

ACADEMIC CAREERS: TEACHING DEMONSTRATIONS

Search committees, particularly at teaching-focused schools, like to see candidates in action. One method for doing so is the teaching demonstration, which can take several different forms and reveal much about applicants.

Types of Demonstrations

Classroom Lecture:

- Sometimes faculty will ask you to guest-lecture in one of their actual classes
- Listen very carefully to the instructions and ask clarifying questions
- Serious job-seekers make themselves known to others who might have job leads or contacts by:
 - Request a copy of the course syllabus so you know what text is being used, what material has already been covered, and what material comes after your presentation
 - Ask about course title, class size, grade level, room details, and length of time you should teach
 - Are you supposed to teach the specific topic indicated in the syllabus for the day of your visit or can you choose a different topic related to the course?
 - Are you expected to lecture, lead a discussion, or both?

Visiting Presenter:

- You may be asked to prepare a class and present it to a random group of students, staff, and faculty
- Make sure you ask:
 - Who is invited to attend?
 - What level of knowledge will audience members have about your topic?
 - Will you be videotaped?
 - How long should your presentation be?
 - Can you select any topic?
 - What technology will be available?

Important Considerations

- Be clear about expectations
- Be prepared for anything
- Use techniques and technology with which you are familiar
- Demonstrate a variety of teaching methods, including didactic and interactive components
- Use visual aids such as handouts or slides
- Prepare a few discussion questions
- Reserve necessary equipment
- Realize that both your content knowledge and your presentation skills are being assessed
- Manage your time well and end on time
- Answer audience members' questions with respect
- Practice your teaching demonstration multiple times

Additional Resources:

- <http://chronicle.com/jobs/2002/07/2002071601c.htm>
- <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/history/grad/phd/phdjobtalk.html>