

The Massage Educator

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1,883 the number of message program instructors who have participated in free ABMP Instructors on the Front Lines workshops since 2008.

Created by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals • philosophy for instructors



INCREASING INSTRUCTIONAL CLARITY

Instructional clarity is defined as “the teacher’s ability to effectively stimulate the desired meaning of course content and processes in the minds of students through the use of appropriately structured verbal and nonverbal messages.”¹ Put simply, instructional clarity is the ability of a teacher to present information in a way that students understand. The research on teacher effectiveness has consistently found that instructional clarity is associated with higher levels of student achievement, enhanced motivation levels, and student satisfaction with educational programs.²

WHAT NOT TO DO

In a study to determine what decreases instructional clarity, researchers found that inexperienced teachers made a common mistake; they tried to cover too

much content and give too many details.³ This tendency seems to stem from credibility worries. When interviewed, those new to teaching believed they appeared more authoritative when they provided detailed lectures. Students, however, quickly became overwhelmed and then bored. Experienced teachers tend to focus on the most important content and place it in a meaningful progression, regularly connecting it with information already familiar to students.

BEHAVIORS OF TEACHERS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF INSTRUCTIONAL CLARITY
Researchers regularly describe three broad behavior clusters, which outline the behaviors of teachers with high levels of instructional clarity. They are:

- Verbal clarity, including presentation skills, verbal fluency, the ability to give explanations, and the use of examples and real-life cases.
- Structural clarity, where teachers use best practices for structuring and delivering content including previews, organization of concepts, transitions, links to previously learned material, summaries, reviews, outlines, flow charts, graphic organizers, illustrations, and visual aids.
- Process clarity, where teachers understand how best to emphasize aspects of content, provide relevant content, ensure curriculum build and flow, and assess and respond to student learning challenges.

Instant Activities

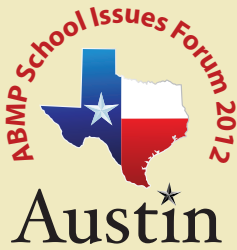
An instant activity is used to engage students immediately as they enter the classroom. The tasks should be simple, clear, and centered on the students’ prior knowledge and skills. Teachers might ask students to write four quiz questions from last week’s textbook reading, work in groups to review for a pop quiz, or journal about the way in which a previous lesson changed student thinking about massage. The goal is to get students involved and working productively right away to enhance class starts, and set the stage for the next level of learning.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Get Ready, Get Set, Go!

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) is developing new projects, as well as participating in upcoming events to support massage program teachers. Plan ahead to take advantage of these opportunities for self-growth, enhanced student achievement, and fun! To find out more about any of the projects and events described here, go to www.abmp.com and click the appropriate links in the Resources for Massage Schools and Instructors section.



ABMP SCHOOL ISSUES FORUM (APRIL 19-21, 2012)

ABMP is thrilled to invite you to its 16th annual School Issues Forum, April 19–21, 2012, in Austin, Texas. Held at The Driskill (a grand hotel built in 1886 as a cattle baron's showcase), the ABMP School Issues Forum is a gathering where massage school owners, directors, and instructors can educate, inspire, learn, network, and talk shop with peers about important education and business topics. Review the instructor program at www.abmp.com when you click the link for the “2012 School Issues Forum” under the Resources for Massage Schools and Instructors section.



INSTRUCTORS ON THE FRONT LINES— NEW TOPIC (STARTING JANUARY 2012)

In 2008, ABMP launched Instructors on the Front Lines (IFL), a free workshop series to support massage teachers in their efforts to create meaningful learning environments for students. ABMP takes a new IFL workshop on the road each year, and today we count it as a privilege to have worked with more than 1,883 massage instructors across the country! Our first topic discussed building emotional intelligence in students. This year we talked about Gen Y learners, their unique needs, and how to build essential capacity in this group. In 2012, our new topic will focus on teaching methods that build critical thinking skills. To find out more about IFL workshops in your area, visit www.abmp.com and click “ABMP Instructors on the Front Lines Events” under Resources for Massage Schools and Instructors.

Educators have been enjoying the Instructors on the Front Lines workshops since 2008



INSTRUCTOR IOI WEBINAR

Helping massage instructors meet in the classroom, has been an important part of the *Massage: Fundamental Principles in the Classroom* (Williams & Wilkins, 2009), and IFL Front Lines. Now, we are planning a new generation of massage professional education will offer monthly webinars and develop a foundation in the classroom. Watch for “Key Education Theory in Action,”

REPLAY THE WORLD MASSAGE

ABMP was excited to partner with (as part of an online event) to bring the professional development this month. All state-approved massage registrations, courtesy of ABMP are available that could be used to broadcast these sessions live in their classrooms and take advantage of this great opportunity. Through the live event, and now in the past, icons of the massage profession are featured. Ruth Werner explains that the world of massage to high quality research articles is “Practice.” Learning how to apply research and techniques for better client outcomes. There are dozens of other presentations by Myers and Robert Schleip, “Insurance: The Educated Heart: Roles and Benefits,” “The Power of Relaxation Massage.” For the November conference, ABMP has programming designed specifically for schools and click “ABMP Education Day at Schools and Instructors. There you

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT IDENTIFIES CHALLENGES



Representatives of the seven primary organizations that comprise the massage therapy profession, including Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals, gathered September 13–14 for a Leadership Summit in St. Louis, Missouri. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: to identify the most significant challenges and limitations that currently exist in this field, and to begin the process of developing and implementing solutions that will enable it to move forward in its evolution.



Participants in the Massage Therapy Leadership Summit—St. Louis, Missouri, September 13–14, 2011. Left to right: Ruth Werner (MT Foundation), Shelly Johnson (AMTA), Rick Rosen (AFMTE), Glenath Moyle (AMTA), Randy Swenson (COMTA), Debra Persinger (FSMTB), Bob Benson (ABMP), Kate Zulaski (COMTA), Paul Lindamood (NCBTMB), Pete Whitridge (AFMTE), Les Sweeney (ABMP), Alexa Zaledonis (NCBTMB). Rick Rosen, photographer.

AR SERIES (STARTING JANUARY 2012)

the challenges of today's changing students, as well as thrive
important initiative for ABMP. We produced the textbook *Teaching
Adult Education for Massage Program Instructors* (Lippincott
launched our national live training program, Instructors on the
g to support new teachers as they strive to develop the next
ls. The Instructor 101 series will launch in January 2012 and
downloadable activities on topics essential for building a strong
ch for webinars on "Writing and Using Learning Objectives,"
"Lesson Planning," "Developing Great Lectures," and more.

MESSAGE CONFERENCE

the World Massage Conference (an
on's top presenters to schools earlier
massage schools received two free
and the World Massage Conference,
the entire conference or specific
and faculty rooms. You can still take
y by replaying the event today.
in the replays of those presentations,
re able to come directly into your classroom. For example,
world of massage therapy research is exploding, and access
easier than ever in "Applying Research to Your Everyday
research in daily practice helps students fine-tune treatments
outcomes, while building a more successful practice.
ations, including "The Fascia Responds" with Thomas
ance Billing for Massage Therapists" with Diana Thompson,
boundaries for Massage Therapists" with Laura Allen,
" with Eric Brown and Eli Bay, and many more.
ABMP created an additional day of World Massage Conference
y for massage and bodywork instructors. Go to www.abmp.com
at the World Massage Conference" under Resources for Massage
u will find even more resources developed just for you. 🍏



S AND OPPORTUNITIES

Inconsistent quality, depth, and focus of entry-level
massage therapy education, as well as licensure portability,
were identified as priority discussion items. A series
of factors that need to be addressed regarding entry-
level massage education were also identified, including:
curriculum design, teacher competency, student
assessment, and updating subject matter to match
evidence-informed practice.

To continue the inter-organization dialogue begun in
St. Louis, the representatives will have another face-to-face
meeting on May 1–2, 2012, as well as ongoing telephone
and electronic communication. To find out more about
the Leadership Summit, visit www.abmp.com and click the
"Leaders Meet to Discuss the Future of the Massage Therapy
Profession" link in the News and Information section. 🍏

It is also important to remember that adult learners
often pursue learning to build new skills and advance in the
workplace. In *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn* (Jossey-Bass,
2008), author Raymond Wlodkowski points out that adult
learners have some specific needs related to instructional clarity.
They are pragmatic students who are looking for solutions to
real-life problems. Unnecessary theoretical content may leave
them thinking, "Don't waste my time," "Why should I care
about this?" or "Are you kidding me? Get me out of here!" For
this reason, instructional clarity includes regular explanations
about why the information is important and can help the
learner meet important life goals.

Teachers with instructional clarity tend to naturally follow
a particular teaching progression. First, they provide the big
picture (this is where we are trying to get in our learning today).
Next, they define key words and terms, extract broad concepts,
and provide a structure for the information before filling in
important details. Personal experiences and stories are used to
tie information to real-life examples so that students know why
they should care and how the information will support their
efforts to work in the massage profession.

Demonstration of instructional clarity is a direct reflection
of content expertise. If you don't know it and know it well, you
can't teach it well.⁴ Too often, new teachers are asked to manage
classrooms on topics that are outside their area of proficiency.
If you are worried about your level of aptitude in a particular
topic, explore your degree of comfort with these statements:

- I understand this topic to the degree that I can explain it to myself logically in my own words. I don't have to read any of the lecture material from note cards.
- I can give at least two good examples (a story, fact, personal experience, piece of research, or analogy) for each key concept I'm teaching.
- I can personally and proficiently demonstrate any hands-on skill I am teaching on more than one region of the body.

Recommendations from experts advise teachers to work at
mastering content to increase feelings of confidence, and then
build communication skills so materials are presented fluidly.
Finding a teaching mentor, such as an experienced teacher or a
content expert, to support improvement is also useful. It is also
important to recognize that instructional clarity is just one piece
of a complex puzzle and that other skills also come into play.⁵ 🍏

1. J.L. Chesebro, "Teaching Clearly," in *Communication for Teachers* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002).
2. D. Lane, "Communication with Students to Enhance Learning," accessed November 2011, <http://www.education.com/reference/article/communication-with-students-to-enhance/>.
3. J.D. Feezel and S.A. Myers, "Assessing Graduate Assistant Teacher Communication," *Communication Quarterly* 45, no. 3, (1997): 110-124.
4. A.B. Frymier, "Making Content Relevant to Students," in *Communication for Teachers* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002).
5. R.J. Wlodkowski, *Enhancing Adult Education to Learn*, revised edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999).

Four Aces of Effective Teaching

In “Stack the Deck in Favor of Your Students by Using the Four Aces of Effective Teaching” (*Journal of Effective Teaching*, University of North Carolina—Wilmington), authors Sean Bulger, Derek Mohr, and Richard Walls encourage educators to use the “Four Aces” as a framework for improved self-reflective practice in higher-education settings. This concept condenses the most widespread recommendations from teaching-effectiveness research.



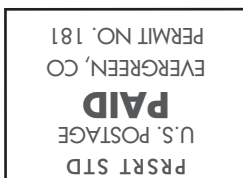
Ace 1—Outcomes: Well-designed and articulated learning outcomes tell students where they are going, how they will get there, and why particular information is important.

Ace 2—Clarity: Instructional clarity ensures students understand the information and processes presented to them so that they can build on what they already know. (See more about this on page 1.)

Ace 3—Engagement: Students learn by doing. Don’t lecture for more than 30 minutes before running an activity that involves all students. Have students *do* what you want them to learn.

Ace 4—Enthusiasm: If you love teaching it, they will love learning it. Effective teachers display high levels of enthusiasm for the subjects they teach.

For more information on the Four Aces, visit <http://uncw.edu/cte/et/articles/bulger/>. 🍏



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