

Planning your interdisciplinary learning session

If you're interested in using and adapting [ANH Academy's interdisciplinary curriculum enrichment teaching materials](#), we've put together a useful list of things to consider when planning your session. Whether you're incorporating these materials into a teaching module, hosting a lunchtime seminar or just trialling the resources with colleagues, we hope the guidance below might be helpful.

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Planning for staffing

Are you planning to run the session alone or with someone to support you? If possible, consider sharing the responsibilities. Co-delivering learning experiences can offer a range of benefits to educators and students alike. Is there someone (a colleague, PhD student etc.) who would be interested in running the session with you? In particular, it's useful to have some support with the breakout group activities – to move around the room checking how each group is progressing, and if necessary to stimulate discussion and ensure that everyone is getting a chance to contribute to the discussion. An additional educator can also help to monitor chatboxes if you are hosting the session online or in a hybrid format.

Advertising your session & inviting participants


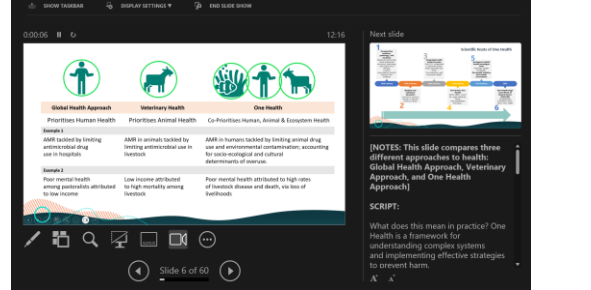
Who are you planning to invite to your session? Is it a mixture of students from different courses? These interdisciplinary topics lend themselves to participation from a broad range of backgrounds, where different ideas and perspectives can be shared among one another. It's good to remember that a lot of learning happens between students themselves, so this is an opportunity to stimulate that.

Think about where and how to advertise your session. Will it be fully in person, fully online, or a 'hybrid' combination of both? Each require subtly different planning. The sessions have been curated with a mixture of lectures and interactive breakout group activities. As such, you'll want to have a sense of numbers in advance so you can prepare for group activities. Consider having a sign-up form to help with this.

Familiarising yourself with the content and materials

By their nature, interdisciplinary topics such as these can be challenging. Teaching them involves stepping out of your comfort zone and moving beyond your area of specific expertise to help others see linkages between things that may have been traditionally siloed. The good news is that if you're reading this then you're up for the challenge!

Before delivering the session, to feel more comfortable and confident it is a very good idea to set aside adequate time to familiarise yourself with the subject matter and session content. **Read the session plan carefully.** The PowerPoint slides are designed to mirror these plans, so you can be assured that there are no surprises. Each slide has accompanying **notes** and where necessary a **script** for you to use. To view these while you present, make sure that your PowerPoint is set to 'Presenter Mode' (see below).

<p>Click on 'Slide show,' then click on the three dots to reveal the menu. Click on 'Show Presenter View'</p>	<p>Browse through the slides and you will find 'NOTES' and 'SCRIPT' throughout</p>
	

Where possible, prepare by **doing a full run through of the lectures in advance at least once, but maybe several times.** If you can, record yourself practicing the lecture(s) using videoconferencing

software such as [Zoom](#). Watching this back will help you to know if you're going too slow or rushing the content. Some people like a printed copy of the lecture(s). To do this, [follow these instructions](#).

The slides contain references throughout which are listed in full at the end. If you have time and interest, consider exploring some of these resources in more detail to get a deeper understanding of the subject matter before the session.

Adapting the materials

The teaching materials are not intended to be exhaustive, nor are they designed to be THE optimal way in which to introduce students to the topics in question. Different people would certainly curate these teaching materials in different ways for different audiences and time constraints. **As such, we encourage you to adapt these materials according to your needs.** Importantly, you might want to consider making them more **context-specific** to where you are. In the slides we have **highlighted in yellow** some areas in which this might be useful, particularly around case studies and breakout group activities. If you do adapt the materials for your context, please do consider sharing these with us at ANH-Academy@LSHTM.ac.uk if you feel comfortable, so we can make them available to others who might be in similar contexts.

Preparing the teaching space and equipment

Depending on the format of your session: in person, online or hybrid, you'll need to make specific preparations for space and technology:

- **In person:**
 - Book a room which can accommodate your intended number participants. The sessions will work best with up to 30 participants, but they can be adapted for larger groups
 - The room will need a computer and a large screen
 - Different layouts can help with student interaction, particularly for breakout group activity work. Consider having round or square tables that can seat 5-6 people each
- **Online**
 - Use videoconferencing software such as Zoom or MS Teams to host your session. Send the invitation link out well in advance (with a password, to protect against unauthorised participants). You can also send a calendar invite to ensure that participants remember to join on the day
- **Hybrid (in person and online students)**
 - Book a room with a computer, screen and internet connection. Ideally you would also have speakers and a microphone to enable students online and in person to hear one another.
 - For the breakout sessions, plan to have groups online and in person separately to avoid complications. When setting up the videoconferencing software, check that you can allow online participants to share their screen (with your permission on the day) in case they need to present back after breakout group work).

Sharing materials in advance: "Flipping the classroom"

You might find that students are able to engage more in the session, its content and breakout group activities, if they are able to familiarise themselves with the content in advance, like you. Allowing them to absorb some information in advance may lead to more interaction and participation in the session itself. As such, consider sharing a PDF version of the PowerPoint slides or specific recommended reading(s) or resources ahead of the session.

You can also print the session slides as handouts, which will allow students to take notes throughout the learning experience. To print in this format, [follow these instructions](#).

Things to consider during the session

Every session includes a short warm-up activity towards the beginning. This is an opportunity to ‘break the ice’ in the room. The warm-up activities are not designed to be a test, but rather a way to engage students interactively around the topic. If you are hosting your session online or in hybrid format, encourage participants to turn on their camera for this section and explain that they can use the chatbox function throughout.

It is likely that you are stepping outside your comfort zone and area of expertise to deliver this interdisciplinary session. Therefore, you cannot know everything. As such, don’t be afraid to say that you don’t know the answer to a question if one arises. Trying to answer a question that you don’t know the answer to may be detrimental to the learning experience – and may be incorrect! You can always follow up or suggest resources where the answer could be found.

Teaching and learning are a two-way activity. It’s good to be willing to learn from peers and students who may come from disciplines and have experiences that provide insights to different aspects of the cross-cutting subject matter.

If you are running a hybrid session with students online and in person, remember to connect the two groups by ensuring that they can hear one another. If the sound setup does not permit this, then relay the responses to each group to foster a sense of a shared learning environment.

Viewing the session from the students’ viewpoint

How will you invite students to engage throughout the session, try out their understanding, ask questions and seek feedback? Of course, you will have the activities which you may customise to suit your students’ contexts. These activities will be where students can work together and share their experiences and understanding. However, you will be working through a number of slides before these activities and sometimes these sections may last up to 15 or 20 minutes. So, it is worth considering in the plan how and when you might pause ask questions of students regularly to enable them to try out their understanding as well inviting them to comment and ask questions themselves. This approach will help you to work out how well the students are following explanations and grasping concepts.

After the session: Seeking feedback and assessing whether students found it useful

Did the session go well? Did the students enjoy the experience? Were the learning objectives met? What could be adapted or improved for next time?

Having answers to these important questions will help you to continually improve teaching and learning experiences and outcomes. **To capture this information, consider issuing a feedback survey at the end of every session.** This could be on a paper handout or an online survey. We have created a sample template below that could be printed, emailed or transferred online using a free service such as [Qualtrics](#) or [Survey Monkey](#). To obtain as many responses as possible, you could post a QR code on the screen at the end of the session linking to the survey. Various free QR generators exist, [including this](#).

If you feel comfortable sharing the feedback responses or summary information from your sessions with us, we’d love to hear about their use and adaptation, as well as ways in which we can improve the materials: ANH-Academy@lshtm.ac.uk.

Sample feedback survey

Name of session					
Date of session					
Location					
Lecturer					
On a scale of 1-5 please respond to the following (5 = I strongly agree, 1 = I don't agree)	1	2	3	4	5
My overall experience of the session was excellent					
The learning objectives were pitched at the right level					
I learnt a lot in this session					
I feel that I understand the subject and can critically engage with it now					
The timings of the session were about right					
The amount of content for the session was about right					
I would like to participate in similar interdisciplinary sessions					
<i>Add further statements</i>					
<i>Add further statements</i>					
Is there anything you would improve about the session? (free text)					