



Short but Mighty: The Power of the Brief Presentation

Mariah Rudd, MEd & Shari Whicker, EdD, MEd

Objectives

1. Recognize the role of the lecture in health professions education.
2. Discuss attention span research and challenges of today's learners.
3. Identify theories to support a shift to abbreviated lecture times.
4. Recognize several models to support shortened lectures.
5. Identify best practices and tips for health professions educators who want to shorten lectures.

Why do we turn to lectures?



Why do we turn to lectures?

- Historically accepted means of acquiring knowledge
- Provide an efficient means of information dissemination
- Learners and teachers are comfortable with lectures
- Provide a structured approach to student learning and engagement
- Allow for general control and consistency

(Bligh, 2000)

The Pitfalls of Long Lectures



- Stimulate low cognitive engagement
- Don't foster critical thinking or high-order thinking
- Facilitate only transmission of knowledge
- Lose learner attention
- Create a passive learning experience
- Cram too much information in too short a time

Should we abandon lectures?

- Still an effective teaching tool!
 - Supports acquisition of knowledge
- Part of a diverse and balanced teaching arsenal
 - Use multiple approaches
- Modify lecture to meet learner needs



Learner Attention Span

- Evidence doesn't support the shortening of learner attention spans
- Learner preferences are evolving
- While attention spans may not be getting shorter, they still aren't lengthy...
- Learner attention is tied to the learner preferences
- Educators can appeal to changing learner preferences and needs to support attention

In addition to attention span, what else supports the modification of the traditional lecture?

- Working Memory
- Cognitive Load
- Adult Learning Theory



- Limited capacity
- Readily accessible information
- Used when new information or concepts are encountered
- Long lectures can strain working memory

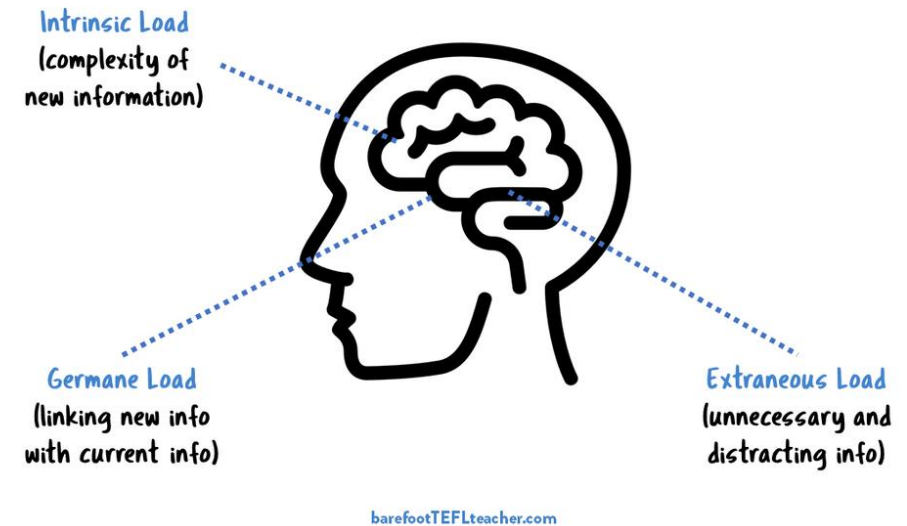
Working Memory

(Anmarkrud, Ø., et. al., 2019; Cooper, A. Z., & Richards, J. B., 2017; Cowan, N., 2014).

Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive Load

- Cognitive load (Sweller): the amount of information that working memory can hold
- Cognitive load describes how learners handle conditions where they are burdened with deep-information processing
- Three types of cognitive load:
 - *intrinsic*
 - *extraneous*
 - *germane*
- High cognitive load is encountered due to the complexity of content and the means with which it is presented
- Teaching methodology can be used to maximize learning and reduce cognitive load

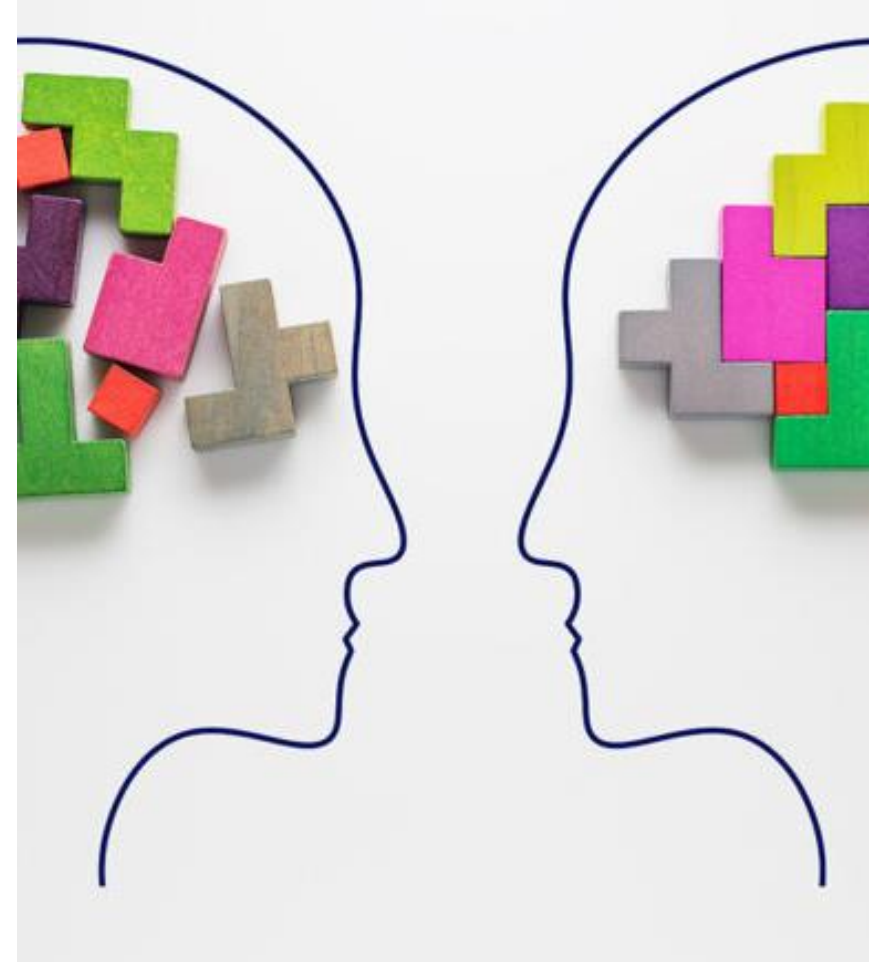


(Leppink, J., et. al., 2015; Leppink, J. & van den Heuvel, A., 2015); Lewis, P. J., 2016)

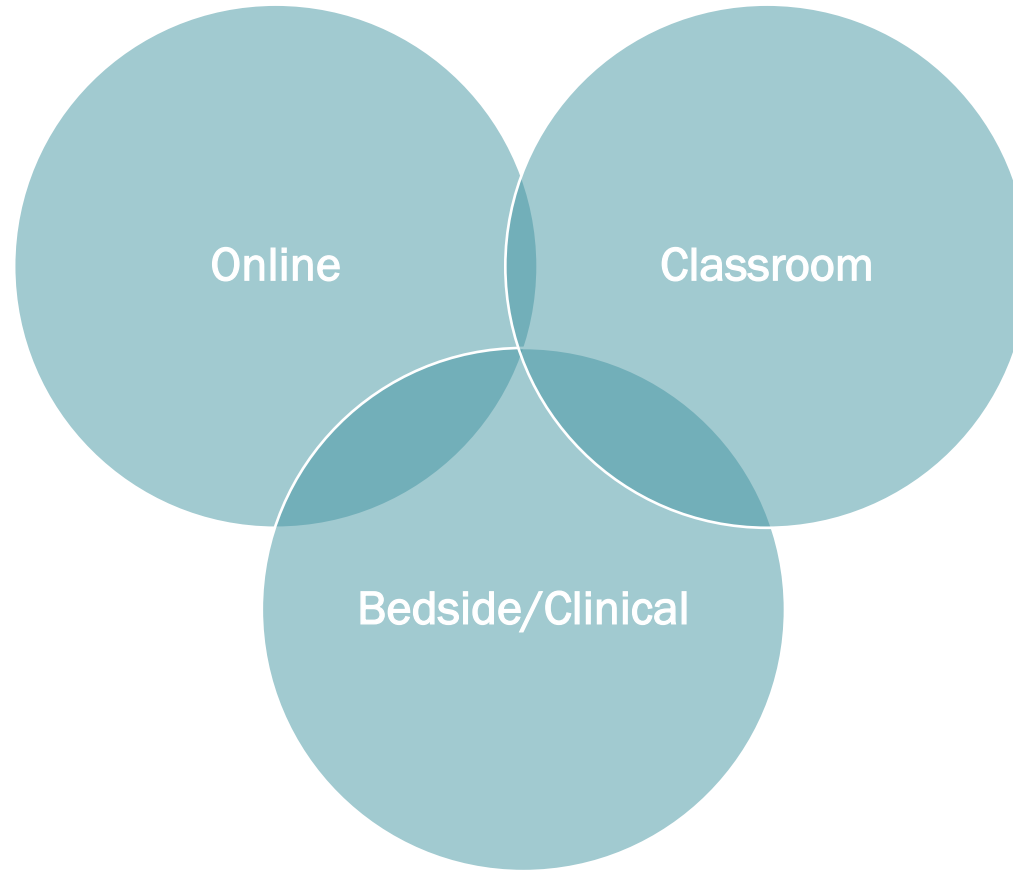
Adult Learning Theory (andragogy)

- Outlines how adults best respond to learning
- Adults crave:
 - Control
 - Connection
 - Problem solving and reasoning
 - Relevance/applicability
- Self-directed learning approaches are preferred

(Merriam, S. B., 2018; Cooper, A. Z., & Richards, J. B., 2017)



Learning Spheres



Spaced Practice

- Present content in short, spaced instances
- Break up learning into smaller sessions
- Provide opportunities for application
- Allow time between learning

Chunking

- Break down teaching into smaller components
- Focus on one concept at a time and only the most important aspects
- Give the content context

Two Concepts

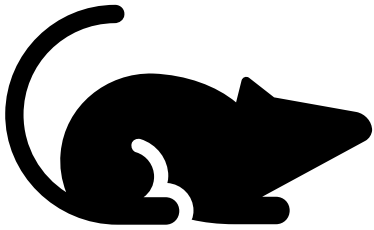
Putting it together



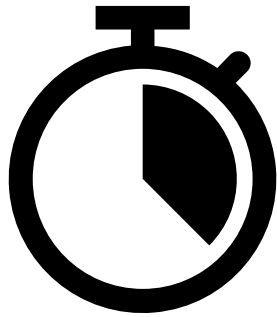
- Keep it brief (as possible)
- Create meaningfulness
- Connect
- Chunk learning
- Be intentional
- Identify what's important

What are some models to support these changes for brief presentations?

Models



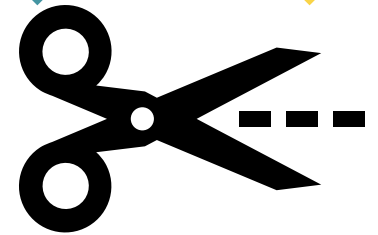
Microlearning



Pecha Kucha



TED Talks



Snippets

Microlearning

- Bite-sized
- Short, focused presentations
- Only information to meet learning goals
- Digestible
- Break 1-hour lecture into multiple microlearning sessions
- **What it looks like:**
 - 1-2 learning objectives and key concepts
 - Media (images, videos, visuals)
 - “Just-in-Time” information
 - 3–7-minute presentations



(Major, A., & Calandrino, T., 2018; Vaughn, L., Gonzalez del Rey, J., & Baker, R., 2001)

Pecha Kucha

- Japanese for “chit chat”
- Eliminates overuse of text in presentations
- Elevator pitch
- Uses imagery and storytelling
- **What it looks like – 20x20:**
 - Limit of 20 slides
 - 20 seconds is devoted to each slide
 - Slides advance automatically
 - Very visual slides



1 0:20



2 * 0:20



3 * 0:20



4 * 0:20



5 * 0:20



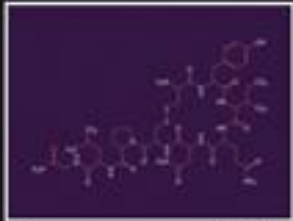
6 * 0:20



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16 * 0:20



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18 * 0:20



19 * 0:20



20 * 0:20

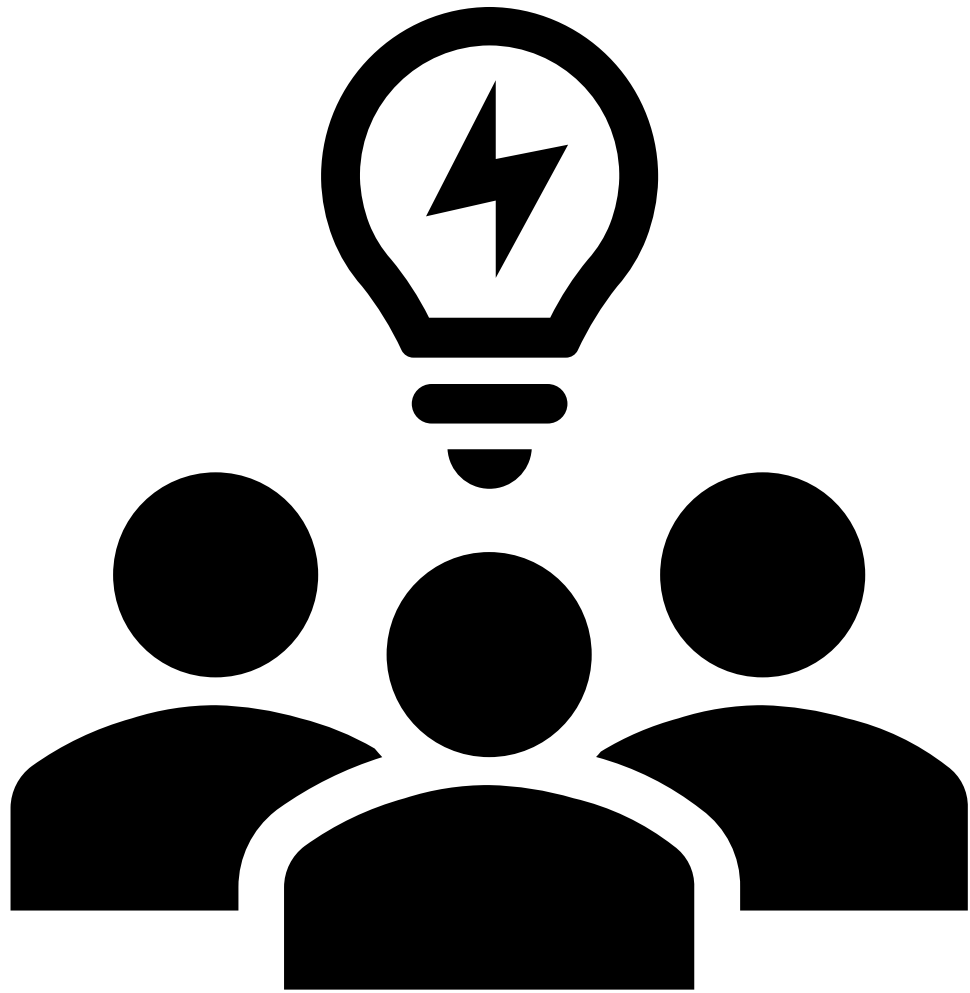
“TED Talks”

- Memorable presentations framed in a persuasive style
- Promote curiosity and discussion
- **3 key elements-**
 - Structure
 - Brevity
 - Purpose
- Grab attention
- Just long enough
- **What it looks like:**
 - Less than 18 minutes
 - One idea

SNIPPETS

- Structured, brief presentations
- Limited to 20 minutes
- **What it looks like:**
 - 10 slides maximum with:
 - Title slide
 - Learning objectives
 - Key learning points
 - Brief activity
 - Take-home points

(Bar-On, M. E., & Konopasek, L., 2014; Jarrett, A., 2019)



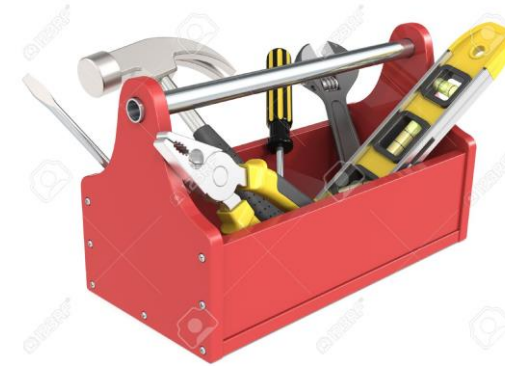
Discussion



Why should you consider the brief presentation?

- Traditional lengthy lectures reduce retention and engagement
- Both short and long presentations of information may be helpful for facilitating complex topics
- Learners have more responsibilities, evolve to attend to the increase demand
- Exposing learners to more content in lecture doesn't mean it is meaningfully retained

So remember, lectures are still an important tool for teaching (just not the only tool)

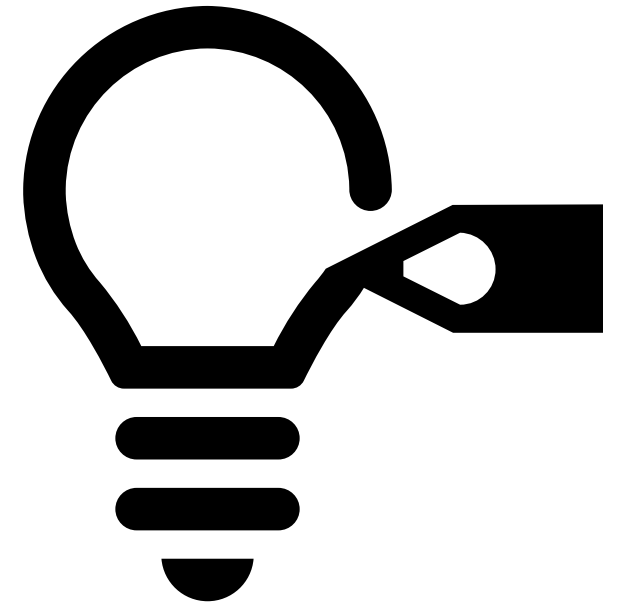


Benefits of keeping things short:

- Promote knowledge transfer
- Reduce cognitive burden
- Promote deep learning and connection
- Supports working memory
- Increase efficiency

Practical Tips

- Short isn't enough
- Redesign your thinking and preparation
- Focus
- Engage
- Supplement
- Plan and practice your presentation



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