

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



Teaching Technique 09

Three-Minute Message

ACTIVITY TYPE

- Reciprocal Teaching
- Presentation
- Learning Assessment

TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Surface Learning
- Lack of Participation
- Low Motivation/Engagement

LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL

- Caring
- Application: Analysis & Critical Thinking
- Application: Creative Thinking
- Application: Problem Solving

Three-Minute Message

Three-Minute Messages (3MM) are modeled on the Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) academic competition, in which students have three minutes to present a compelling argument and to support it with convincing details and examples.

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- 1** Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for the *3MM*
 - 2** Select the focus and parameters of the message
 - 3** Set assignment parameters (including order of presentations, etc.)
 - 4** Develop a plan for learning assessment or grading
 - 5** Communicate assignment instructions to students through a handout
 - 6** Allow students time to prepare and then present their messages
 - 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

Most of us want students to care about what they are learning. But does it matter if learners care? Beyond the sheer annoyance and frustration we experience trying to teach indifferent students, there does seem to be a correlation between caring and the resultant quality of learning. Fink proposes, “When students care about something, they then have the energy they need for learning more about it and making it a part of their lives. Without the energy for learning, nothing significant happens” (2013, p. 360).

Speculating on the relationship between caring about schoolwork and achievement, Scherer (2002a) cites a 2001 study that showed that success in math is highest in countries that foster a culture that cultivates caring about the acquisition of math skills. Common sense and our own experience as teachers suggests that students who really care about what they are learning invest the time and effort to learn it well and remember it longer. We want students to care about learning in general and our course in particular, but how do we achieve that? The *Three-Minute Message* technique can at least provide an assignment that challenges students by requiring them to grapple with articulating their ideas and expose their thinking as they explain their work to others. In so doing, they may also increase their caring about the topic.

In addition, oral communication is a critical skill that students will use beyond the limits of a single course. In a *Three-Minute Message*, students learn the value of parsimonious oral presentation. The limited timeframe forces them to choose what is the most essential part of their message and then deliver their information in a clear and concise way using language that is accessible to a non-specialist audience. In addition to helping students practice concise oral presentation, this technique allows students to learn from each other during the presentations. A *Three-Minute Message*, then, is a robust technique that can serve a wide range of teaching purposes and learning goals and it is therefore important that you clarify for yourself why you are considering it for use in your course.

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

A *Three-Minute Message* may be used to assess a range of learning dimensions, and it is important to be clear at the outset what you want students to demonstrate. This might include concepts, theories, or specific skills related to the subject of the course. In addition to these cognitive goals, this technique can help you assess humanistic goals such as interpersonal competence, intrapersonal confidence (e.g. confidence, professionalism), and caring about the issue.

Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)



STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

- **Select the focus of the message**, whether student original research or course content that has been covered previously.
- **Create a rubric** for assessing the Three-Minute Message. We provide a sample rubric in the Support Materials section of this document.
- **Set additional parameters**, such as the order of the presentations, the type of equipment students will have for displaying the slide (e.g. projector and slide, flipchart paper, or poster).
- **Determine when you will assess each message**, whether you will record video of each presentation to review later, or use a rubric scoring of the presentation in the moment, your notes, student evaluations, or other.
- **Determine who will be involved in the assessment**. In this technique, this means determining who will be able to ask questions of the student: an external assessor, a designated panel of peers, all peers, or other.

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

Create a rubric that you can use to assess the *Three-Minute Messages*. See the **Support Materials** section of this document for a sample rubric. Determine who will be involved in the assessment. For example, having external reviewers or having student peer review each other's presentations.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

Because assignment instructions for a *Three-Minute Message* can be complex, it is best to create a handout.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

- Announce the activity, and discuss with students characteristics of an effective presentation.
- Describe the parameters of the activity, noting that students will have exactly 3 minutes to make their presentations, they can use only one slide and there should be no animation or movement in the slide, and they should use spoken word (as opposed to music or poetry).
- Share the presentation rubric with students so that they know how they will be assessed.
- Give students time to prepare their messages.
- Allow class time for the message presentations, and complete the rubric during the presentations.

Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)



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. For *Three-Minute Message*, we provide a sample assessment rubric

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A *Three-Minute Message* may be used to assess a range of learning dimensions, so be clear at the outset what you want students to demonstrate. In addition to cognitive-based learning goals (such as mastery of content), this technique can also help you assess goals such as interpersonal competence, professionalism, and caring about the issue.

On pages 7–8 is a slightly modified sample rubric from University of Wisconsin Platteville. (http://www.uwplatt.edu/system/files/UW-Mad%20Oral_presentation_rubric.pdf)

THREE-MINUTE MESSAGE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Adapted From The University of Wisconsin Platteville

Name _____

	4 EXCEPTIONAL	3 ADMIRABLE	2 ACCEPTABLE	1 POOR	SCORE
Eye Contact	Holds attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact, seldom looking at notes or slides.	Consistent use of direct eye contact with audience, but still returns to notes.	Displayed minimal eye contact with audience, while reading mostly from notes.	No eye contact with audience, as entire report is read from note.	
Body Language	Movements seem fluid and help the audience visualize.	Made movements or gestures that enhance articulation.	Very little movement or descriptive gestures.	No movement or descriptive gestures.	
Poise	Displays relaxed, self-confident nature about self, with no-mistakes.	Makes minor mistakes, but quickly recovers from them; displays little or no tension.	Displays mild tension; has trouble recovering from mistakes.	Tension and nervousness is obvious; has trouble recovering from mistakes.	
Enthusiasm	Demonstrates a strong, positive feeling about topic during entire presentation.	Occasionally shows positive feelings about topic.	Shows some negativity toward topic presented.	Shows absolutely no interest in topic presented.	
Speaking Skills	Uses a clear voice and speaks at a good pace so audience members can hear presentation. Does not read off slides.	Presenter's voice is clear. The pace is a little slow or fast at times. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Presenter's voice is low. The pace is much too rapid/slow. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Presenter mumbles, talks very fast, and speaks too quietly for a majority of students to hear and understand.	

	4 EXCEPTIONAL	3 ADMIRABLE	2 ACCEPTABLE	1 POOR	SCORE
Length of Presentation	Within two minutes of allotted time +/-.	Within four minutes of allotted time +/-.	Within six minutes of allotted time +/-.	Too long or too short; ten or more minutes above or below allotted time.	
Subject Knowledge	An abundance of material clearly related to the research is presented. Points are clearly made and evidence is used to support claims.	Sufficient information with many good points made, uneven balance and little consistency.	There is a great deal of information that is not clearly integrated or connected to the research.	Goal of research unclear, information included that does not support research claims in any way.	
Organization	Information is presented in a logical and interesting sequence which audience can follow. Flows well.	Information is presented in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because the presentation jumps around and lacks clear transitions.	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	
Visuals	Excellent visuals that are tied into the overall story of the research.	Appropriate visuals are used and explained by the speaker.	Visuals are used but not explained or put in context.	Little or no visuals, too much text on slides.	
Mechanics	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has many spelling and/or grammatical errors.	
OVERALL COMMENTS					TOTAL SCORE

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 a Professor adapted *Three-Minute Message* in their course, *History of American Education*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.

Technique Template

Sample *Three-Minute Message* Completed Technique Template:

Content from *Learning Assessment Techniques*

History of American Education

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?

Note: This is not a course I, Elizabeth Barkley, teach nor have I implemented this technique in my other courses. I am therefore using this template to describe its implementation in another course that is one of the examples from the Three-Minute Message technique in our book, Learning Assessment Techniques. This is an onsite, graduate-level history course. The class meets weekly for 3 hours, and it has 20 students enrolled.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

The Professor had students researching the integration of the university in the university archives. He decided to use the Three-Minute Message to have them present their work to the rest of the class because he wanted to keep the presentations tight, knowing that student presentations could be dull.

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?

Students read archival work, developed a thesis, and documented their argument through historical records.

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?

The Professor decided to have students do their work individually, but present to the class so that all students could learn from the presentations. He also decided that the presentations would be live, but that he would also videotape each presentation.

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?

The Professor created his own rubric to assess the presentations.

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?

The Professor created a handout that he distributed in class and also posted in the course's Learning Management System. He also set aside some time in class to discuss the project with students and answer questions.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

During the first half of the class meeting, the professor had 10 students present, then they took a break, and 10 more students presented. The Professor scored the rubrics while students were presenting and also videotaped the presentations so that students could review their own performances and find ways to improve them in the future.

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?

The Professor created a bar graph of the rubric assessment results. He shared these results with students and also asked students to review the taped sessions and to notice where they were struggling the most. Finally, he asked students to write a reflection on what they would do differently next time. He determined that the activity was successful and decided to use it in a subsequent course.

Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement **Three-Minute Message** 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?

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

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?



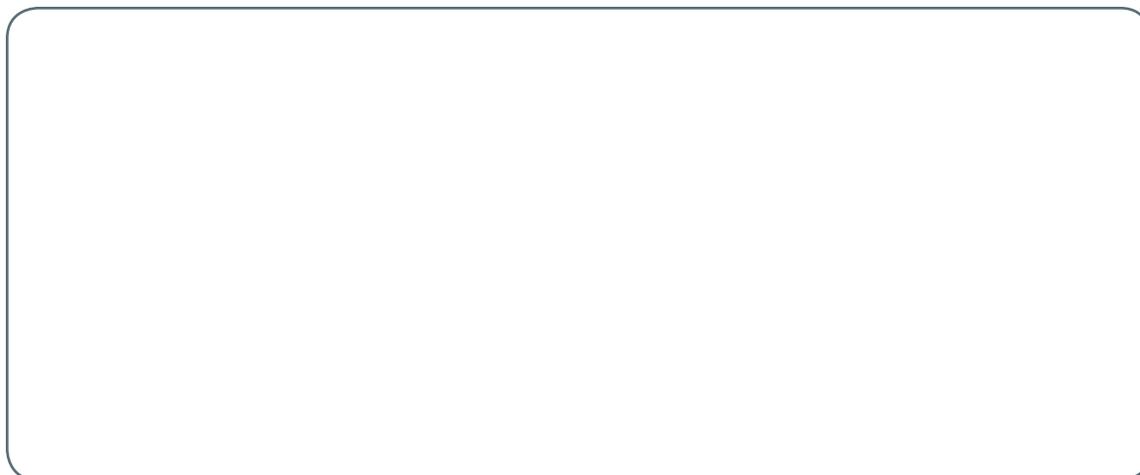
STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

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?



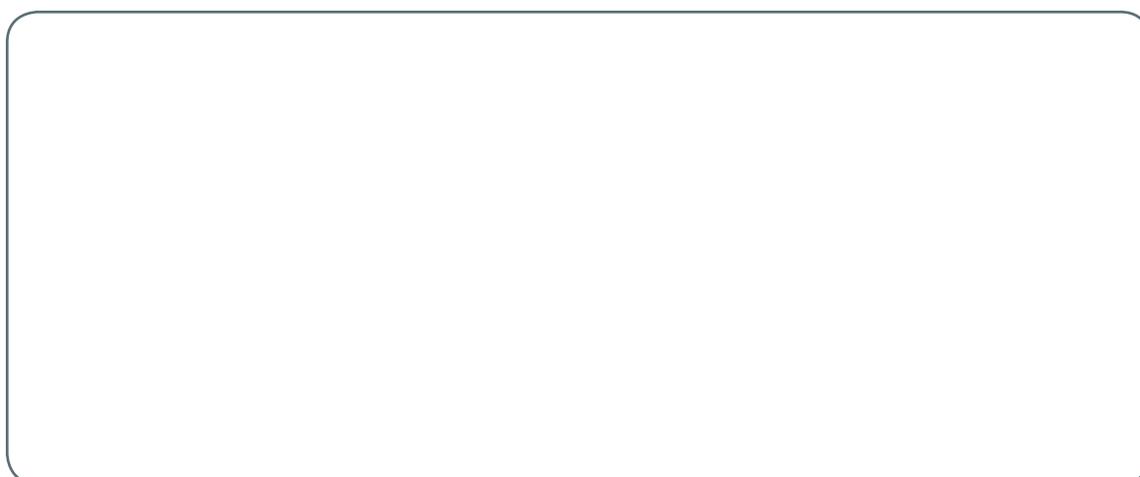
STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

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?



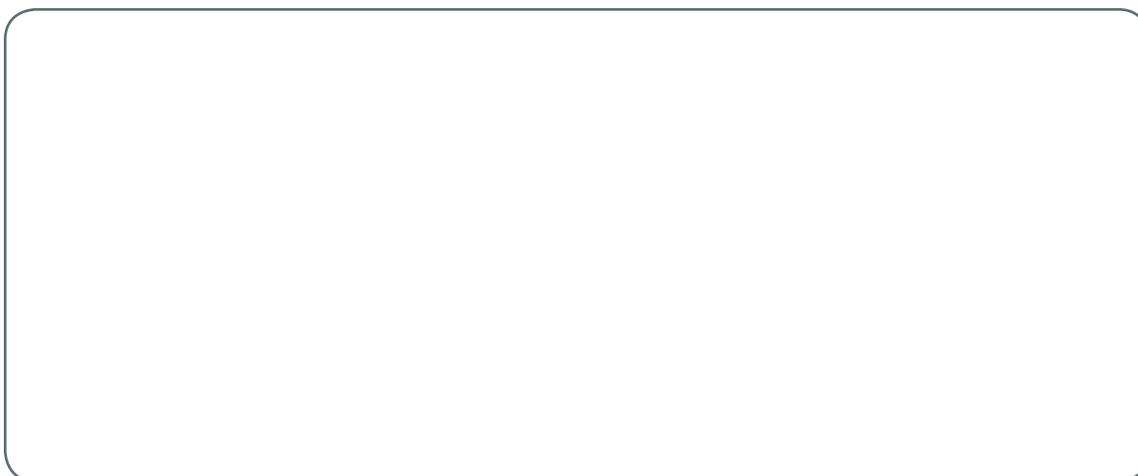
STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

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?



STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

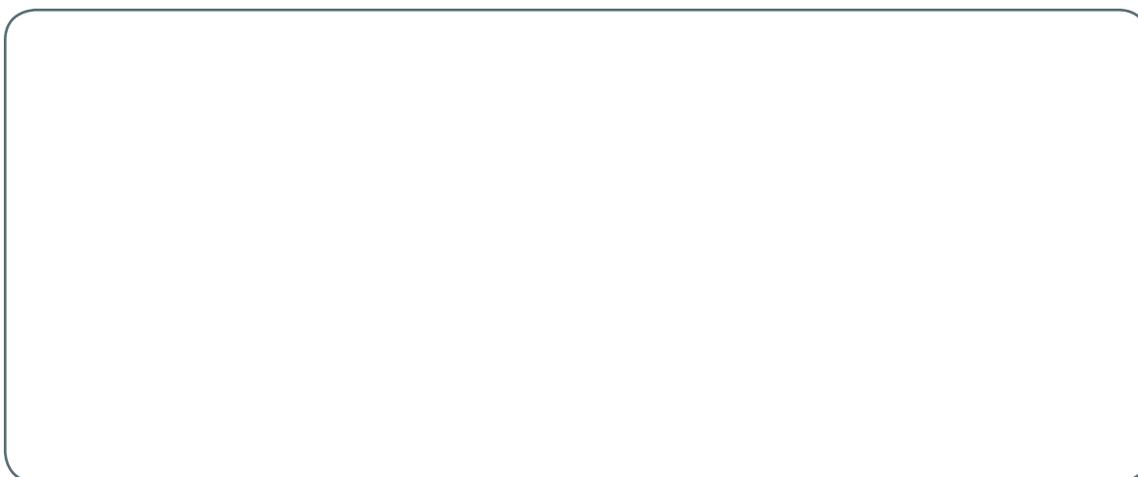
How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?



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?



References and Resources

PRIMARY SOURCE

Content for this download was drawn primarily from “Learning Assessment Technique 38: Three-Minute Message” in *Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (Barkley & Major, 2016), pp. 324–329. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in both on campus and online courses, see the primary source:

Barkley, E. F., Major, C. H. (2016). *Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- 3MT (nd) Three-minute thesis. <http://threeminutethesis.org>
- Fink, L.D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gordon, J. (Nd) *A short guide to oral assessment*. https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/publications/files/100317_36668_ShortGuideOralAssess1_WEB.pdf
- Scherer, M. (2002a). Perspectives/who cares? And who wants to know? *Educational Leadership*, 60 (1). 5-5. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept02/vol60/num01/Who-Cares%C2%A2-And-Who-Wants-to-Know%C2%A2.aspx> (Accessed 1.17.15).
- Scherer, M. (2002b). Do students care About learning? A conversation with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. *Educational Leadership*, 60 (1), 12-17. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept02/vol60/num01/Do-Students-Care-About-Learning%C2%A2-A-Conversation-with-Mihaly-Csikszentmihalyi.aspx> (Accessed 1.17.15).

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