The Academic Innovation + Intelligence Lab

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH®

Curriculum Builder

November 2024

Iterate. Interrupt. Reconstruct.

We break barriers + build paths for student success.

Curriculum Builder overview

A visual way to design engaging courses by breaking sessions into multiple parts and quickly iterating on their sequence & structure.

Time
40 min. – 1 hr.
* Plus additional time for testing and refining

Materials
- Post-its
- Sharpie marker (or thicker, visible pen)
- Blank paper (or a blank, clean surface)
- A way to digitize your plan (e.g., Microsoft Office, Google Suite, etc.)

Keep in mind
This is meant to introduce a new way of thinking and problem solving. Have patience as you go!

Questions or issues?
Contact aii@utah.edu

Inspiration

Consider buildings as collections of modular parts.

They have the same base components (windows, doors, entryways, corridors) but vary wildly in their experience, function, and appearance.

How might we use the concept of modular pieces to test and improve our students' experiences?

Let’s start by understanding students’ needs

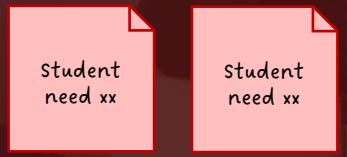
The Design Thinking Cycle
James Agutter, University of Utah

DISCOVER

1 Step 1: Identify Students' Needs

What do we know?

- **Attention spans** are short
- **Challenging content** is difficult to learn & internalize
- Students want & need **engagement**
- **Note-taking** is a diminishing skill
- *What else have you noticed? Jot them down on Post-it note(s)*

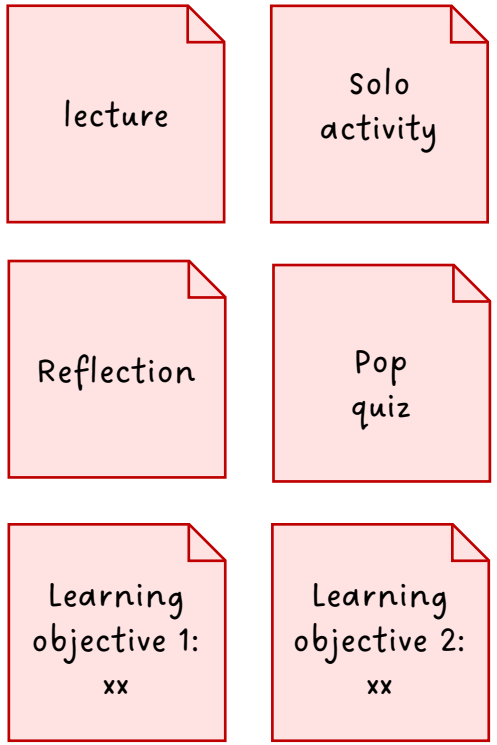


How might we make the experience more engaging?

Let’s think about components by mapping them.

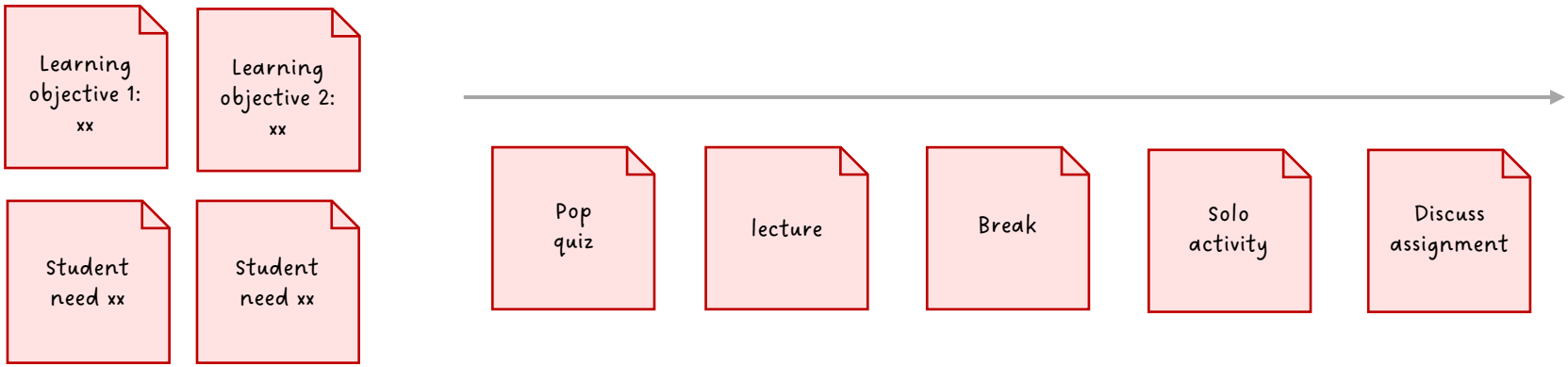
2 Step 2: Document your class components

- On Post-its, **record the components** you use today in your class(es)
  e.g., your methods (lecture), tools, activities (independent work, group work), and techniques
- Document your **learning objectives**, that drive your decisions on which components to use
- Write one component/outcome per Post-it note



3 Step 3: Map out a typical class

- Place your components along a timeline **in the sequence you normally follow.** Feel free to add additional component Post-its as you go.
- Place your **learning objectives & student needs** to the side of your timeline to keep them top of mind.



Inspiration

Think about your class as a narrative you can change, splice, rearrange, and edit.

- What would the experience feel like if you tried alternate component sequences?
- How might that structure deliver on your learning objectives in a different way?
- How might that affect your class outcomes?

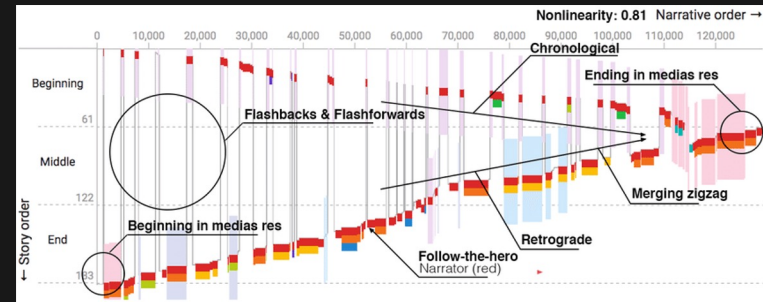
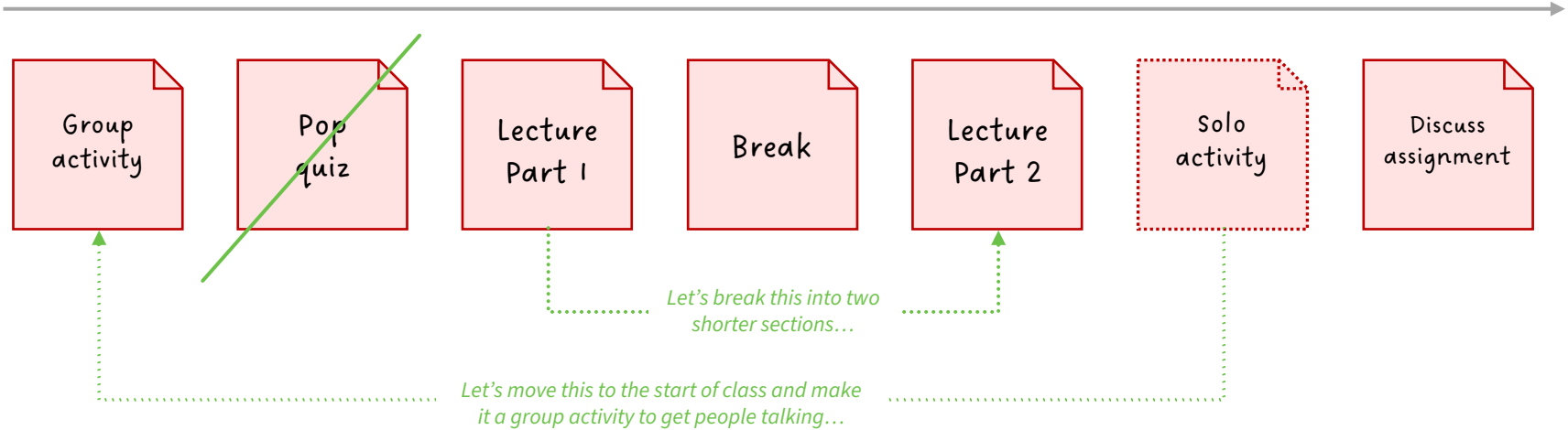


Image sources:
(Top) Memento poster, 2000
(Bottom) a visual analysis of the film's, spliced narrative threads,
Visualizing Nonlinear Narratives with Story Curves

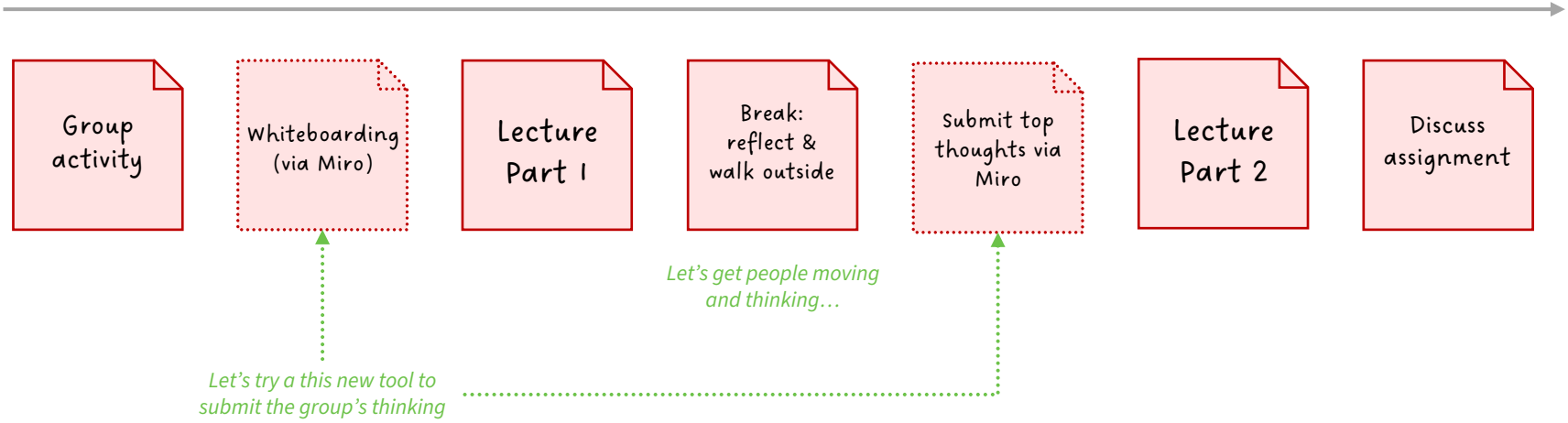
4 Step 4: Rearrange your class

- How might you **restack your class** to better solve for students' needs and fulfill your learning objectives?



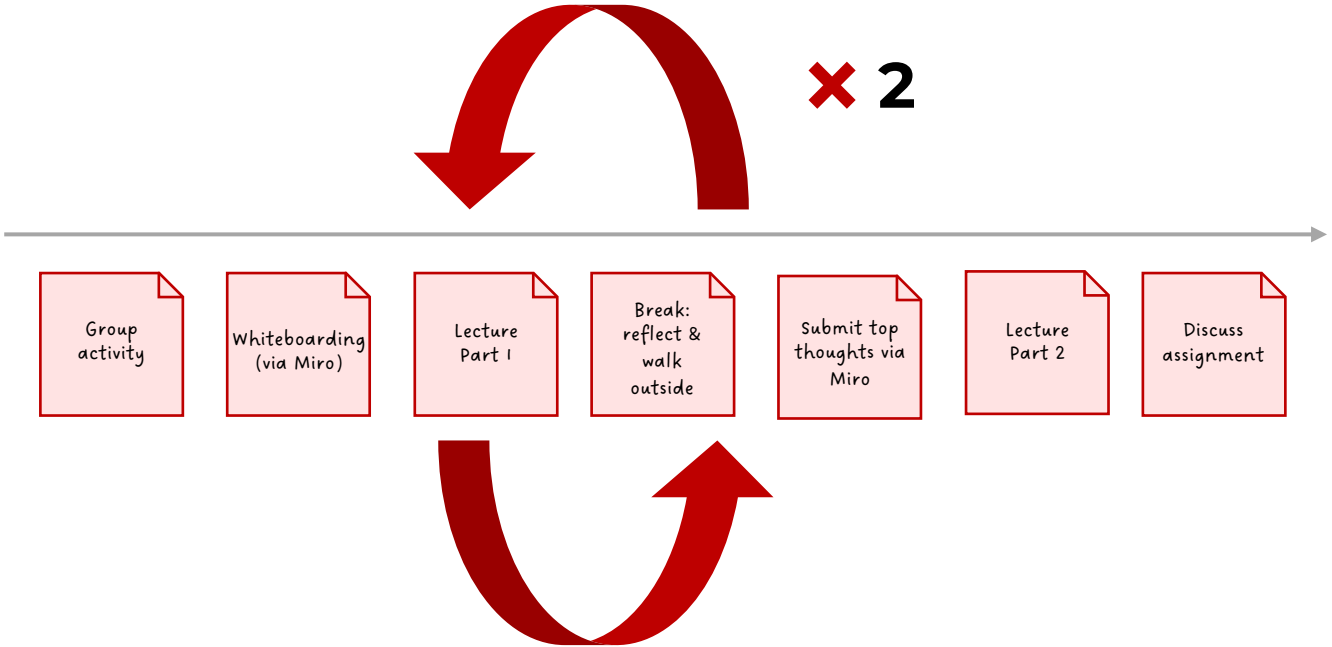
5 Step 5: Add other components

- Consider, research, and find other components you could add to the class to make it more engaging and to better deliver on your objectives.
  i.e., what new tools or technology could you use? Additional resources? Additional physical spaces or environments?



6 Step 6: Iterate

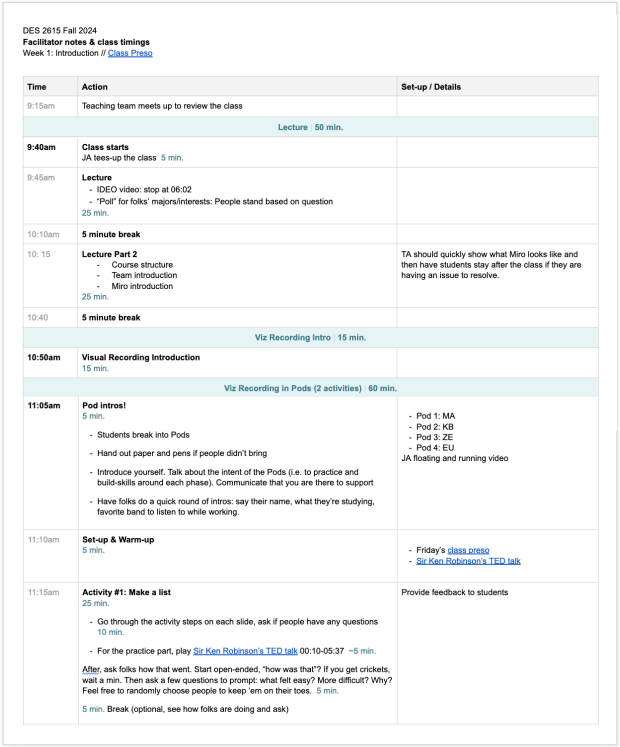
- Come up with **at least 2 other approaches** by restacking, rearranging, and adding



7 Step 7: Formalize your top approach

- Create a **”run-of-show” document** to help you organize logistics for your new class structure.
  Include time stamps, descriptions of each component, and facilitation notes as you see fit.

- Use this template if you’d like, or create your own:
  A.I.I._Run of Show Template

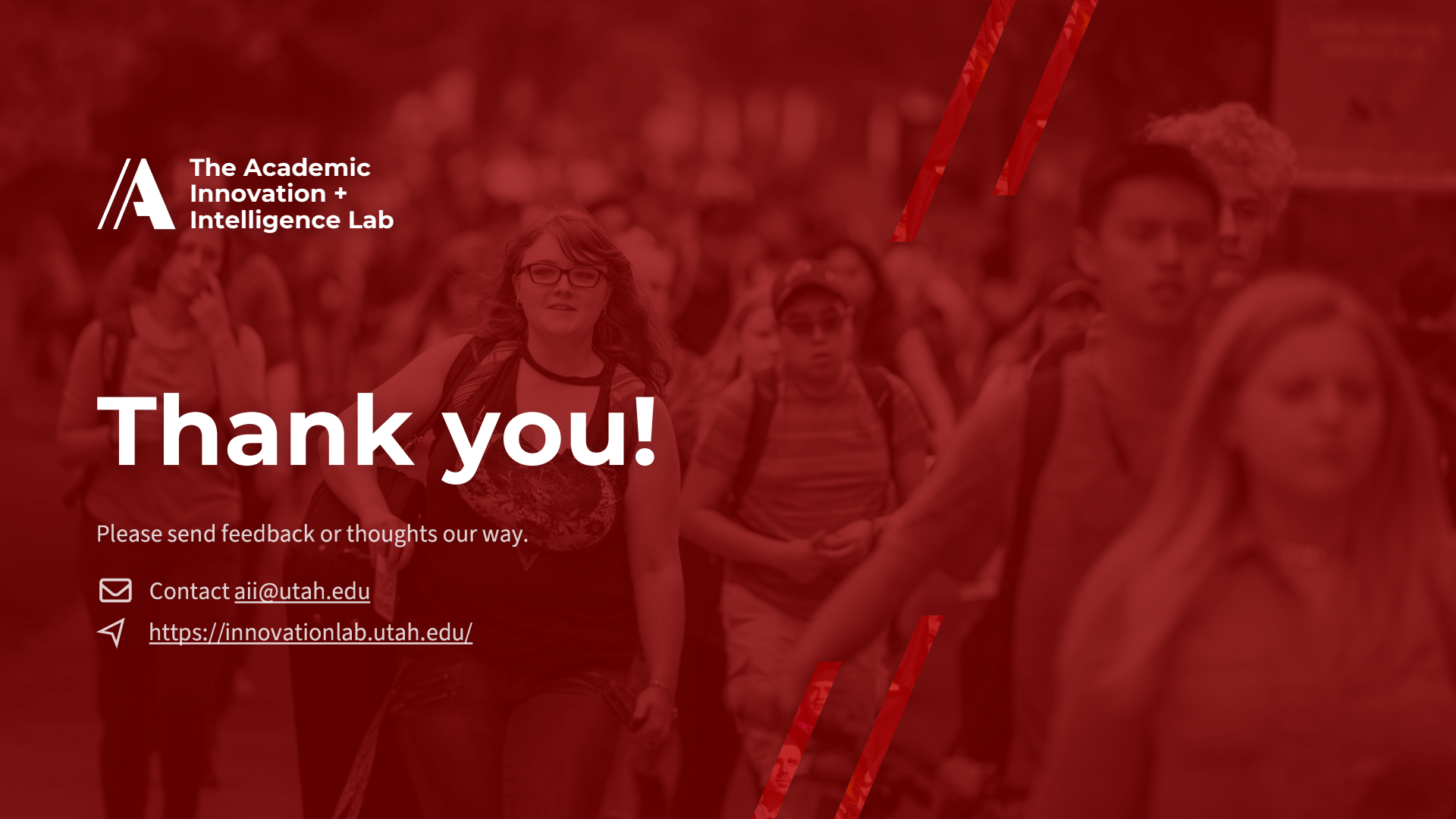


DES 2615 Fall 2024
Facilitator notes & class timings
Week 1: Introduction // Class Preso

Time	Action	Set-up / Details
9:15am	Teaching team meets up to review the class	
	Lecture | **50 min.**	
9:40am	**Class starts** JA tees-up the class 5 min.	
9:45am	**Lecture** - IDEO video: stop at 06:02 - ‘Poll’ for folks’ majors/interests: People stand based on question 25 min.	
10:10am	**5 minute break**	
10: 15	**Lecture Part 2** - Course structure - Team introduction - Miro introduction 25 min.	TA should quickly show what Miro looks like and then have students stay after the class if they are having an issue to resolve.
10:40	**5 minute break**	
	Viz Recording Intro | **15 min.**	
10:50am	**Visual Recording Introduction** 15 min.	
	Viz Recording in Pods (2 activities) | **60 min.**	
11:05am	**Pod intros!** 5 min. - Students break into Pods - Hand out paper and pens if people didn’t bring - Introduce yourself. Talk about the intent of the Pods (i.e. to practice and build-skills around each phase). Communicate that you are there to support - Have folks do a quick round of intros: say their name, what they’re studying, favorite band to listen to while working.	- Pod 1: MA - Pod 2: KB - Pod 3: ZE - Pod 4: EU JA floating and running video
11:10am	**Set-up & Warm-up** 5 min.	- Friday’s class preso - Sir Ken Robinson’s TED talk
11:15am	**Activity #1: Make a list** 25 min. - Go through the activity steps on each slide, ask if people have any questions 10 min. - For the practice part, play Sir Ken Robinson’s TED talk 00:10-05:37 ~5 min. After, ask folks how that went. Start open-ended, “how was that”? If you get crickets, wait a min. Then ask a few questions to prompt: what felt easy? More difficult? Why? Feel free to randomly choose people to keep ‘em on their toes. 5 min. 5 min. Break (optional, see how folks are doing and ask)	Provide feedback to students

8 Step 8: Test the approach in class

- **Implement your new structure** in your next class. Observe in real-time how it performs.
- After, **debrief** how it went by asking:
  - What went well?
  - What could be improved?
  - What are some next steps?
- **Reflect, iterate, & refine** your plan as you see fit.



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Thank you!

Please send feedback or thoughts our way.

Contact aii@utah.edu

https://innovationlab.utah.edu/