

Teaching Matters



Center for Teaching Excellence



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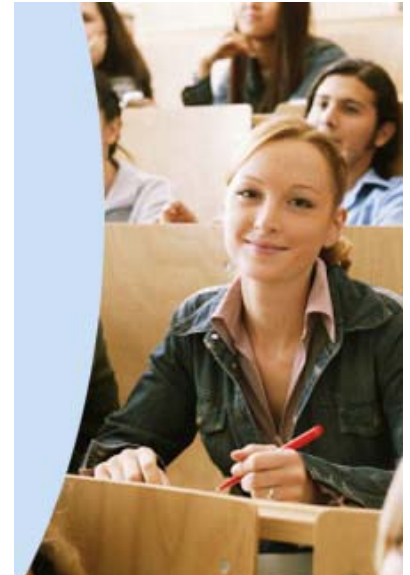
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Why Students Should Attend Class

Here are some reasons you can share with your students explaining why attending class is important.

1. Attending class and taking notes begins the learning process and shortens study time afterwards.
2. You can ask questions right there and then and likely save yourself time later.
3. You will get an idea of what material in the text the instructor thinks is important and clues as to what might appear on tests -- again, this will enable you to study more effectively and efficiently.
4. You can often find answers to possible test questions
5. You get up-dated material and ideas that's not found in texts.
6. You will obtain the latest information on tests and take-home essays and have more time to complete them.
7. Most instructors are aware of who attends class and this can help your grade.
8. Most of what you're paying for is to be found in class instruction -- so get your money's worth!
9. You will feel more connected to the class and be motivated to do well.
10. You will be able to test out your own ideas and respond to the ideas of others.
11. Others' notes rarely make complete sense to someone else -- "getting the notes" will not work.
12. Note-taking and thinking skills are sharpened by attending lectures -- skills you can use in your career.



CALL FOR ARTICLES
If you would like to share your teaching experiences with your fellow instructors, please submit your article, in Word format, to Barry Friedman, Director Center for Teaching Effectiveness at barryf@keisercollege.edu

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Retrieved from University of Wisconsin website http://www.uwmc.uwc.edu/freshman_seminar/attend.htm on March 31, 2004

Student Self Assessment Class Form

You can use the Student Self Assessment Class Form below with your students to help them identify appropriate behaviors before, during, and after class.

Please check those items that are applicable to your work in this class so far this term.

--- BEFORE CLASS ---

	I read assignments before attending class.
	I re-read at least some assignments before attending class.
	I take notes while reading the assignments.
	I try to make connections between the reading assignments, looking for agreement, disagreement, and/or differing emphases.
	I organize my thoughts about the material in advance of attending class.
	If I do not understand the material, I write out questions in order to quiz myself or I ask questions in class.

--- DURING CLASS ---

	I have attended every class.
	I have attended almost every class.
	If I am unable to attend class, I secure class notes from a reliable source.
	I have asked a question during class.
	I have participated in group discussion, usually responding to instructor's questions.
	I take notes regularly during class.
	I always participate in the activities during class.
	I participate in discussions, either by raising an interesting question, responding to a point made by someone else, or making some other substantive contribution that facilitates learning for myself and the other students.

-- AFTER CLASS --

	I think about issues raised in class at a time when I am not dealing directly with class-related work.
	I have talked with others about issues raised in class.
	I read carefully the comments on my graded assignments.
	I have sought out my instructor (whether in person, by phone, or by e-mail) for some purpose other than to complain or ask a routine question about assignments.

AFTER READING OVER THIS LIST, ONE THING I CAN DO TO FACILITATE MY OWN LEARNING IS:

(Adapted by William McAllister, Teaching Resource Center, University of Virginia, who uses this in history courses and who adapted his questionnaire from the work of Patrick Rael, at Bowdoin College. Further adaptation by Barry Friedman, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence, Keiser Collegiate System. Retrieved from <http://trc.virginia.edu/Tips/SelfAssessment>.)

Good Classroom Management 101

Strong Beginnings and Endings for Large and Small Classes

by Nora Bellows, & Peggy Stuart, University of Maryland

A late start and a frazzled end could cost ten minutes of teaching and learning time during a 50 minute class— that is twenty percent of your class time. Make sure your students are getting the most from your class by having a number of established opening routines and closing routines. Try some of the following suggestions to *Maximize Time for Teaching & Learning!*



Routines that signal the start of class

Starting a class well is very often linked to class size. While there are methods for beginning class that may work better in a small discussion-based class than a large lecture, it may, in some cases simply be a matter of voice volume. Saying “Let’s start!” is one simple way to begin Here are some other suggestions.

- **Simply shutting the door can function as a signal** that class has started.
- In any sized class, **you can greet the class with a particular question and have them take a moment to reflect on paper** so that they are ready for discussion or the day’s lesson. “What did you find interesting or notable in the reading for today?” Supply your own content-specific filler.
- **A hand-raising poll at the start of class on some issue related to the lesson content can work in small or large classes.** Use this poll

as a starting point for the discussion or lecture. E.g. A good many of you felt that we can still see evidence of the early modern humoral understanding of the human body in today’s language--what are some examples?/Let’s look at some examples.

- **Write an Agenda for the class meeting on the board**, and begin class by referring to the first item on the list.
- **In a large class, you may want to signal the start of class by training your students that when you raise your hand, it is their cue to be quiet and also raise their hands.** The raised hands will spread through the class like a wave in the bleachers of a Miami Hurricane football game.
- **Have students take a non-graded “quiz” to jog their memories** of past lessons or to get them thinking about concepts that will be presented in the current lesson.

Routines that signal the end of class

We have all been witness to the shuffle and scrape of students packing up before the end of class.

- Don’t let class end on their terms! Here are some tried and true ways to help teachers keep students in their seats so they retain what you have just covered.
- **Have the students reflect for a moment on how a particular issue/topic is relevant to the rest of the class material** or to their own lives. Go around the room and hear from everyone (very briefly--this takes about 5-10 minutes, depending on the class size).
 - **Have the students do a “one minute-paper”** that has them reflect on one thing they learned during the class, and one thing that is still unclear. Collect these “papers” and use them to help you plan subsequent lessons. Dismiss them as a group.
 - **Cross the last item off your Agenda to signal the end of class** and indicate to students that they can pack up.
 - **Tell the students what they should have learned** in the class and preview what they will learn in the next class.

Retrieved from <http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/newsletter/nov-dec%2003.pdf> on March 14, 2004

Teaching Strategies

Lecturing

The students in the room are clattering about greeting the friends, trying to find their favorite pens at the bottoms of backpacks, wondering if their significant others really meant what they said last night. You are at the front of the room, about to introduce them to the subject that has held your interest through a decade of graduate school, poverty, travel, intellectual separation from loved ones. You are, in fact, about to introduce them to something you've been loving, planning for, grappling with, despising, rejecting, re-embracing for years. It is your field, your spouse, your child. They are still wondering about the location of their favorite pens, the movie they saw two nights ago.

By all means, organize your lecture carefully. Have the thing make sense. Be concise. But, perhaps most important, communicate the passion you have. If you REALLY want to be an inspirational teacher, show your students your passion.

Use the A.I.D.A. formula for putting passion in your lectures: **Attention, Interest, Desire, Action.**

To grasp students' **attention**:

- Allow a few minutes of adjustment time; don't put your key sentence right at the beginning when students are still looking for their pens.
- Give students a forecast of what the major points will be.
- Review how today's lecture fits into the course.
- Begin with a story, an example, a startling statistic, a personal experience.

To maintain students' **interest**:

- Share information that is particularly relevant to students. Relate topics of your field to course issues.
- Cover fewer points or topics, but cover them in depth. Superficial treatments of numerous topics is boring.
- Vary the kind of information you give: statistics, historical anecdotes, simple facts, illustrations, questions;

- Move around; use the blackboard, charts, graphs, maps, pictures, books, magazines; use films, slides, the overhead projector, television.
- Your lecture is a speech. Prepare for it as carefully and thoughtfully as you would a persuasive speech.

To communicate your **desire** for students to be as committed to their education as you are:

- Show students what you have done in your field, your current and planned future involvement.
- Demonstrate your emotional commitment. You've done everything but bleed for your intellectual interests, and maybe you've even done that--communicate it.
- Eliminate speech hesitations such as "uh," "er," "you know,"--be intellectually and physically powerful.

To inspire students to be as filled with **action** as you are:

- Be prompt, efficient, prepared, and alert.
- Maintain eye contact with students.
- Maintain an alert and erect posture.
- Move about with certainty and surety. Eliminate random, casual, or distracting movements.
- Gesture comfortably and naturally. Do not plan your gestures, but plan to gesture.

Putting these suggestions into action does not guarantee that students will sit wide-eyed and breathless on the edges of their chairs, using all their restraint to raise their hands before asking questions, but it will help communicate your passion. And if your students understand your passion, they may just become impassioned themselves--keeping up with the reading, asking relevant and significant questions, visiting at your office hours to ask how to research a related issue, and maybe learning how to make the love of learning into the most helpful life tool they have.

Adapted from "Effective Lecturing Techniques: Alternatives to Classroom Boredom" by Richard L. Weaver in *Teaching College: Collected Readings for the New Instructor*. Ed. by Rose Ann Neff and Maryellen Weimer. Madison, WI: Magna Publications, 1990.

Retrieved from <http://trc.virginia.edu/tc/1994/Lecturing.htm> on March 31, 2004



Some Ideas for Motivating Students

By Robert Harris

1. Explain.

Some recent research shows that many students do poorly on assignments or in participation because they do not understand what to do or why they should do it. Teachers should spend more time explaining why we teach what we do, and why the topic or approach or activity is important and interesting and worthwhile. In the process, some of the teacher's enthusiasm will be transmitted to the students, who will be more likely to become interested. Similarly, teachers should spend more time explaining exactly what is expected on assignments or activities. Students who are uncertain about what to do will seldom perform well.

2. Reward.

Students who do not yet have powerful intrinsic motivation to learn can be helped by extrinsic motivators in the form of rewards. Rather than criticizing unwanted behavior or answers, reward correct behavior and answers. Remember that adults and children alike continue or repeat behavior that is rewarded. The rewards can (and should) be small and configured to the level of the students. And the important point is that extrinsic motivators can, over a brief period of time, produce intrinsic motivation. Everyone likes the feeling of accomplishment and recognition; rewards for good work produce those good feelings.

3. Care.

Students respond with interest and motivation to teachers who appear to be human and caring. Teachers can help produce these feelings by sharing parts of themselves with students, especially little stories of problems and mistakes they made, either as children or even recently. Such personalizing of the student/teacher relationship helps students see teachers as approachable human beings and not as aloof authority figures. Young people are also quite insecure, and they secretly welcome the admission by adults that insecurity and error are common to everyone. Students will attend to an adult who

appears to be a "real person," who had problems as a youth (or more recently) and survived them.

It is also a good idea to be approachable personally. Show that you care about your students by asking about their concerns and goals. What do they plan to do in the future? What things do they like? Such a teacher will be trusted and respected more than one who is all business.

4. Have students participate.

One of the major keys to motivation is the active involvement of students in their own learning. Standing in front of them and lecturing to them (at them?) is thus a relatively poor method of teaching. It is better to get students involved in activities, group problem solving exercises, helping to decide what to do and the best way to do it, helping the teacher, working with each other, or in some other

way getting physically involved in the lesson.

Students love to be needed. By choosing several students to help you students' self esteem is boosted and consequently their motivation is increased. Students will also see themselves as necessary, integral, and contributing parts of the learning process through participation like this. Use every opportunity to have students help you. Assign

them homework that involves helping you ("I need some magazine illustrations of the emphasis on materialism for next week; would someone like to find one for me?").

5. Teach Inductively.

It has been said that presenting conclusions first and then providing examples robs students of the joy of discovery. Why not present some examples first and ask students to make sense of them, to generalize about them, to draw the conclusions themselves? By beginning with the examples, evidence, stories, and so forth and arriving at conclusions later, you can maintain interest and increase motivation, as well as teach the skills of analysis and synthesis. Remember that the parable method of making a point has some significant historical precedent.



6. Satisfy students' needs.

Attending to need satisfaction is a primary method of keeping students interested and happy. Students' basic needs have been identified as survival, love, power, fun, and freedom. Attending to the need for power could be as simple as allowing students to choose from among two or three things to do--two or three paper topics, two or three activities, choosing between writing an extra paper and taking the final exam, etc. Many students have a need to have fun in active ways--in other words, they need to be noisy and excited. Rather than always avoiding or suppressing these needs, design an educational activity that fulfills them.

Students will be much more committed to a learning activity that has value for them, that they can see as meeting their needs, either long term or short term. They will, in fact, put up with substantial immediate unpleasantness and do an amazing amount of hard work if they are convinced that what they are learning ultimately meets their needs.

7. Make learning visual.

Even before young people were reared in a video environment, it was recognized that memory is often connected to visual images. We can provide better learning by attaching images to the ideas we want to convey. Use drawings, diagrams, pictures, charts, graphs, bulleted lists, even three-dimensional objects you can bring to class to help students anchor the idea to an image.

It is very helpful to begin a class session or a series of classes with a conceptual diagram of the relationship of all the components in the class so that at a glance students can apprehend a context for all the learning they will be doing. This will enable them to develop a mental framework or filing system that will help them to learn better and remember more.



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8. Use positive emotions to enhance learning and motivation.

Strong and lasting memory is connected with the emotional state and experience of the learner. That is, people remember better when the learning is accompanied by strong emotions. If you can make something fun, exciting, happy, loving, or perhaps even a bit frightening, students will learn more readily and the learning will last much longer. Emotions can be created by classroom attitudes, by doing something unexpected or outrageous, by praise, and by many other means.

The day you come to class with a bowl on your head and speak as an alien observer about humans will be a day and a lesson your students will remember. Don't be afraid to embarrass yourself to make a memorable point.

9. Remember that energy sells.

Think about these problems for a minute: Why do so many students want to see *Rambo*, *Robocop*, *Friday the 13th*? Why is rock music more popular with youth than classical music or elevator music? Why is evil often seen as more interesting than good? The answer is connected with the way good and evil are portrayed. Unfortunately, evil usually has high energy on its side while good is seen as passive and boring. We've been trapped by the idea that "bad people do; good people don't." Good is passive, resistant, reactionary, while evil is proactive, energetic, creative.

In a typical cartoon where Sylvester the cat is trying to catch and eat Tweety bird, the cat is highly creative, inventing several ways to get at Tweety. Meanwhile, the guard dog is passive and waits until the cat comes within range before spoiling his plans by beating him up. The cat is admired because of his creative energy; the dog is just a boring policeman.



Being energetic in your teaching is a motivating factor in itself; adding energy to the ideas you want to convey will further enhance learning and commitment to the ideas.

Retrieved from <http://www.virtualsalt.com/motivate.htm> on March 31, 2004

What Some Students Are Really Thinking

The faculty at Indiana University of Pennsylvania conducted a panel discussion on motivating students in November 2003. Here is a brief summary of some of input provided by students relating what motivates them or what does not motivate them. This provides some wonderful insight.

Q: What one thing REALLY motivates you in class?

- Faculty who take a few minutes to talk to us, ask us how we are doing, get to know us as people.
- Faculty who don't just come right in and start to talk at us, but dialogue a little bit about the topic.
- Faculty who care about how we are learning and show that by asking questions that show they care.
- Faculty who use different ways of teaching besides just always lecturing.



Q: What one thing really turns you off?

- Faculty who don't tell you what they want you to learn...they make you guess.
- Faculty who don't control the classroom environment (example given was a group of students in a math class who sit in the back and just won't be quiet...the instructor never addresses the issue).
- Faculty who look like they don't want to be in class. (comment that students understand that everyone has a bad day, but don't come to class ready to rip into the students if they had nothing to do with the bad day).
- Faculty who come in with pages of written notes, then they put it on the board or overhead (or PowerPoint) and then just give you a reading assignment and never really cover the information.

Q: Obviously all of you here are already motivated. What do we do about students who aren't?

- I think you have to remember that some kids just aren't going to be motivated no matter what you do.

- You really have to do your best to teach to everyone and that it is the student's choice whether to learn or not. You can't make them learn.
- There are just some students who are not going to be motivated because they really don't want to be in school and there really is little you can do about them....you can call them in for a talk and show that you do really care if they are learning, but, if they don't want to be in school, then the best you can do is to teach to the ones who do.

- The best thing you can do is to call them aside and talk to them privately.
- If someone is really disruptive, you need to stop the behavior so it doesn't interfere with the other's learning.

• Behaviors

- Be sure to make clear what your policies are regarding classroom behavior (attendance, tardiness, participation, movement in the classroom, etc.) in your syllabus AND be sure to review the policies in class.
- Be consistent in your response to problematic behaviors...if it is not appropriate for one, it is not appropriate for all.
- If behaviors are getting out of control, rather than naming the culprit (purposeful embarrassment), review the policy with the entire class, then contact the student and arrange a meeting to discuss the unacceptable behavior privately.
- It's not necessarily a good idea for student's to try to say something about misbehavior in the class, it can backfire and cause a rift among groups of students (mess up collaboration activities).
- **Grading**
 - Be sure to include positive comments on papers even if you can only find one good thing, it is better for the student to get the positive feedback as well as the corrections/errors.
 - Be really clear on the grading criteria so the students know what exactly they need to do.

Student Expectations

- Try not to make a paper look like it's 'bleeding'...use an ink color other than red when making your corrections.
- Students need time to process the errors they make on assignments, give that time in class or let them keep their work so they can ask questions and get better feedback regarding their performance.
- **Personal interactions**
 - Students really need to know that you are a person too and that you may be having a bad day and it doesn't hurt to let students in on why it is a bad day...this goes back to getting to know students as people and just not someone sitting in a seat... it goes both ways...students will be more forgiving if you are
 - Show that you really like what you are doing, enthusiasm is so important, that alone can really make a difference in class and can have a big impact on motivation

Q: Are there particular teaching activities that are better?

- Mix it up...it is really hard to sit for an hour or 90 minutes, let alone a 2-3 hour night class
- Do hands-on or manipulative demonstration activities (the example given was a math class where the professor created his own 'scale' out of classroom materials to demonstrate the algebraic concept of balance in the equation. He used pieces of candy on each side to demonstrate the balance needed for a correct algebraic statement...student thought it was incredibly creative and an excellent way to physically demonstrate a math concept)
- Cooperative activities help us to work together to understand a topic better (the activity has to have a clear focus) and break up the sitting time
- Discussions that really let you explore the topic, not just have a right/wrong answer
- Feedback is really important...asking questions and then providing feedback about answers
- It's good when an activity isn't working to do something else rather than staying with what isn't working

<http://www.iup.edu/teachingexcellence/reflectivepractice/motivate-rp11-03.shtml>

In her book *Customer Service: A Practical Approach, 2e*, Elaine K. Harris of Tulsa Junior College cites a survey in which school administrators and faculty were asked to identify the expectations their students had of the institution. They cited the following:

- Grades with little effort;
- Extra assistance with enrollment;
- Short class meetings;
- No outside reading assignments;
- More parking.

In the same survey, students were asked to cite their expectations of the institution. These included:

- Positive environment that encouraged learning;
- Transferable classes;
- Instructors who knew their names and cared about them as individuals;
- Safety in the parking lots and campus buildings;
- More parking.

This survey supports additional studies that have found the following more detailed findings of student expectations:

- Assignments that are reasonable in quantity and quality, and that are clearly and consistently communicated by professors;
- Sensitivity to the diverse demands on students' time, and reasonable flexibility by faculty in accommodating such time demands;
- Effective use of class time, i.e. not shorter classes, but richer classes;
- A classroom environment that values students' input, and protects their dignity;
- Examinations and assignments that address issues that were fully addressed and clarified in class, are appropriate to the students' intellectual level, are punctually scored and returned, and are used fairly to determine final course grades;
- A classroom environment that exhibits humor and spontaneity.

When students' expectations of a class turn out to match their learning goals, and those goals are perceived as attainable without unreasonable obstacles, they will tend to be highly motivated to achieve.

Have you clarified your expectations of students lately?

Retrieved from: <http://www.developfaculty.com/tips.html>