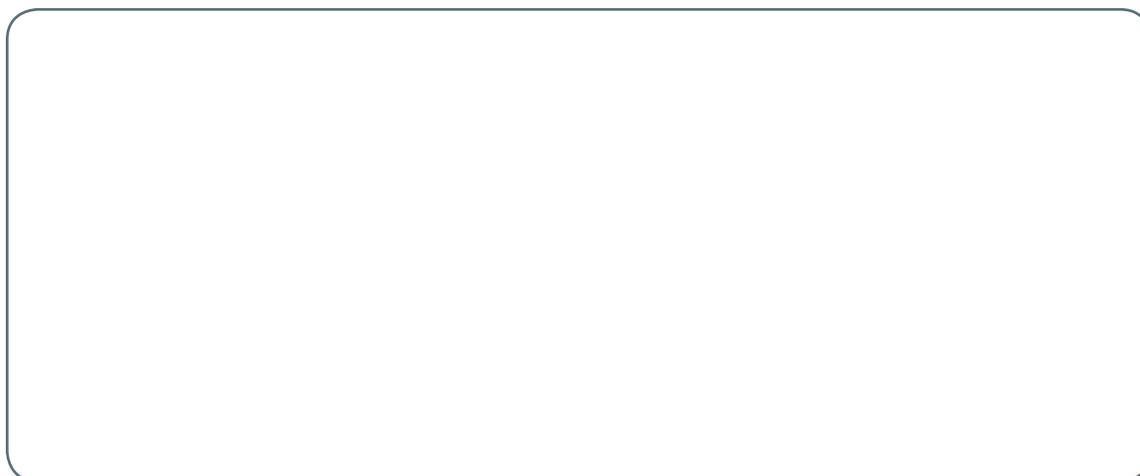
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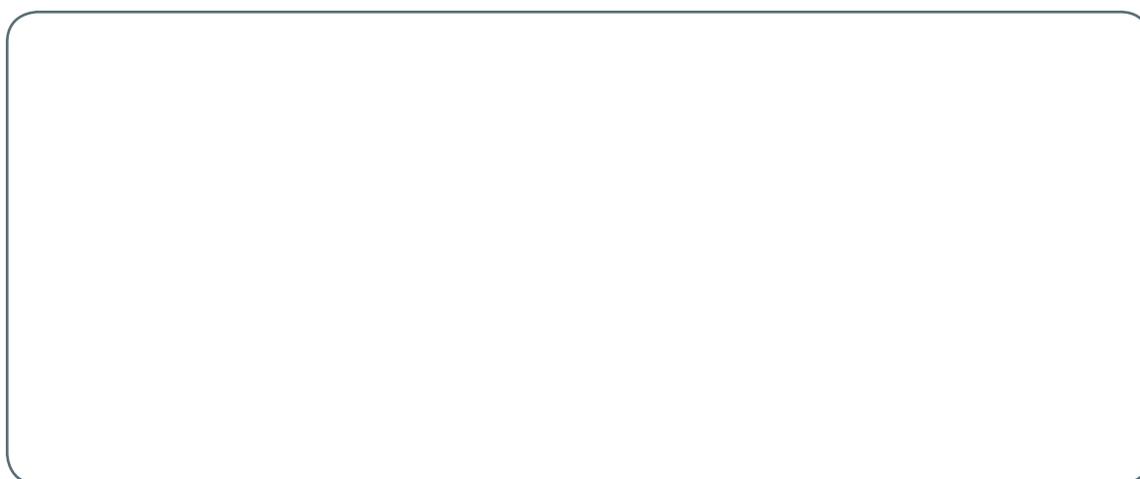
References and Resources

PRIMARY SOURCE

Content for this download was drawn primarily from "Active Learning Technique 27: 3-2-1" in *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty* (Barkley & Major, 2018), pp. 331–335. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in both on campus and online courses, see the primary source:

Barkley, E. F., Major, C. H. (2018). *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Alsamadani, H.A. (2011). The effects of the 3-2-1 reading strategy on EFL reading comprehension. English Language Teaching, 4(3), 184–191. Retrieved from http://files.eric.gov/fulltext/EJ1080738.pdf

- Van Gyn, G. (2013). The little assignment with the big impact: Reading, writing, critical reflection, and meaningful discussion. Faculty Focus. Retrieved from www.facultyfocus.com/articles/instructional-design/the-little-assignment-with-the-big-impact-reading-writing-critical-reflection-and-meaningful-discussion/

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