This Worked for Me

Every classroom is unique. No pedagogical technique works in every teaching situation. But some ideas work quite well and quite often. And, as we all work to make our own classes better, finding out what worked for other instructors can be helpful.

The ideas here have been submitted by your fellow OLLI instructors. We hope you find one or two that you can use.

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My classes last an hour and a half with no break. I announce this at the beginning of class and tell students where the rest rooms are. They are free to get up as they wish. They are never gone for long, and have never seemed to have a problem getting right back to the subject matter.

On the other hand, a 10 to 15 minute break is nearly always longer AND the class loses continuity. (FYI I teach Italian conversation.)
--Catherine Mitchell

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For me, these practices seem to pay dividends for my Aging Tech classes.

1. Extensive preparation
2. Localizing content (e.g. BayCare Health and Publix Health Monitoring kiosks) to illuminate and personify
3. Use videos where they can make a "real" difference in the presentation-not all videos are that helpful
4. Take notes immediately following the class to record what worked, what didn't and other pertinent observations. Then, check the notes before the next time you teach the class.
--Mike Bice

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Here are a few suggestions that I've found useful:

1. Have passion/enthusiasm for your subject.
2. If you are a novice teacher, get guidance and training from OLLI.
3. If you are a novice, consider sitting in on one or more classes from OLLI recommended teachers.
4. Do extensive research into your subject.
    a. Original sources, if possible.
    b. If not, other trusted sources.
5. If your course will require moderate to heavy use of audio/visual material, try to have access to the best available:
    a. Video Projector, or High Definition TV, with DVD player, if needed.
    b. Speakers
    c. All necessary audio-visual cables.
    d. Projection screen
    e. Up-to-date computer software (operating system and applications, such as PowerPoint) and up-to-date computer hardware that has the power to handle videos.
        - This is particularly relevant if you want to use High Definition videos.
6. High quality handouts.

7. Visit the site or sites where you will be giving your class.
     - Check on seating, tables, lectern, lighting.
8. If the topic demands it, constantly review, update and improve the presentation.
9. Prepare backup/contingency plans if one or more of your presentation requirements (hardware, software, etc.) fails or is not present at the venue.
10. If possible, and if makes you more comfortable, try to bring your own hardware and software (e.g. your own laptop.
--Jack Herman

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People need breaks, or at least a change in teaching style, every 20 minutes or so.
--Penny Noriega

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When I taught high school, it was believed that continuous lectures should be roughly about the student age in years. So that meant every 15 minutes, do something a little different so that students are active and engaged. In technology classes, we don't have the long lectures, because our classes are totally dependent on hands-on activities which count as a diversion or change. Consequently, our lectures are only a few minutes long.
--Jeanne Dyer

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My husband and I are co teaching the *Cord Cutting* Class. What is working for us is having him teach the content of the class with me doing the opening and introduction to what will be taught that day and controlling the questions. I close the sessions by telling the class how new we are and that we need feedback. We have had the suggestions to give the attendees a copy of the slides before each session, and it is working well. I also "stop my hubby for translation" when it gets too technical. We are loving teaching the class and will repeat it in February. We also go out to lunch after every class.
—Margaret Weatherby