

Properly Formatted Didactic Description

(Or How to Get Attendees to Flock to Your Session)

A Didactic is a presentation designed to teach. It can vary in structure from lecture, panel discussion, flipped classroom, discussion group, to other types of scenarios.

Having clearly-articulated descriptions (with a dash of pizzazz), attractive session titles, and well written learner objectives (required for didactics), will increase the chance that annual meeting participants will attend your session. Here's what you need to include:

A SESSION TITLE THAT IS SHORT AND COMPELLING (Use Title Case)

Word/character limit: 100 characters/15 words max (not including spaces).

The session title is the first, and perhaps only, impression you'll make on a potential attendee. So, the better your session title, the better your odds of having what you've written read by a larger percentage of people and compelling them to attend your session. Here are three ways to make your title stand out:

1. **Promise benefits.**

"How to" is the most common way of starting a benefit title. Adding benefits to the title makes it sing! Examples:

- ◆ How to teach a _____ class that makes students think
- ◆ How to be an inspiring _____
- ◆ How to engage and inspire your _____ through _____

2. **Promise a story.**

People love stories. Use the power of story in your presentation title. For example:

- ◆ How a burned out _____ reconnected with the love of _____ through _____.

If you're presenting a case-study, this format is ideal for your presentation title. Here's the format "How A got to B." Make "A" and "B" as far as part as possible by adding adjectives.

3. **Put the number three at the front.**

Consider this title: Critical concepts for _____. Sounds boring, but put a number in front of it: Three critical concepts for _____; now your prospective audience is thinking "I'd better find out what those three critical concepts are!"

Note: Three is the ideal number of major points to cover in a presentation, and five at the outside. If you try and cover more you won't be able to do justice to each point. It's better to go deep, than wide.

4. **Provoke curiosity/create FOMO.**

If you're revealing new research in your presentation make the most of it. People want to hear what's new. They come to SAEM's annual meeting to be at the cutting-edge. Example: New _____ research reveals the _____ methodology that gets the best results.

That title works because of the curiosity and FOMO (fear of missing out) that it evokes. You can exploit the natural attraction power of FOMO/curiosity even if you don't have cutting-edge research to reveal. For example: The #1 strategy for _____.

A STRUCTURE THAT WILL HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Character limit: 500 characters max not including spaces.

Your structure should be carefully chosen. Some examples of common structures used are: Lecture, Panel, Flipped Classroom, Discussion Groups, etc.

A LIVELY, CLEARLY-ARTICULATED PROPOSAL

Character limit: 500 characters max not including spaces.

Your proposal must not only give an overview of your session, it must also create interest and generate excitement about your presentation. A good session description should get the reader to say, “That sounds interesting! What do the Learner Objectives look like?” Here’s how to create interest:

◆ **Focus on the reader/attendee.**

Before you write your session description, take time to make a list of the benefits attendees will receive from participating. Then, pick the three most important points that address the “what’s in it for Me?” benefits of the presentation. You may wish to start with a compelling fact or statement or a question for the attendee to consider.

◆ **Spell out who should attend.**

Label the appropriate audience for each session in terms of experience level and niche area (as well as other categories specific to the specialty).

◆ **Keep it brief.**

The word limit imposed on the session description is not the challenge; it’s choosing the *right* words. You can start by:

- *Counting syllables.* Replace as many three syllable words as possible with one or two syllable words (e.g., replace utilize with use).
- *Using punctuation.* Count 18 words from the start of the sentence. No period or colon? Your sentence is too long.
- *Counting words.* Describe your session in 500 words, then cut back to 280 words and write a Tweet about it. You’ll discover what is essential in your 280-word Tweet and what you can easily lose.

◆ **Use the active voice and strong present-tense verbs.**

◆ **Keep it simple and acronym free.**

Always define any acronym at first reference and avoid jargon.

◆ **Be honest.**

Your session description must match your presentation. Attendees expect session descriptions to be accurate representations of the presentations, and have scheduled their time based on where they think they will get the best return on their investment.

STRONG LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Limit: 2-4 objectives; approximately one sentence long each

Learning objectives are statements that follow the session description and describe what the participant is expected to achieve (outcomes) as a result of attending your session. Your didactic description **MUST** (i.e. it is a requirement) include:

Properly written Instructional learning objectives:

- ◆ **Must** be student-oriented, not instructor-oriented.

- ◆ **Must** be stated in behavioral/measurable terms (see examples below), not in abstract terms
- ◆ **Must** have a time constraint factor (i.e. the objective should be achieved by the end of the course and not require further study or learning by the student).

Example of a properly written instructional objective:

Upon completion of this session, participants should be able to:

- *Discuss the national statistics of unexpected return visits to the emergency department*
- *Identify the five most common reasons that patients return to the emergency department after discharge*
- *Demonstrate awareness of risk-reduction strategies such as: patient empowerment, teachbacks, shared decision making*
- *Develop a personalized evidence-based strategy for identifying patients that are high-risk for unexpected return visits*

BEHAVIORAL/MEASURABLE TERMS

Your learning objectives must be stated using these terms, not in abstract terms

Knowledge/Information

list	arrange	tell	recognize	cite	select	point
record	name	recall	label	identify	trace	record
state	relate	memorize	select	quote	update	summarize
define	describe	repeat	reproduce	recite	draw	write

Comprehension

assess	demonstrate	translate	discuss	review	reference
contrast	differentiate	express	restate	illustrate	interpret
distinguish	explain	summarize	locate	tell	reiterate
restate	describe	identify	compare	critique	compute
associate	report	classify	discuss	estimate	predict

Application

apply	respond	conduct	match	report	predict	prescribe
sketch	practice	execute	relate	translate	schedule	select
perform	construct	complete	calculate	review	use	utilize
use	role-play	dramatize	examine	treat	develop	
solve	demonstrate	employ	operate	interpret	locate	

Analysis

analyze	critique	quantify	experiment	diagram	contract	detect
inspect	differentiate	extrapolate	relate	infer	deduce	
test	catalogue	calculate	debate	question	inventory	
distinguish	diagnose	measure	apply	appraise	summarize	
categorize	appraise	theorize	criticize	separate	contrast	

Synthesis

develop	formulate	construct	design	modify	assemble	produce
revise	collect	create	integrate	manage	generalize	document
compose	build	establish	devise	arrange	validate	
plan	propose	prepare	organize	specify	detect	

Evaluation

review
appraise
choose
justify
argue

conclude
assess
rate
compare
defend

score
evaluate
report on
select
interpret

investigate
measure
support
critique
rank

assess
decide
grade
determine
judge

recommend
test
estimate
revise