

# The Massage Educator

issue 2, 2009

**151%** The percentage increase in the number of massage and bodywork programs in the United States from 1998 to 2008, according to ABMP's school enrollment survey conducted in January, 2009.

Created by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals • [philosophy for instructors](#)



## CREATING LESSON PLANS

KEYS TO AN  
EFFECTIVE PROCESS

As instructors, we must develop lesson plans. Some basic guidelines, presented here, will help make these more meaningful and effective. For sample lesson plans, visit [www.abmp.com/instructors](http://www.abmp.com/instructors), then click on the School Instructors dropdown menu. Under Resources, you'll find Lesson Planning.

### IDENTIFY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What do you want your students to apply, demonstrate, or understand when the lesson is over? What depth of knowledge will be required? Work

backward from your desired end result—the learning objectives.

Good learning objectives define the behaviors and knowledge that educators believe students should attain in order to progress to the next course or achieve success in the massage profession after graduation.

First, determine how you will assess students' knowledge or competency. What format will be used: a written (multiple choice or essay) exam, a verbal exam, or a practical competency check? Assessment tools should mirror how the application, execution, or understanding is delivered. For example, if a student needs to recall contraindications for massaging clients with high blood pressure, a lecture about hypertension followed by a multiple-choice or short-answer exam may be appropriate. Developing a student's ability to conduct health history interviews may be best achieved using role-play; effective assessment may require a verbal exam or practical competency check. (For additional details about learning objectives, read the articles available at [www.abmp.com/instructors](http://www.abmp.com/instructors) in the School Instructors dropdown menu under Resources.)

## visualize success

Help students mentally practice difficult events to decrease anxiety and build confidence. This skill carries over to professional situations, like networking and meeting clients.

Have students close their eyes and imagine the anxiety-causing situation. Encourage use of multiple senses; what do they feel, hear, see, and smell? Have them mentally manipulate the situation. Start with simple elements (what the room looks like) and progress to changing feelings or situational outcomes. Focus on creating positive outcomes.



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# WEBINARS FOR INSTRUCTORS

Webinars are web-based seminars that allow people to learn about a topic from the convenience of their own computer. ABMP holds regularly scheduled, free webinars for instructors on issues related to building educational capacity and student success. Past webinar topics include:

- Building Emotional Intelligence—Keys to Student Success
- Building Your Campus Community and Culture
- Critical Thinking: Fostering Good Judgment in the Massage Classroom
- Demystifying the MBLEx
- Planning Great Orientations
- Preventing Sexual Harassment in Massage Schools

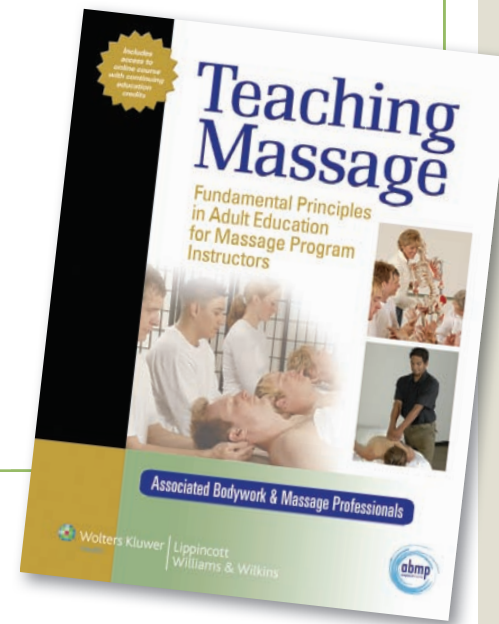
ABMP is also launching a series of webinars that are companion pieces to the new textbook *Teaching Massage: Fundamental Principles in Adult Education for Massage Program Instructors*. The series was

kicked off with a webinar about teaching pathology, hosted by Ruth Werner, who authored the book’s chapter on the same subject.

If you missed the presentation of a webinar, you haven’t missed out on the opportunity to use these resources.

Download the PowerPoint presentations and accompanying materials at [www.abmp.com/instructors](http://www.abmp.com/instructors), where you’ll find them in the School Instructors dropdown menu under Instructor Development.

To be notified about upcoming webinars, select Webinars for Instructors from the link above, then click on invitation list in the second paragraph. 🍏



“LIFE ISN’T ABOUT FINDING YOURSELF. LIFE IS ABOUT CREATING YOURSELF.” —GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

## Building Confident Learners

Massage and bodywork students come to us with a variety of school experiences. Some are confident in themselves and their ability to learn, but many lack experience or success with formal education. As instructors, we must quickly build trust with and between our students and set the stage for successful learning.

### ESTABLISH A CONTRACT

Though your school has policies and procedures to which students have been oriented, a classroom contract is an agreement customized for your class. The process should be interactive, where you and your students agree to guidelines for classroom goals and behavior. Start by identifying elements of your role as instructor, then discuss what students expect from you. Next, discuss what is expected of students. You may also include roles of other school personnel, such as administrative staff or other instructors. Specific topics you may address include ground rules for communication and interaction and how to handle conflict with other students, with you, or with other instructors.

Once you have established pertinent ground rules, create a written contract. One that is negotiated and signed by each student establishes accountability and ease with expectations. It also serves as a concrete tool when mediating conflicts with or between students.



CREATING LESSON PLANS  
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### TAKE INVENTORY OF ALL RESOURCES

First, determine how much time is available. The length of the class or lesson will influence your schedule and how the lesson plan framework is developed.

**Identify what tools are available.** Use of art supplies, computers, massage supplies, models, projectors, textbooks, and white boards further shape your plan. Don’t forget to include the classroom space and layout in your evaluation.

**Consider your audience.** How many students are in the class? What is their experience with the topic? What are their learning styles? Factor in how your students may best receive and digest information.

**Evaluate yourself.** What are your strengths and weaknesses as an instructor? What is your learning style? How are you most effective? Will you have help from a teaching assistant or associate? Consider consulting with colleagues to find out their own best practices.

### MIX UP THE DELIVERY

Break up your class time into digestible chunks. Changing activities every 20 or 30 minutes keeps students engaged. Varying tasks also keeps the lesson fresh and interesting for instructors. Allow time for short breaks and transitions; the number of segments, breaks, and transitions will vary according to the lesson and time available.

Offer various formats to accommodate learning styles. Auditory learners thrive on lectures and discussions. Visual learners require charts, images, and models. Kinesthetic learners need to build models, handle objects, or problem solve using their body. Present the big picture and its components or coax students to a conclusion using additive knowledge. Though specific topics will lend themselves a particular style, keep your audience in mind.



### CREATE ORDER AND PACING

Place your lesson segments into an order that facilitates progressive learning. Some instructors prefer to present concepts in a lecture first, then have students apply them in an activity. Others organize an experiment and follow with a discussion of findings. Both methods are effective; there is no single correct way to organize lesson components. The topic, your audience, your own personality and experience, and the setting all influence the order. Assign specific amounts of time for activities, breaks, checking in with students, lectures, and transitions. Transitions include switching from one segment to the next, setting up or breaking down equipment, and cleaning up. It is essential to facilitate the process and transitions. Write the schedule on the board and hold students (and yourself) to it. There is room for flexibility if you find an activity or discussion to be especially fruitful, but communicate with students about alterations and accommodate these changes in the overall schedule.

Following these basic principles will guide your steps in creating effective and meaningful lesson plans. Revisit your plan often and adapt as information and objectives are updated, learning styles fluctuate, and your own skills evolve. 🍏

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## 10 Tips for Maximizing Practice Sessions

Meaningful practice is a key element of the massage and bodywork classroom experience. Here are 10 tips for maximizing this experience by keeping students on task and achieving objectives in practice sessions.

- 1 Establish procedures for setting up, transitioning, and breaking down.
- 2 Write the schedule in a location visible during practice sessions.
- 3 Display on the board the objectives or specific skills being practiced.
- 4 Demonstrate the target skills, using appropriate order of application, communication, and time management.
- 5 Answer students' questions at the beginning of each session.
- 6 Circulate around the room, making yourself equally available to each student.
- 7 Provide guidance appropriate to the experience of each class and each student.
- 8 Give brief pointers and then keep moving.
- 9 Reiterate the objectives of the session if individual students become distracted.
- 10 Monitor the group dynamic and make adjustments if the group loses focus. 🍏



BUILDING CONFIDENT LEARNERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

### CREATE FRAMEWORK

Once the classroom contract has been established, you will have a foundation on which to build an educational experience. Establish clear routines when working with new students. This may include routines for setting up and breaking down the classroom. This can extend into what supplies are required (art supplies, sheets, textbooks, etc.). You can organize your lessons in predictable fashion. For example, lessons may always include:

- 15-minute check-in
- 30-minute lecture
- 20-minute demonstration
- 30-minute practice session
- Break and transition
- 30-minute practice session
- Break down tables and transition
- Regrouping and debriefing.

Students will be learning new skills, which can create excitement or anxiety, but the familiar routine will be calming. Your job is to be consistent and reinforce these routines; communicate clearly when routines change. Mixing new experiences with familiar routines is very powerful in building confidence and trust.

### EVOLVE

As students evolve, your teaching methods must also. New students take comfort in structure and routine, but they need to develop critical thinking and independence before graduating and entering the professional world. Some students will have extensive life and work experience; others may be entering their first career. Recognize that, regardless of their past, this experience is new. Students must develop their massage and bodywork skills systematically and with progressive complexity.

Newer students will focus on simple, specific skills and principles. They want to know the rules. A structured learning environment supports this. As students progress, start layering skills, such as interviewing clients, planning sessions, modifying techniques, and communication. Integrating progressive amounts of problem solving and choice is key. Gradually loosen structure to encourage experimentation. New students can be very uncomfortable with the notion that there may be several methods for accomplishing the same result, but more advanced students should be encouraged to explore various strategies.

Keep in mind what you expect each student to accomplish by graduation. Transitioning from structured learning environments to creative, independent experiences will build the confidence necessary to begin a successful practice. 🍏