



# AGENDA SETTING & CLOSING THE LOOP : RESEARCH

TIMETABLING FOR CONTENT AND CHARACTER

**“If a lesson does not start off strong by activating prior knowledge, creating anticipation, or establishing goals, student interest wanes, and you have to do some heavy lifting to get them back. If it fails to check for understanding, you will never know if the lesson's goal was attained.”**

## RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Consider for a moment, a song, most people can recognize the melody and lyrics for the **starting** and **ending**, while the middle is the haziest – this is also true for recalling a number sequence, the start and end are typically easier to remember.

Great **hooks** and **closure** serve as one of the main tools of an effective classroom. The purpose of the beginning of a class is to provide **direction** and **focus** on the objective and the process in which the content will be taught. However, without establishing the **relevance** of why this is worth learning, students will be excited with a great hook, and leave the rest with **passive** learning.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the end of the class is typically **lost** with last-minute summary, reminders for homework or important announcements. The closing of the loop can be most effective in **reinforcing** the important and major points of the class, while this may seem **redundant** to the teacher (because the notion that “since I just said that, I don't need to repeat it” is premised on the belief that students are paying **attention** to **every** single word you say, which sadly is not true). In addition, students can be in **charge** of the closing of the loop, to check understanding as well as recapping it for all the other students.<sup>2</sup>

Its also important to establish the **expectations** of the class by setting the agenda of the objectives, both in terms of **content** and **character**. Teachers should not be afraid of stopping the session to go back to the **agenda** to call out students who are not conforming to the objectives identified at the start of the class, this will reduce future problems in classroom management (bonus: **co-creating** the agenda with the students allows for accountability and ownership of the learning).<sup>3</sup>

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## **AGENDA SETTING & CLOSING THE LOOP : IN A NUTSHELL**

- The setting of the agenda and the closing of the loop are windows of **opportunity** that can greatly increase the ability for students to learn as well as **synthesize** and **reflect** on concepts<sup>5</sup>.
- Without adding teacher load, active learning through student **participation** and **reflection** for closing the loop maintains the in-class focus especially for higher-level learning. In addition, it allows for **metacognition**, as students understand how they learn. Interactions like these also builds peer **relationships** and group work dynamics<sup>6</sup>.
- Students enter a classroom not thinking about **participating** in a class, they are busy pondering about all the **complexities** of their lives; without a **deliberate** effort to grab their attention to focus for the content, the rest of the class plays a game of **catch-up**<sup>7</sup>.

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>5</sup>The Beginning and End of Class. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://ctl.yale.edu/Beginning-End-Class>, Yale Center for Teaching and Learning
- <sup>6</sup>Love, B. (2013). Finishing Strong: End-of-Class Review to Improve Relationships, Measurements and Learning Outcomes. *College Teaching*,61(4), 151-152. doi:10.1080/87567555.2013.773417
- <sup>7</sup>Lang, J. M. (2016, January 11). Small Changes in Teaching: The First 5 Minutes of Class. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Small-Changes-in-Teaching-The/234869> The Chronicle of Higher Education