THE K. PATRICIA CROSS ACADEMY

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Teaching Technique 29

Advance Organizers

ACTIVITY TYPE	TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED	LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL
• Graphic Organizer	• Insufficient Preparation	• Foundational Knowledge
• Active/Engaged Learning	• Poor Attention/Listening	• Caring
	• Low Motivation/Engagement	• Learning How to Learn

Advance Organizers

An *Advance Organizer (AO)* is a template that professors can share with students prior to a lecture to help them structure the information they're about to learn.

1 Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for the *AO*

2 Choose an *AO* that is compatible with the course content

3 Create the *AO* that students will complete

4 If you choose to assess and grade, determine how

5 Communicate assignment instructions to students

6 Have students complete the *AO* as they listen to your lecture

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

An *Advance Organizer* is a tool that can help professors more effectively introduce a topic by providing students with an organizational structure for the information they are about to learn. Students fill in the structure while listening to the new information. *Advance Organizers* can help support a range of teaching purposes and help to achieve a variety of learning goals, and it is important to clarify how they might best work in your course.

For example, *Advance Organizers* serve as a conceptual bridge between old and new information. They also establish a scaffolding task and orient the learner by providing organizational clues that help them to categorize, infer, summarize, compare and contrast, and evaluate what they are learning. *Advance Organizers* also draw student attention to the most important facts, concepts, or ideas. *Advance Organizers* therefore help make listening to a lecture an active learning technique. When you help students to develop active listening skills, you not only enable them to learn more from your lecture, but you also provide them with important success skills that will benefit them throughout their education, future employment, and life in general.

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

Students practice active listening skills as they complete an organizing template during a lecture.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

- Choose an *Advance Organizer* that is compatible with the content you intend to convey.

    › **Expository Organizers** explain upcoming content, such as through a definition or rubric.

    › **Narrative Organizers** use story-like information provided through an article, account of an event, or work of art.

    › **Graphic Organizers** provide a visual structure for the information, such as through a chart or table. Graphic organizers are the most commonly used Advance Organizer and can visually depict both expository and narrative information.

- Examples of common graphic organizers are provided in the **Support Materials** section of this document.

Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

Choose how you wish to assess or grade the completed *Advance Organizers.* A simple plus, check, or minus may be sufficient.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

Present the organizer to students, for example, on a presentation slide or through a handout or an online format. Using a digital medium to distribute the organizers can save time and resources that printing and paper require, and it can allow for easy revising and updating.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

- Explain the purpose of the *Advance Organizer.*

- Share the template you have selected with students.

- Ask students to fill in missing content during your lecture.

- Ask students to submit the organizer to you for review.

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.
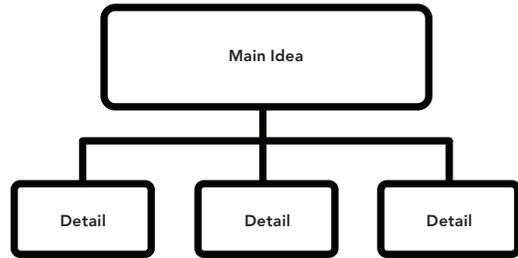
SAMPLE ADVANCE ORGANIZER STYLES

Consider the following examples on **page 6**. Choose an organizer style that is compatible with the content you intend to convey and share with your class.
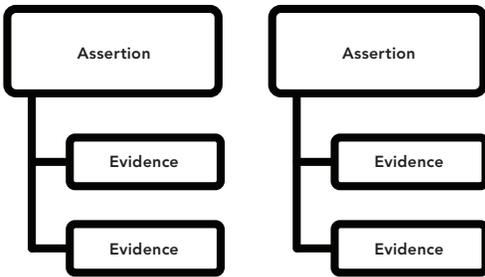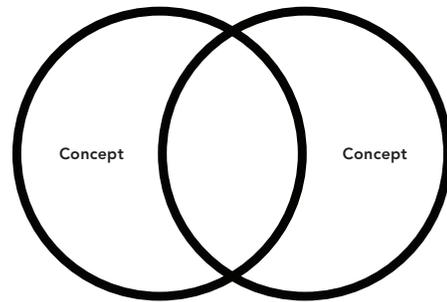
EXAMPLE 1: SEMANTIC MAP

Related Idea

Related Idea

Related Idea

Central Idea

Related Idea

Related Idea
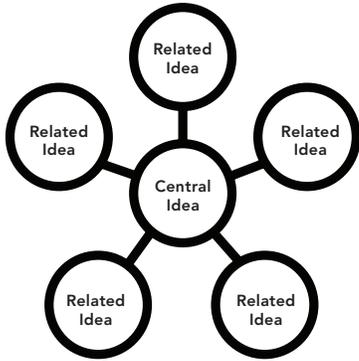
EXAMPLE 2: MAIN IDEA & DETAIL CHART

Main Idea

Detail

Detail

Detail

EXAMPLE 3: ASSERTION & EVIDENCE ORGANIZER

Assertion

Evidence

Evidence

Assertion

Evidence

Evidence

EXAMPLE 4: VENN DIAGRAM

Concept

Concept

EXAMPLE 5: SEQUENCE CHAIN

Step

Step

Step

Step

EXAMPLE 6: ZONE OF RELEVANCE

Least Important

Most Important
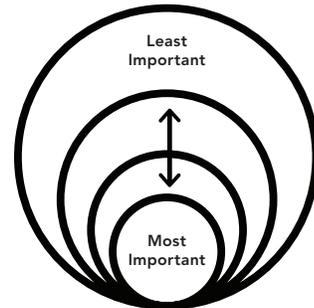
EXAMPLE 7: BRACE MAP

Whole

Part

Part

Part
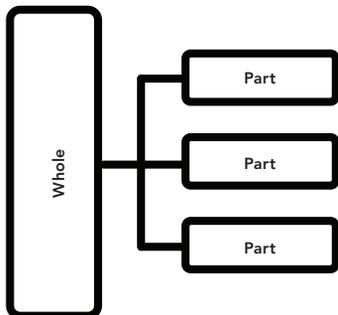
EXAMPLE 8: CYCLE OF EVENTS

1

2

3

4

5
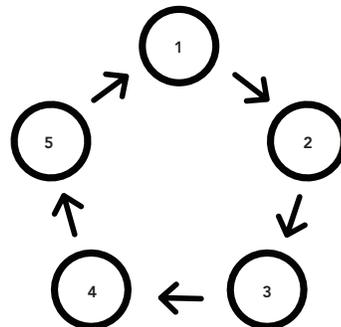
Online Adaptation

This section is intended to help you with the process of implementing and assessing *Support a Statement* in your online class.

HOW TO START

- Create an organizer that is compatible with your lecture content, such as a Venn diagram or sequence chain. Examples of organizers are provided on **page 6**.

- Create an assignment in your Learning Management System with:

    › Directions

    › Expectations

    › A downloadable template of your chosen organizer

- Have students fill out the organizer as they view your synchronous or pre-recorded lecture.

- Ask students to scan or take a picture of their completed *Advance Organizer* and upload it as an assignment.

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 Elizabeth Barkley adapted *Advance Organizers* in her course, *Great Composers and Music Masterpieces of Western Civilization*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.

Technique Template

Sample *Advance Organizers* Completed Technique Template:

Content from Elizabeth Barkley

*Great Composers and Music Masterpieces
of Western Civilization*

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 an on-campus section of a lower division General Education course that meets the Humanities requirement. It is an entry level survey course and it is important that students learn a large number of facts and basic concepts. It enrolls about 45 students. It attracts a wide variety of students with different levels of academic preparedness and motivation to learn.

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 guides students to organize information in ways that will help them study and remember it.

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?

I will use this technique as a way of helping students sort out and then remember different types of vocal and instrumental compositions of the Baroque period.

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?

I will create a chart titled "Main Compositional Forms of the Baroque Period." It will consist of two main sections (Vocal Compositions and Instrumental Compositions), each of which will be further subdivided into Single Movement Forms and Composite Forms. I will provide students with a list of terms, and have them fill in the chart blanks as I present them and as a way of preparing them for listening to these forms in class.

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?

I will consider this one of their basic assignments, and I will grade it with a simple plus, check, or minus that will translate to 5/3/0 points toward their final 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 create a handout that I will distribute in class and also post in our 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?

I need to create the chart, but other than that, this seems to be pretty straight forward.

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?

After I implemented this technique I asked students how they liked it, and many said that they found it very helpful. They asked for similar organizational charts for other key topic areas. I will consider that as I prepare for the next academic term.

Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement **Advance Organizers** 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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Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

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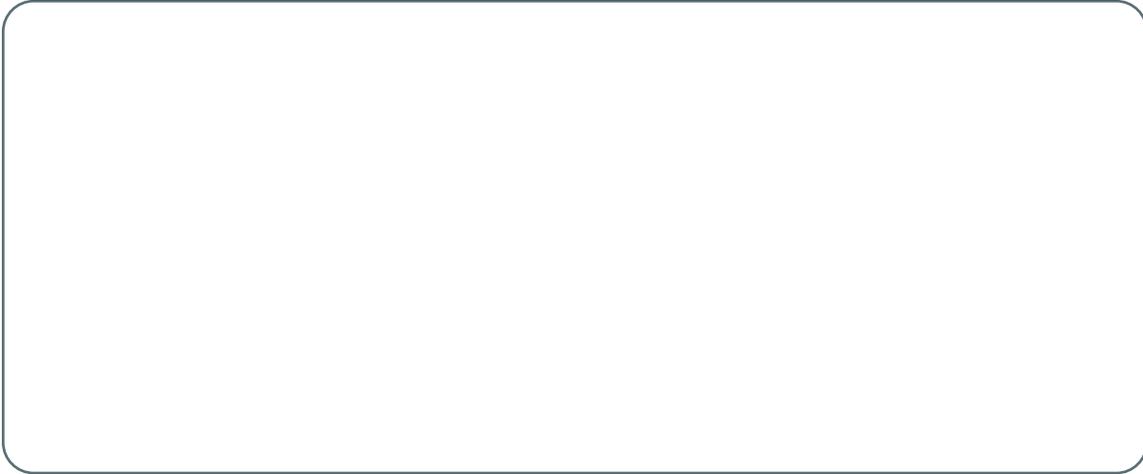
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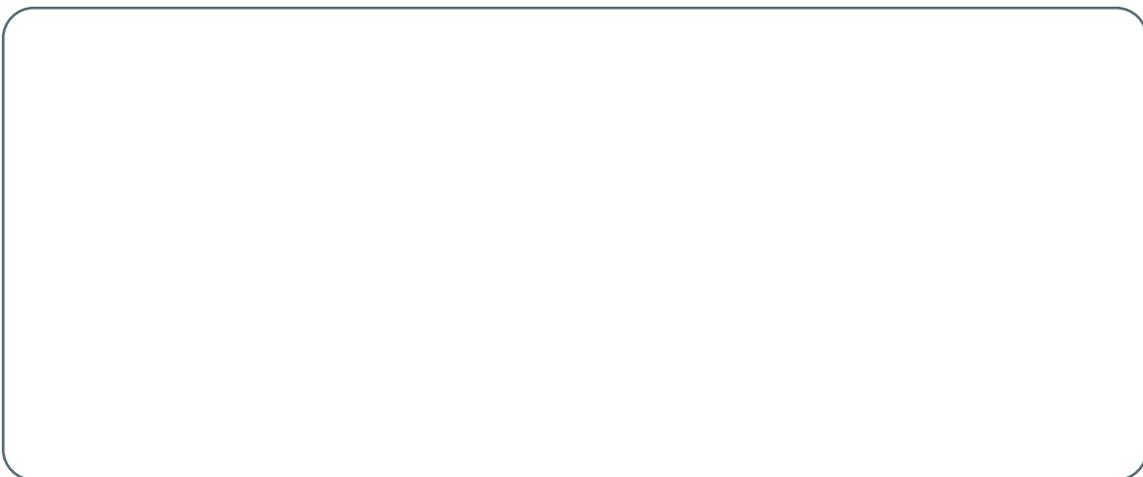
References and Resources

PRIMARY SOURCE

Content for this download was drawn primarily from "Interactive Lecture Technique 9: Advance Organizers." Barkley, E. F. and Major, C. H. (2018). *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 238–244. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in online and on campus courses, see the primary source:

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

CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Ausubel, D. P. (1963). *The psychology of meaningful verbal learning.* New York: Grune & Stratton.

- Barkley, E. F., Major, C. H., & Cross, K. P. (2014). *Collaborative learning techniques: A resource for college faculty* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Chen, B., Hirumi, A., & Zhang, N. J. (2007). Investigating the use of advance organizers as an instructional strategy for web-based distance education. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 8*(3), 223–231.

- Major, C. H., Harris, M., & Zakrajsek, T. (2015). *Teaching for learning: 101 techniques to put students on the path to success.* New York: Routledge.

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- Barkley, E. F. and Major, C. H. (2018). Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Copyright © 2014 by Jossey-Bass/Wiley.

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