The Academy for Effective Teaching Presents:

A Handbook of Reflections on the Art of Teaching

Second Edition

Offered by Past Winners of

Wichita State University's

Academy for Effective Teaching Award

Edited by Michael B. Flores

AGH Faculty Fellow

A teacher affects eternity;

they can never tell

where their influence stops.

Adapted from:

The Education of Henry Adams

Henry Adams (1907)

The Purpose of the Academy for Effective Teaching

The purpose for the Academy for Effective Teaching is to recognize the importance of effective teaching to the successful education of the students and, thus, to the mission of the university. To this end we are devoted to fostering effective teaching by assisting in the development of good teachers and the rewarding of accomplished teachers.

Members of the Academy assist at orientation programs for new faculty, and graduate teaching assistants. They also offer confidential mentoring on request.

The Academy also supports seminars that focus on teaching and learning strategies. Faculty and G.T.A.s from all disciplines share resources, techniques, and experiences that promote effective teaching and successful learning.

For more information on the Academy, please visit: www.wichita.edu/aet

A Forward from Members of the Academy for Effective Teaching

Sentiments and Considerations

Shared by Academy Members

Twenty-five years from now your students
won't remember what you said,
but they will never forget
how you made them feel.
Ed Sawan

The greatest gift we can give students is to have confidence in them. Show them that you believe that they are special and capable of handling whatever comes their way. Believe in them until they believe in themselves.
John Belt

My success as a teacher is not measured by the knowledge students leave the course with, but rather in how well they succeed in using it in their life. If a student of mine succeeds in life, I hope that I have nurtured that success.
Nancy Bereman

Students may not remember our names in the future, but they do remember whether or not we knew theirs.
Kathy Strattman

The art of excellence in teaching is to inspire and instruct students to discover and develop skills and knowledge that enhance their dreams in, through and for our society.
Walter Myers

I try to understand what is motivating students and what interests them. If I can do it, I try to enable them to get where they are wanting to go through their work in my classes.
Louis Medvene

Teaching is personal business:
the more personal, the greater the learning.
Ron Matson

The 2020-2021

Academy for Effective Teaching

Steering Committee

John Belt

Nancy Bereman

Randy Ellsworth

Louis Medvene

Ron Matson

Ed Sawan

Kathy Strattman

Preface

More than a decade ago, John Belt and I started bandying around an idea I had that related to the mission of the Academy for Effective Teaching. I wanted to memorialize the rich history of learning success at Wichita State University, and the teachers that made it happen. Over time, those conversations became the first edition of this book. We solicited thoughtful contributions from past Academy Teaching Award winners, a university-wide honor. We wanted to know who they are, and how they came to be known for their success in the classroom. I felt it would be critical for them to share their paths to success. We wanted these stories to serve as encouragement to and inspiration for faculty members in general, but new Shockers in particular.

Since this type of project had never been done at WSU, we had several concerns. Would anyone participate? Would anyone read the book? Would the book make a difference?

Over time, the answer to these questions were a resounding “yes!” The first printing initially went to all current WSU faculty at the time. For the next several years, new faculty were provided a copy. Additionally, the University sent copies of the book across the country.

Ultimately the supply of print copies was exhausted. However, the book lives on in its virtual form and is still available at: https://www.wichita.edu/faculty/aet/AET_Handbook_First_Edition.pdf.

About two years ago, I reminded John that the ten-year anniversary of the first edition was coming up. After discussions with the Academy, it was decided to proceed with a second edition of the book.

I would strongly encourage you to have a look through the book. I have deliberately omitted highlighting the department in which these outstanding faculty reside. Read each entry with an open mind. I believe you will find lessons and inspiration in many of these pages, regardless of whether the writer is in your department/college or not. In the first edition, I was moved most of all by remarks made by a Professor in the School of Music. Remarkable, considering I teach accounting!

I was loath to change much of any of their original words. Only minor changes were made in the spirit of clarity. I truly hope you find these teachers' words as inspiring as I do!

Michael Flores, Editor
Summer 2021

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Visvakumar Aravinthan

Our son’s kindergarten teacher explained that the role of a teacher is understanding that young minds are sponges that seek knowledge, and we must provide the environment for the sponges to soak in the knowledge. When I look back at my own teachers, each teacher had a unique way to provide that environment, which made me realize the importance of curiosity and knowledge in one’s life. Every one of them had a unique style, but all my effective teachers had one thing in common, and that is compassion. They did not teach what they knew, but they taught what is important to us, the students, with their characterization of

compassion. This motivated me to develop a plan to embrace compassion towards students based on my personality and my expectations towards students. As each semester passes by, my characterization of compassion goes through a revision. I have characterized compassion as “Students engage with me for their better future, which not only includes the knowledge, but also soft skills, and professional development. If I provide that opportunity to them, even if they feel I am a difficult instructor, probably twenty years later they will remember me as an important part in their growth.”

I utilize four strategies to provide this opportunity:

(i) On the first day of class I introduce myself as a tool for their learning.

(ii) I focus on the basics. As a student I felt that if I have a good grip of the fundamentals, application becomes uncomplicated.

(iii) I strongly encourage the students to challenge me; not only do I demand that they work in small groups during the class, but I also request that they ask questions to each other and to me.

(iv) I incorporate an application component to my classes to provide an opportunity for the students to realize they can apply what they learned in the quasi-real-world problem. As it can be seen, none of these are novel or innovative ideas. As a teacher, I try to take advantage of prevailing practices that can focus on knowledge sharing and alter them to my teaching style.

The major challenge that I face as teacher can be attributed to the digital world. This generation of students have access to information and data at a much faster rate. This creates an illusion that they have acquired knowledge. In my opinion, there is a major difference between having access to information and knowledge. Knowledge is vital for transforming the data into useful information. When the information is directly provided to the students without fundamentals, they will not develop the skills that are necessary to transform the data into useful information. More dangerously, they will not learn to separate useful information from information that is just noise. If next-generation students do not understand this, it will be challenging for them to create new information,

which is vital for their professional development, including research.

The ease of access to information that my students have, often forces me to reassess the value that I can provide in the class. Anne Isabella Thackeray Ritchie in her 1885 novel states: “if you give a man a fish, he is hungry again in an hour. If you teach him to catch a fish, you do him a good turn.” If I relate this to the current ‘google.com’ world, teaching the students to have the ability to relate, analyze and apply is more critical than providing the facts or information. As I try to teach the students of today, who are saturated with information, I believe it is my duty is to present the fundamentals in greater detail with relevance to application, discuss the underlying principles and provide opportunity to the students to apply, analyze and rationalize the fundamentals to advance the knowledge. This is the biggest challenge especially at the graduate level, where students are expected to bring concepts from multiple disciplines to develop solutions independently. Most importantly, it is my responsibility to realize that the students have access to information and tools to solve the problems, and my role is to go beyond the tools, information, and data. I will not provide any value to them if I do not relate to the existing information and tools and

examine their relevance and application. Every semester in any class I teach, especially at length at graduate level classes, my first discussion point is the statement from Albert Einstein: “The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks,” and its relevance to today’s world filled with digital information. When I was struggling to connect with the students, Dr. John Belt, an AET member and a recipient of AET award, taught me a valuable lesson: when students feel ownership of their work, they will perform to their best. I have been trying to apply this in every class I teach. For example, when I assign a course assignment that requires demonstrating the ability to apply what they have learned in the class, I let them choose the problem. I mandate that they should meet me within one week to discuss and formulate the problem and provide a periodic update. Many students try to go beyond my expectation as they feel they own the problem that they are solving.

Teaching is becoming more challenging, as I pen these few words, we are in the middle of COVID-19. We had to move to remote instruction, which was a new learning experience to me, especially teaching to a

computer monitor that does not provide any real-time feedback on my teaching. During this time, I learnt an important lesson: Teaching is a continuous progression, I need to have the same mentality as my students: be a sponge and keep learning not only the material but to new teaching styles. Just because a teaching method/style worked for someone, doesn't guarantee it will work well for me. I need to fit the best methods to suit my style. As a teacher I need to be vigilant and find effective approaches to provide additional value to my students beyond textbooks, information from the internet and published technical articles. I can be an effective teacher only if my students find value in attending my classes voluntarily.

Ramazan Asmatulu

My general teaching philosophy is that a faculty member should create an environment that encourages and challenges students, facilitates a learning process that requires interactive participation, and motivates students to become active and lifelong learners. As a faculty member, I request their active participation in order to effectively communicate the basic fundamental principles. Using various technological tools and real-world examples, I achieve this through continuous utilization of thought-provoking lectures, questions, discussions, excitements, and enthusiasms. Based on my previous experiences, the following are my strategies for

high-quality teaching and learning at a university:

- Be well-organized and prepared for each lecture; express simply and clearly what is intended to be conveyed to students.
- Use real-world examples to motivate students, for them to understand why the selected materials or processes are so important.
- Since teaching engineering courses is very challenging, as technology changes very quickly, constantly evaluate course content in order to keep it exciting and pertinent.
- Encourage students' active and deep learning skills and critical thinking abilities using experiences, new technologies, and tools so that they can directly seek proper resources and effectively solve their problems on time.
- Invite experts to class to motivate students, improve their understanding of a subject, and provide them with future directions and challenges in the field.
- Provide relevant laboratory experiments, which are essential for engineering students to advance their practical knowledge and hands-on experience after the fundamental concepts have been conveyed.

- Favor long-answer exams over short, multiple-question exams, since this will improve students writing and critical thinking abilities.
- Encourage students to learn better by being active participants in class; hence, depending on course materials, divide students into groups to solve technical and analytical problems and to increase their teamwork and presentation skills.
- Be aware of industry-university relationships that will increase students' work experiences and job-seeking opportunities after graduation.
- Be collegial to students, respect their capabilities, and take notice of their comprehension, goals, strengths, and interests.
- Reach out to more underrepresented and underserved minority groups and women in engineering education for improved diversity and inclusion.
- Encourage the talented undergraduate students to apply to graduate school to pursue M.S. and Ph.D. degrees.

Elizabeth Behrman

There is no magic technique, of course. No one strategy works for everyone, or even, works on average for a class. Moreover, that variation is not constant in time. A strategy that works today, with this class, on this subtopic, may not work tomorrow or for this other subtopic.

But try to think about this fact as a feature rather than a bug: Variation can be a kind of adaptability. That is, students are in your class to learn. One of the things they can learn is a new strategy or technique for how to learn. Indeed, it could be argued that learning how to

learn – and, by extension, learning how to think – is the most important part of a university education.

To accomplish this, I think, it is important to reward behavior till it becomes habit, and to be upfront about it. Tell your students they will get extra credit for having a fellow student check over written work before handing it in, both because this catches errors and because peer teaching works. Be delighted when a student asks a question, and not just the really insightful ones! (If you can, find something insightful about the question that was asked!) Be especially delighted when a student catches you in an error. When you catch your own error, point out explicitly how you found it - in physics, often, it is simple things like checking units, signs, directions, and magnitudes, all of which any working scientist or engineer should practice, practice, practice, till it is second nature. Point that out, too.

Try new stuff. Talk to your colleagues, share ideas. My favorite invention is the Slide Rule of Shame – one of the few of my ideas that works almost universally. I brandish my old slide rule from college, tell my students that while calculators had been invented at that point, they were really expensive and only rich kids had one. And while calculators are great, they also lead to laziness in that students will ignore

which digits are significant and simply write them all down, which is wrong. So, anyone doing this on a test or quiz will not be allowed to use a calculator on the next test or quiz, but will have to use the Slide Rule of Shame instead, which gives them only 2 or 3 sig figs automatically. I've never had to actually impose it: just the threat works.

But also, it is important to be flexible. These days it is often difficult to discern what needs to change, what with most heads' being bent over phones in class, and goodness knows what is going on with distance learners. One can devise some strategies for dealing with this. Blackboard has an anonymous discussion board feature, for example. One can also hand out one's own teaching evaluations early in the semester: these can contain questions one actually wants answers to, and you can also tell the students that with an early evaluation they themselves get to see the changes they want.

John Belt

My Journey as a Teacher

As I look back on my 30 years of teaching and my efforts to become a more effective teacher, I realize that my teaching career can be roughly divided into three distinct phases. I didn't suddenly and radically change my teaching approach, but my thinking gradually evolved, and I changed how I thought about teaching and what I did in response.

Teaching as a Performance Art

As I was finishing my graduate work and preparing to begin my new role as a professor at Wichita State University, I realized that while I knew a lot about my discipline and about quality research, I knew nothing about teaching. I talked to my major professor about this, and he advised that I should think back to my favorite teachers and try to teach like they did. I did my undergraduate work at a large university on the west coast. Most of my classes in the first two years were in large auditoriums that held from 300 to 500 students. The professors who taught those classes were obviously chosen because they could hold the attention of, and even entertain, large groups of students. These people became my teaching role models and I attempted to emulate their styles as I began my teaching career.

All of my role models were excellent communicators, they were upbeat, enthusiastic, and passionate about their subject matter. They were always well prepared, interesting, and entertaining, delivering excellent lectures full of content, and had numerous anecdotes to illustrate their points. You were never bored in their classes. Although they made it look easy, I quickly discovered it was not easy. I must admit that my initial efforts to teach were less than

successful. In fact, this was the most difficult thing I had ever attempted. However, I was determined to excel at my chosen profession, and I constantly looked for ways to improve. As a result of a lot of hard work and constant experimentation, I gradually became comfortable and even confident in my role as a teacher. By this time, I started winning teaching awards, my class evaluations were gratifyingly positive, my classes filled up quickly and other teachers started asking if they could sit in on a class to see how I did it. Best yet, students would tell me that they hated to miss class because it was so entertaining. This was a heady time for me, and I erroneously believed that I had attained my goal of becoming an excellent teacher. Little did I know that I was just beginning the journey.

The Student as Learner

Up to this point in my teaching career my whole emphasis was upon myself:

- how could I become better?
- how could I communicate more effectively?
- how could I develop better platform skills?
- how could I give better examples and tell better stories?

During an annual review, my chair mentioned that since I had developed a reputation for

being such a good teacher, he was surprised that my students didn't seem to be more knowledgeable than other students. This was an epiphany for me. Slowly, albeit very slowly, I came to the realization that my emphasis was misplaced. I should not be at the center of things; the student was what it was all about. My job was not to impress students or entertain them, but to help them master the material. This was an entirely different orientation for me and required me to rethink and restructure my approach to teaching. How could I create an environment that would facilitate learning? What kinds of activities would engage the students and make them think, really think about the material? In my research on the subject, the most important thing I discovered is that learning is not a passive activity: you don't learn by listening to or being entertained by someone. Learning is an active process: we learn by doing. Therefore, I started concentrating upon developing experiential activities that would require them to become involved in the material. I experimented with games, simulations and role playing. I developed assignments that required them to seek out information and then apply it. I scheduled outside experts who could speak to, and reinforce, the material that was being conveyed in class. Interestingly, one of the most successful strategies for engaging students was to create ways for them to teach the material to others. This was, of course, the

ultimate role reversal of my original emphasis of my being the teacher, the center of attention.

Making a Personal Connection

The third stage of my journey came about gradually as a result of discussions with colleagues, but mostly with students, especially former students. If you ask students to tell you about the teachers who had the most impact on their lives, they don't talk about professors who were knowledgeable or brilliant or entertaining. Almost everything they talk about revolves around a personal relationship with a teacher. They talk about teachers who were interested in them, who cared about them and how they were doing, and who encouraged them and supported them.

I came to realize that what was missing from my teaching was the human element, the personal connection. Up to this point I had viewed my students as customers. I was always cordial, courteous, and respectful but detached and impersonal. I did not attempt to get to know them, nor did they get to know me. After all, there were so many of them. While I was close to a few special students, they were the exception, largely because they were exceptional.

After a great deal of soul searching and reflection, I developed a list of principles to

guide my future interactions with students. There were five of them, and they are:

1) **Impact**. Always remember that students are at a formative period of their lives, and they are very susceptible to influence. Because of our positions, we have the wonderful opportunity to have a major, positive impact on their lives, more than anyone else, except perhaps their parents. The university puts many demands upon us, but the students should always be our top priority.

2) **Care**. The secret of establishing a meaningful relationship with students is to care, genuinely care, about them. Be interested and concerned about them, how they are doing, and what help they may need. Learn their names as quickly as possible. Be available and give them your time. Make them feel welcome in your class, your office, your life.

3) **Growth**. Believe that every student has the potential to do great and wonderful things. It is your job to help them become what they are capable of becoming.

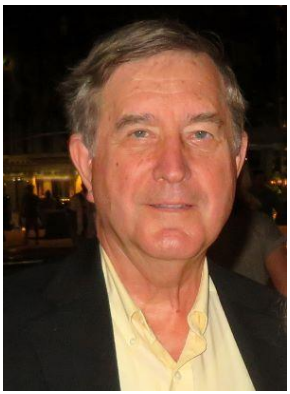
4) **Confidence**. While it is important that you have high standards and expect a great deal from your students, you must also show confidence in your students' ability to handle the most demanding assignments. Constantly

challenge them to excel, to do their best work. Encourage them, support them and believe in them.

5) **Success**. Always want the best for your students. Be on their side. Get to know their aspirations. Help them become successful not only in the classroom but in their lives. Be willing to write letters of recommendation, introduce them to people that could help them or hire them. Give them advice and counsel. Do everything you can to help them succeed. Their success is your success.

These are five principles guided my teaching in the final chapter of my career. In looking back I believe that this was my most effective period as a teacher. It was certainly the most rewarding.

Stephen W. Brady



Words That Rhyme with "Care" and Pursuing knowledge

I believe that one is on the road to excellence in teaching if one does a good job with respect to several similar sounding words. These include to pre-pare, to be there, to care, to be fair, to share, and to repair. To elaborate:

Prepare -- An instructor's proper and extensive preparation for a class can make any presentation and learning experience better. Strive to ensure that your worst lecture is still adequate. Present more than what is in the required text. Try for a consistent product in your lectures. Show enthusiasm for your subject. **Clarity** is very important.

Be there -- physically Try to never miss class (remote or in person); and be on time. If you must get a substitute, make sure the substitute will do a competent job. Find ways to encourage student attendance (remote or in person). Consider using lack of attendance for (at least the threat of) a semester grade level decrease. If you can get them to attend class, you can (if necessary) sneak knowledge into them. Make every class interesting and informative. I want students to worry they might miss something valuable if they miss a class. I hope they are surprised and disappointed when they are in class and the time for the end of a class period arrives--because they are engaged in the subject being considered.

Be there -- otherwise Convince your students that you are there for them (especially in times of crisis like during a pandemic). Encourage questions. Don't postpone answers. Keep office hours (in person or remote) and allow communication at all hours. Outside of class, try not to turn away a student who has questions whether or not their arrival at your door (or on-line) is at a propitious time. Show interest when they tell you about their interests and goals. Try never to show anger or impatience inside or outside the class. Try to keep your own problems out of the classroom environment. Be a good coach. Take student

requests, complaints and comments seriously. Sometimes, a student wants only for someone to listen. So, listen and try never to act like you would rather be somewhere else or that you are short of time.

Be fair —Treat every student fairly — in class, in grading papers, in determining grades, etc. Make sure that the material on which the students are tested was adequately covered in your class presentations as well as phrased in a style similar to homework questions they considered--especially in the lower-level classes. Try to build a class- room atmosphere in which students feel comfortable enough to be able to ask questions freely. Try to get the student to overcome subject or test anxiety. Finding topics in which they can have a success experience can greatly improve their chances of overall success. Make the first question on a test an item they can answer correctly.

Share -- If you have varied interests, hobbies, extensive travel, or are multilingual, and if any of these facets can be made relevant for the classroom, consider using them. Students may hear and ask about some country you have visited in which they have an interest. This provides the opportunity (usually outside of class) to develop a rapport with students you might not reach. Such discussions usually lead

to better performance in the classroom. Foreign students will “light up” when they learn you have been in their country or when you say one of the few phrases you might know in their native language. Teach with a **flair**.

Repair -- Find out what might need to be “repaired.” Learn about which students may be at risk in your class due to previous unsuccessful enrollments. Try to get a good feeling for the pulse of the class, what background students have individually, what appropriate concepts are in their long-term memories, what special circumstances or concerns exist, etc. This helps determine the pace of the class, any reviewing or repairing that should be done, and the depth to which you can go.

Pursuing knowledge -- The purpose of a university is to pursue knowledge. There are many secondary reasons to be at a university, but the pursuit of knowledge is primary. Both students and faculty are at a university for this purpose, but some students don’t seem to realize it. Many students come to us pre-programmed to worry about “grades” and are interested in the lowest score to achieve a certain grade. Faculty should spend time trying to get students to understand that if they study a subject to learn it, then most of the time the grade will be satisfactory. If one studies to

achieve a grade, the grade may not be achieved and the knowledge most likely won't be gained either. If learning has been achieved while studying, then preparing for a test becomes an easy task. Also, in the future, it is the knowledge one needs to bring to bear on an issue.

Telling someone that you got an A in a crisis management course doesn't in itself help in that crisis. **Dare** them to try to learn the subject without worrying about the grade.

Sometimes, students tell me that they see no reason to learn a subject since they "are never going to use it." I have found it valuable to ask them "Do you believe it is a good idea to learn CPR?" I have never had "No" as a response. The response is always that learning CPR is a good idea. Then I ask them "What if you never use it?" As they ponder that, they begin to understand that knowledge is not necessarily for "using." It is having the ability to use it that is important. If one does not know something, it is certain that they can't use it. Once you have knowledge, you may not always remember all you learned, but you will have a link to that knowledge in your memory that can be recalled. Then the knowledge can be regained. This is also why I believe in a comprehensive final in a class. To

prepare for it the student must review all that has been covered in the semester. Reviewing helps put a perspective on the whole subject matter and many topics not well understood at the time will now be understood and fit into the puzzle that at semester's end should become a recognizable picture of knowledge gained.

Students should be encouraged to consider homework assignments as absolute minimum tasks in the pursuit of knowledge. If, after completing an assignment, some aspects of a concept are not understood, students should be encouraged to continue studying. This should become normal practice. More generally, I tell students to consider the requirements of the numbers of hours in a variety of disciplines that students must attain should be considered the minimum number of hours to take in a subject and not the maximum. I challenge them to find something interesting in each subject they study; and, if they find something interesting, to perhaps follow up with more coursework in that area. I ask them to try to find out why (in some subject the student finds boring or un-interesting) a professor might spend her/his whole academic life immersed in it. Perhaps there is something fascinating about a subject the student has missed and learning about it may ease the

learning of the subject in general. Many students change majors during their college career. Pursuing what seems interesting may provide a path to follow in case a change in major is contemplated or required. In any case, the knowledge gained is what matters.

Gina R. Brown

Be a Student Advocate

- As teachers, we have a responsibility to students to pursue what is best for them. This includes a need for discernment regarding when to be flexible and when to be firm.
- Advocating for students includes a sincere interest in them as individuals: smile, laugh, listen, go to class early to chat, aim to make a positive influence on each day.
- An advocate is also genuine with students: humility, stories of my personal mistakes and lessons learned, admitting that “I don’t know”, and giving a ton of reassurance and encouragement.
- Best teaching tool: student notes provided for every lecture. I write them myself; they are comprehensive but do not provide unnecessary information. They clearly

explain content with short paragraphs, not a bullet-point list. They are Word documents, not power points or pdfs. It allows students to type in their own notes within mine and informs the students as to what is really essential. Students love these notes and see the time I put into writing them as time I give to help them learn without unnecessary frustration or confusion. The notes align with my power points, so students follow their notes as I lecture. The notes are an expression of advocacy – to help them learn and be successful.

Katherine Mason Cramer

Construct a Vision for Your Teaching

One of the most important practices I engage in as a teacher is constructing (and continually revising) a vision for my teaching. In doing so, I ask myself the following questions:

- What guides my design of WSU's English Education Program, including individual courses, practicums, and internships?
- What is the big picture? What am I trying to accomplish as a teacher educator beyond individual course

outcomes, program licensure standards, and graduation?

Asking myself these questions has helped me articulate a vision that guides my program and course design. As of this writing, my vision for my teaching is as follows:

To prepare middle and high school English teachers *who* …

- possess deep understanding of English language arts content, pedagogy, diversity, equity, and social justice;
- design research-based instruction that is responsive to students' needs and identities;
- engage in continuous professional inquiry; and
- demonstrate critically informed and generous leadership in English education.

Everything ties back to this vision, so I keep it posted where I can easily see and refer to it as I design instruction, assess student learning, and reflect on my practice. I also share it with my students early in their program so they can see our trajectory in each of our classes together. As I design each course, each

informal and formal assessment, and each class meeting, I review my vision and ask myself: Do my course outcomes, assessments, and learning activities align with this vision? This encourages me to continually self-assess my instructional design and delivery of each course.

Establish Positive Relationships with Students at the Start of the Semester

1. ***Send a Welcome Email***: Building relationships with students begins *before* the first day of class when I send students a welcome email (via Blackboard Announcements) encouraging them to visit our course Blackboard site and familiarize themselves with its content and organization. Although I do not typically teach online courses, I set up all of my face-to-face Blackboard sites using Quality Matters standards as a guide; I want students to be able to easily use Blackboard to supplement our face-to-face class meetings. I also welcome their questions and suggestions regarding the site's organization and content.

2. ***Implement a Ticket in the Door***: Building positive relationships with my students continues on the first day of class with a Ticket in the Door. In all of my classes, the Ticket in the Door is a handout distributed as students arrive to class that asks them to share their preferred name, pronoun(s), academic major, hobbies/interests, and any special needs with me. In addition, students answer questions relevant to the course. For example, in CI 616 Literature for Adolescents, students share their favorite books, their experiences with young adult literature, and their current reading. In CI 425E English Methods I, students report on their previous teaching practicum experiences, including successes, challenges, and goals for their current teaching practicum. After responding in writing during the first few minutes of class, I introduce myself to the class and share a bit about my background. Then students introduce themselves to the class and share 2-3 things about themselves while we listen attentively. It is important to allow students to introduce themselves to the class, in case the name on the roster is not their preferred name, and so we can learn the correct pronunciation of their name.

3. ***Respond to the Ticket in the Door*:** Immediately after the first class meeting, I review responses to the Ticket in the Door and use them to establish or further enhance my relationships with students. I may reach out to individual students via email to follow-up on the information they shared with me (e.g., congratulate them on a recent accomplishment, share appropriate campus resources with them in connection to a need they described), or I may engage them in conversation before/after class (e.g., regarding favorite books or recent reading).

Note: Teachers who prefer a digital response could easily replicate the Ticket in the Door experience using Google Forms, which would then compile students' responses into a spreadsheet for easy reference. Since I teach classes of 15-25 students and since my students have four classes and 3-4 field experiences with me--and I serve as their faculty advisor--I prefer having a single page per student, so I can file it into their individual student folders at the conclusion of the semester.

Establish Positive Relationships *among* Students

Effective teachers tend to focus a good deal of time and energy on building relationships with their students. Sometimes, however, we forget to encourage our students to build positive relationships with one another. In my classes, it is incredibly important that my students feel comfortable interacting with one another:

- They typically move through my program as a cohort of about 15-20 over the course of four semesters prior to graduation, so they spend a good deal of time together in my classes.
- They engage in a number of authentic performances in each of my classes--and they provide constructive feedback for another, in addition to receiving feedback from me. They need to feel comfortable taking risks in those performances and recognizing that we are all here to help them.

With that in mind, here are simple steps I take to build positive relationships *among* my students:

1. ***Use Name Cards***: On the first day of class, each student creates a name card using a

folded notecard and marker, indicating their preferred name and their pronoun(s). I do the same. We then display the name cards on our desks/tables for at least the first several class meetings. We also display them any time we have guest presenters, so that student names are clearly visible and can be used by our guests. Throughout the semester, we discuss the importance of calling one another by name during whole-class and small-group discussions, and I make a point of calling students by name in all of my interactions with them. The name cards are also helpful on the first day of class: as students complete their Tickets in the Door, I can walk around and silently practice putting names to faces. My students often comment that my classes are the first classes in which they learn all of their classmates' names.

2. ***Assign Small Groups***: Students tend to sit in the same spots and interact with the same classmates during every class meeting. I have no problem with this. I was also that student who sat with the same people in every class. However, I would have welcomed the opportunity to interact with different classmates in a low-stakes

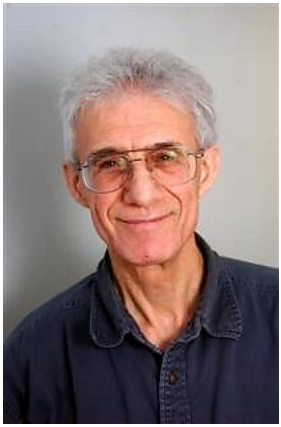
setting, and my students do as well. For at least half of our class meetings, I assign students to groups of 3-5 for small group discussion, instead of letting them pick their own groups. I have intentionally constructed these groups in advance, and they are usually different each time, so students are acquainted with as many classmates as possible over the course of the semester. If it is early in the semester, we begin the small group talk with introductions and icebreakers (e.g., describe a recent success in your teaching practicum) or sharing our literacy practices (e.g., Where do you like to complete your academic reading? What tools do you use in addition to your text [computer, highlighter, sticky notes] to help you construct meaning from the text?). As students become more familiar with one another, we move right into course content upon breaking into groups, but in their early weeks of class, these get-to-know-one-another activities are important for creating a sense of community.

3. ***Teach Students How to Engage in Discussion***: It is easy to assume that college students know how to engage in productive dialogue, and many do. But some do not. I recommend regularly reminding/teaching students what a productive dialogue looks like (and use observations from previous discussions to inform what you teach them prior to the next discussion). For example, in addition to the expectation that students put away all distractions, including cell phones and other devices, here are some tips I shared with students prior to a recent small group discussion:
    a. Display your name card, so your colleagues can refer to you by name. Show them the same respect when responding to their remarks.
    b. Focus your attention on the speaker, listening carefully without interrupting.
    c. Attend to the text; turn to that section in the reading to inform your perspective.
    d. Allow for divergent thinking and disagreement—listen to and learn from opposing viewpoints, rather than simply arguing your own side.

e. Monitor your own contributions:
    i. Do not dominate the discussion. If there are 3-4 people in your group, you should not talk for more than 25-30% of the time. Do not belabor your point. State it succinctly and then invite others to join the dialogue.
    ii. Do not let your colleagues do all the work of discussing. You have ideas too. Jump in and share them. Your perspective, experiences, and questions are important.
f. Monitor your (and your group's) volume. Speak just loudly enough for your group to hear. Move close to your group; lean in.
g. Allow time for silence. Quiet reflection is a good thing in a discussion.
h. STAY ON TOPIC. If you finish responding to the assigned questions, review the text and discuss other topics you found intriguing. Pose a genuine question for your group.

4. ***Plan Opportunities for Students to Mentor Each Other***: Since my students are in my program for their final four semesters (and I stay in touch with them after they graduate), I create opportunities for them to mentor those following them in the program. For example, I invite graduates of my program to return as guest panelists in my CI 436E English Methods III class to share with my seniors about their job search strategies and experiences/advice as first-year English teachers or graduate students. In addition, my graduating seniors host a workshop for incoming seniors regarding topics like licensure exams, thriving in their yearlong teaching internship, and successfully navigating the job search/graduate school applications. These conversations across "grade levels" give my students the confidence to join the professional conversation outside WSU and even assume leadership roles in organizations like the Kansas Association of Teachers of English.

William C. Groutas



During my undergraduate studies, I was blessed to have two inspiring chemistry professors that had a major impact on my career, as well as my philosophy of teaching. Their teaching styles had several traits in common:

- They always walked in the class wearing a smile on their face, and their overall demeanor exuded friendliness and approachability.
- They loved chemistry and taught the subject with passion and enthusiasm.

- Their lectures were always well-organized and sprinkled with real-life examples and anecdotes that made the class very interesting.
- They knew the subject matter very well and conveyed difficult concepts clearly.
- They were kind and patient, and always welcomed questions.
- They emphasized understanding and reasoning skills, rather than memorization.
- The exams were challenging, forcing students to “stretch” their abilities.
- During lectures they would ask probing questions, and purposefully make you aware of unsolved problems in science that students may perhaps consider tackling someday.

My philosophy of teaching is not really mine but closely parallels what I learned from observing my teachers. I am truly indebted to them for their dedication and inspiration.

LaDonna Hale

"Good leaders add value to people, lift them up, help them advance, make them part of something bigger than themselves, and assist them in becoming who they were made to be." John C. Maxwell, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. I strive to be this kind of leader and role model in the classroom.

Quality learning occurs when students begin to see themselves as future healthcare providers rather than "just students." Some students are more comfortable receiving lectures, memorizing, and regurgitating back the information. I challenge them to abandon this

thinking and transition from student to colleague.

I have never been called an “easy” teacher. My students will become our community’s future healthcare providers. I take this obligation seriously and therefore set high standards. I try to help students achieve those high expectations by meeting them where they are, showing them where they need to go, and building upon their strengths. I provide course materials that are concise and organized, simplify and explain complex topics, bridge the gap between classroom and real world, challenge their assumptions through Socratic questioning, provide assignments and activities that build their skills, and lead them to resources where they can learn to answer their own questions. This is all done to lay a strong foundation of knowledge and critical thinking that they, themselves, can continue to develop in clinical practice.

My overall goal in teaching is to energize students’ enthusiasm and passion for learning and to give them the essential tools necessary to transition into life-long learners and colleagues who will use their knowledge to improve patient care. I am honored and blessed to be an educator. I love learning alongside my students every day, and I hope it shows.

Preethika Kumar

To me, teaching has always come naturally. Explaining things to people is something I have always done since childhood, be it to fellow classmates or teaching Math to my sister over a weekend (grudgingly, since my parents had asked me to). I have always wanted to teach, and have always secretly wanted to be a teacher, even though in India when I was growing up, you would be encouraged to either be a doctor or an engineer. Only God in His mighty ways could plan something so

wonderful where he used my engineering skills towards becoming a teacher.

When it comes to being a good teacher, there are several aspects one can talk about. I choose here to talk about the reason that has been most important to me, and that has helped me become very successful in teaching. I have had the good fortune to understand that teaching is a gift from God, and as with any gift that comes from Him, it should produce its fruit and return to Him to give Him glory. Let me explain. When you step into the classroom, not with the intention of doing something for yourself, or for simply doing your job, but to fulfill God's call for you towards your students, the entire atmosphere changes. The manner in which you address your students, the manner in which you care for them and are concerned about their well-being completely changes, and you are no longer simply doing a good job of teaching them. Rather, you are putting your heart and soul into helping them. You no longer see them as simply students: you see these individuals as God's gifts to you, whom He has placed there in the classroom trusting you to give them whatever they need to help them advance.

Before going to class, I have always prayed, handing it all over to God. Afterall, if God is

doing the teaching how can you ever have a bad evaluation? My prayer has always been the same. I am aware that there are different types of students in class, some visual leaners, some analytical thinkers, some intuitive, some process learners. In fact, I can vouchsafe there are as many different learners as the number of students in each classroom. I also realize that it is impossible for me as a human being to satisfy them all. So, I turn to God who shaped each student's mind according to His own designs, and ask Him to communicate the material to each one in whatever manner is conducive to him/her. There are times when I have lost patience in class, especially when I would find that students were unable to grasp the concepts, and I recall turning towards the whiteboard and saying a quick prayer to restore my cool. It has always worked. We humans are not perfect, and it is important to express one's frustrations when you feel them so they can be channeled out of one's system. However, since yelling in class is not going to do any good, directing them heavenwards is always helpful! I have often prayed for my class while they were taking an exam (sometimes I have forgotten to). I have prayed for students who have had difficulties or if they were struggling very hard. I have even prayed for difficult students (every now and then you have one). When you pray for someone, it

opens your heart more towards them, and you are able to care more for their well-being rather than simply policing them to follow certain rules.

Lastly, I have made it my goal to be answerable only to God. If at the end of the day, your conscience is clear, and does not reprove you, and you have your peace, you know that you have done your job well. Many a time I have heard other faculty say not to schedule SPTEs around exam dates as it affects your scores. I have never listened to that advice since I have never believed in it. It might be true for others, but I have faith that if you do your job well, God will take care of the rest, whether it is something as simple as a rating! Many a time, my SPTEs have been conducted around an exam date, however, they have never suffered. I think our students are more mature and generous than we give them credit for.

The students in my class have always been my friends. I recall sometimes being in a not-so-happy mood. Then I would go to class and interact with the students, and I would be my happy self again. Sometimes when doing our job, we forget that we have been put on earth together to be there for each other, and help each other. It is all part of God’s divine plan that you happen to be a teacher for a particular

class for a particular semester. It is God's plan that your path crosses that of your students, probably for only this very short time in life. What we faculty and our students have to share together as individuals therefore, is priceless since it gets recorded in time for eternity. My only plea is – "Please make the most of this beautiful time together to share the best of each other". The rest, thanks be to God.

Ron Matson

A Reflection on Teaching…

From the Rear-View Mirror

After more than 50 years of teaching and retiring two years ago, my thoughts about teaching as part of an academic career are as exciting as if I were approaching a new semester early in that career. Reflecting on those early years, I didn't know how meaningful teaching would become to my career and my life. All these decades later, I realize that teaching students and, in particular being in the classroom, became central to my enthusiasm for all the other aspects of my career, central to my identity as a professional

and person, and central to my construction of living a life with purpose. I believe that from this current vantage point of looking back and reviewing my career, there may be a few observations worthy of mention.

First, a life with meaning needs a platform from which to influence others in whatever sphere one choses. It might be one's family or organization, one's community or state, one's state or region; indeed, the entire world. Whatever the chosen endeavor, it represents an opportunity to reach into life to leave some part of yourself in the world and to sign your name on the moment. The lectern and the classroom became my "bully pulpit," and a way to share my ideas about sociology/gender/relationships with others, centered on the fervent hope that our lives would find mutual enrichment from the teaching/learning process. Likely this idealism was not met with success in most cases, but such idealism set a tone in my work that allowed me to approach teaching as if I was engaging in something of great value: learning.

Second, a teaching-centered career in academia will find much of its reward from the informal feedback students provide more than from the university or college where it is occurring. I believe this is as it should be. A teaching career that finds its greatest reward

from financial gain will likely find the meaning (see above) co-opted. Teaching awards and such recognition are accepted with gratitude and are significant, but they are frosting on the cake of daily work wherein we create learning experiences that engage students. It has always seemed to me that asking no more of life than what transpires each day is a good philosophy for success.

Finally, after 50 years of teaching, I am able to see that the thousands of students venture forth in their lives carrying experiences from our teaching/learning activities. Certainly, most will not be able to recall much of what was learned, but the work of teaching need not be measured as anything more than an opportunity to connect with another person, nurtured by the hope and gratitude that came with the gift. Teaching students taught me to leave behind youthful hubris, replace it with humility, and at 77 years of age I am so grateful!

Vinod Namboodiri

Over time it has become clear to me that there are broadly two types of classes a teacher is likely to be asked to teach.

One type, which I will call “dissemination style”, will be of presenting the knowledge you had previously acquired in the best possible manner and ensuring the students absorb that information in the best way possible. The material covered in these dissemination classes is well known, usually found in mature textbooks. Dissemination classes are more common in K-12 schools and at the undergraduate level. This style requires the teacher to be very patient, organized and adaptive in terms of trying to reach the

students in multiple ways to account for the different ways in which students learn.

The second type is the “research style” class (often found at the graduate level) where the material is relatively new (uncovered very recently through emerging developments by the instructor or someone else). This style of teaching requires the instructor to be able to describe to students where the current state of the art is and provide them tools to uncover new knowledge on their own. Such classes require the teacher to be inspirational and be able to motivate the students to critically think on their own about the subject and set about having an opinion on future directions.

There is often conflict between these two styles and I find those who teach one style to not be appreciative of the other style. I think a good teacher needs to be able to incorporate both these styles of teaching in a class they teach. A class that seems purely dissemination style can still benefit from critical thinking components and having students think how the knowledge can be applied in the future (highest level of Bloom’s taxonomy). A research style class can benefit if the teacher is able to convey the state of the art in a dissemination style, setting up a strong foundation before students pursue uncovering of new knowledge. Given these needs, the holy grail for a teacher, in my humble opinion, is to be a lifelong learner

who can inspire learners to share the same excitement about the topics discussed while simultaneously being empathetic to those struggling to grasp the concepts.

Jodi Pelkowski

When I reflect on teachers that inspired me, these traits consistently come to mind: a shared responsibility to learning and genuine respect of students, a passion for their subject, and a personal connection. As a teacher, I strive to emulate these qualities in ways that are consistent with my own natural personality.

One way to share the responsibility of learning is to meet students where they are and work with them to reach program goals. To meet them where they are, continual assessment is needed. Using time at the end of the last meeting of the week for students to work on an

activity in small groups serves multiple purposes. It encourages attendance. Students gain experience and confidence in discussing specific concepts and more broadly their field of study. It allows students to say “we are struggling” rather than requiring an individual to confess “I am struggling.” Observe where students are having troubles or verify their comprehension. Walk around the room, listen and have conversations with the small groups of students. Begin the next week based on the information gained. Provide feedback and hints of how to better approach a related problem or task and suggest ways for them to apply the material to different problems. Modify your class time or assignment plans to help students successfully meet course expectations.

A personal connection can start in the classroom and continue through outside activities. I integrate examples of my own personal experiences relevant to course material to allow students to get to know me. Ask students about their interests, what they are reading or watching, or what is important to them. With this information, integrate examples into classes that they and their peers can relate to more easily. Outside the classroom, the information can be used to encourage students to find their own way to

apply their academic knowledge to their passions, provide them with resources that match their own unique needs and interest, persuade them to participate in activities that can help in their professional development, or to urge them to apply for an internship or job. The personal connections benefit not only the students but inspire me to be a better teacher and mentor for my students.

Ravi Pendse

I taught my first class in 1987. I was still a graduate student then and incredibly nervous about teaching. I was comfortable with the subject matter but having never taught before was scared to be in front of a class. As I was preparing to teach my first class, I asked myself a question: what do I appreciate about the amazing teachers who have positively impacted my life? That had a calming effect and the rest just worked out. My teaching reflections include ideas that I have learned from my teachers, guidance from my incredible students who were always generous with their time and talent, and from the mistakes I have made over the years. In order for learning to

occur, we need to create an inclusive, compassionate, and an exciting environment in the classroom. I believe that for a teacher to be successful in a classroom and beyond, a personal connection is necessary between a student and a teacher. A student should see a teacher as a friend when they need a friend and as a mentor when they need a mentor. How does one establish this relationship? Over the years, during my keynote talks, I have asked participants: what do they remember the most about their favorite teacher? I share some of their comments in this document. My teaching has evolved to include life lessons one learns along the way. Here are a few commonsense ideas that I use:

Learn their names: No matter how large a class is, it is critical that a teacher makes an effort and learns the names of the enrolled students. This is very important to a student. It matters. I have used the visual roster that is usually available from the learning management system (LMS) to learn the names of each of my students. During the first few weeks, as we are learning about each other, during classroom discussions, I ask those making comments or asking questions to identify themselves. This helps me and everyone in the class to get to know each other better. As they visit with me in my office, I learn

more information about each one of them including relevant personal details. I also share information about me. This allows us to get to know each other better. One of the characteristics identified about their favorite teacher was “one who made an effort to get to know me as a person, and one who knew my name.” Something to think about.

Connect with your students: In my opinion, it is really important to connect with your students. There are many ways to do this and I am sure each one of us has our own methods. If a student misses my class and has not informed me ahead of time (they are expected to inform me), I use all of the communication methods available to reach out and make sure that the person is doing OK. I have called, emailed, texted, and used a variety of social media tools just to let them know that I missed them in class and ask how can I help. I do this using communication preference that they share with me during the first week of classes. If necessary and needed, I offer to reteach an entire class to assist. This is about compassion, empathy, recognizing that a person may have other challenges, and offering support. I found out that I do not need to reach out too often. The word-of-mouth network (and other social networks) among our students is incredible. They tell each other:

“this dude will call!” In my large survey, one of the characteristics of favorite teacher mentioned is “one who cared about me, my success, and one who was kind, understanding, and compassionate.”

Failure is not the end of the world: Students often see their teachers as role models. We know we are not perfect. I certainly am not, and I have failed many times. When appropriate, as part of an ongoing discussion in the class, I share times when I have failed and what I did about that. In our stress filled society today with mental health challenges that we all face, it is important for students to know that there is lot more to life than a few bumps one may encounter. It is really important that a student see the “genuine you.” One other characteristics of a favorite teacher that has been shared with me is “one who is authentic, humble, relatable, transparent, and trusting.”

A teacher who cares: I know all of us care about our students. We are usually very good at recognizing body language and facial cues in a class. When I notice a student who is normally happy, appearing to be down, I will approach the student after class and ask if everything is OK. Sometimes just a caring ear and a friendly smile is all that is needed. Based on the situation, I will provide appropriate

assistance. This is really important for a person who may need that friend and mentor. Students appreciate “a teacher who genuinely cares, does not judge, and is available outside of the class.”

Challenge your students: Students appreciate a teacher who sets a high bar and challenges them in the class. Learning is a marathon and not a one-hundred-meter dash. Difficult concepts take time to sink in. Not all students will learn at the same pace. So, patience is a virtue. I do not believe our students want easy grades. They want to learn from a “teacher.” Create a nurturing environment where one should not feel as they are being talked down. Each one of them will step up and learn in the right positive environment that you have helped create. “My favorite teacher was the one who challenged me, did not talk down to me, was patient, and genuinely cared that I learned.”

Passion and Enthusiasm: I am sure each one of us is passionate about the topics we teach and approach it with enthusiasm. Are you able to project that enthusiasm when you teach? It may be helpful to video yourself while teaching parts of your class to see if you are projecting what you are thinking? I am sure everyone had encountered that boring lecture or speech. Let us not become that. Be passionate, be

enthusiastic, project that feeling, and share your ideas. “My favorite teacher was one who was passionate and enthusiastic about the subject and took personal interest in me.”

Humor: Let us face it, nobody likes a boring lecture or talk. Students these days like performers. Not all of us can be performers but we can try. Practice helps using video tools. Not all of us can be comedians, but I am sure we enjoy a laugh or two. We can certainly laugh at ourselves, laugh at current events, and, in general, look approachable and happy. If you recall your best teachers, I am confident many of them had a great sense of humor and a very caring attitude. Self-deprecating humor occasionally is a good idea. Be careful however on how you use humor and ensure that you are not laughing at anyone in the class. When done well, humor really works. “My favorite teacher was funny in a good way and that made learning easy.”

The List: I have maintained a list of all the wonderful attributes of my teachers that I enjoyed as a student. Over the years, as I have attended lectures, heard from students, I have also put together attributes of various teachers that a student does not enjoy. Both sides of the list continue to grow each year. Before I teach any class or give any lecture or keynote address, I always quickly go over “what not do

to?” If you do not have such a list, I encourage you to start one and pay attention to it. It may be one of the best decisions you made.

Brian Rawson

My mental model for teaching is built upon the following foundation:

1. Question.

When we ask questions, we create a place in our minds for answers (knowledge). If we don’t ask questions, we won't get knowledge. And, if we happen to stumble upon knowledge by accident, we won't recognize or retain it because there was never a place in our minds prepared for it. Accordingly, I spend at least as much time thinking about the right questions to ask that will stretch a student's mind as I do about the right answers.

2. It's not about me.

Rather than ask, "What should I do?" in preparing for a class, I ask myself, "What do I want to happen as a result of this class?" This changes everything. Rather than focusing on my teaching, this directs my focus and attention on the student's learning—on the student's experience in the classroom. Good teaching is a means to the end, not the end itself. The end that I seek is student mind-expanding learning.

3. Everything important happens one-by-one.

While there may be 100 students in a class, learning happens one by one. I don't teach lessons. I teach people. I don't teach classes. I teach people. Classroom discussions typically start from student input about their experiences with a subject. I try to start where they are and move them to where I want them to be rather than start where I am and hope that they get there too.

You can't start where they are unless you know where they are. I ask and then use their experiences as the examples and cases whenever possible. In this way, each class is different—even though it may cover the same principles and material.

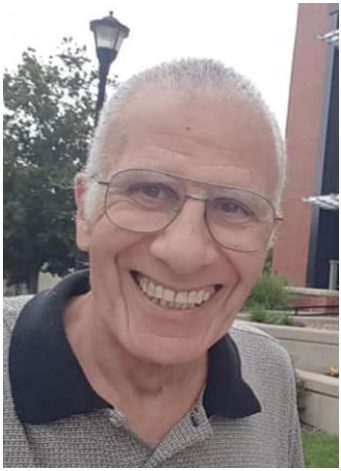
4. People remember stories.

I tell lots of stories to demonstrate and apply principles. I've been fortunate to have many experiences in my business career. I share them regularly. I also make a habit of interviewing at least twenty people each year who are in leadership roles in their organizations. As appropriate, I share their stories as well.

5. "So what?"

Very early in my career, a mentor insisted that we practice our presentations. To do so, we had to present to a "practice" audience. All those in the practice audience wore a headband printed with a bold "So what?" across the forehead. I learned to prepare for presenting and teaching by imagining that everyone in my "audience" is continually thinking, "So, what? How is this relevant to me?" I attempt to continually emphasize how what we talk about in class is relevant to their future and present. If the relevance is not obvious, there is no need to cover it—so we don't.

Ed Sawan



An important step towards becoming a more effective teacher is to analyze the nature of the relationship between a student and a teacher. Throughout the years as a student and as a teacher, I have decided that such a relationship can best be defined as *friendship*. I know that this may seem an unorthodox, even heretical view, but hear me out. I'm not talking about some esoteric definition of friendship. I'm talking about attempting to create a relationship with students that is the same as the relationship you have with those who are special to you in your life. That is, a true friend in every sense of the word.

One of the objections you might have to the idea of friendship as the basis of the teacher/student relationship is that teachers and students are not equals. Rather there is, and must be, a hierarchical and perhaps even an authoritarian relationship. Indeed, some aspects of a teacher's role may be perceived by some as an authority. Examples are grading tests, giving grades and determining what materials are covered. I always spent time during my first lecture explaining my view of these parts of my role as a teacher. Rather than being a tool to evaluate students, I consider grading to be an assessment of my success in sharing knowledge and experience. I also share my belief that retention of knowledge is essential for long-term career development, regardless of the amount of information covered. So, it is the teacher's responsibility to select the essential materials for bottom-up education and then deliver the material in such a way that it will be retained. Thus, teaching, as friendship, is characterized by equally-shared responsibility rather than hierarchical authoritarianism.

Many of us think of our role as teachers is to provide information, i.e., we disseminate facts, knowledge, and information. I find this to be a narrow and unsatisfactory explanation. I maintain that teaching is about sharing

experiences, rather than delivering information. This has always been my mindset with students in each class. In these day of Wikipedia, Google, and YouTube such an approach is needed much more than ever. A teacher's role should go far beyond what students can find at their fingertips.

Let's examine my definition of friendship. I believe that friendship is based on three pillars: mutual respect, trust, and caring. These pillars build a strong relationship regardless of age, gender, or physical distance. Also, they would ensure the sustainability of any relationship including those of blood ties and societal certification. Let's examine each of these in turn.

Respect. Without mutual respect friendship is impossible. Can you imagine having a friend whom you do not respect? Respect between students and teachers can be accomplished by various actions besides standard expectations, such as using proper titles and tone of voice. Students need to come to class on time, refrain from distracting their classmates, and follow class instructions and announcements. A teacher needs to be in class before the starting time, welcome all questions, and end the class on time.

To maintain the respect of my students, I must work hard to be a role model for them as a human being and as a professional. I need to continue my research with the same enthusiasm that I had as a graduate student. I need to be active in professional organizations as well as the local community. When I communicate with my students, I must try my best to be clear and understandable. I need to give a summary of the relevant background that may be needed before starting a new subject. To ensure a smooth transition from one lecture to another, I start each lecture with a list of highlights of the previous lecture. I also end the lecture with a brief description of what would be covered in the following lecture. On the other hand, I encourage the students to be serious about their education to earn and maintain my respect for them. They need to be willing to put the time and effort to master the materials covered in class and complete the assignments to the best of their abilities. They must observe classroom etiquette and all guidelines as outlined in the syllabus.

Trust. A teacher needs to live up to the students' trust by ensuring that the necessary materials are covered in class to prepare them for their long-term careers. A teacher must honor the students' privacy when they share their experiences and plans. The class

syllabus and policies need to be clear and their rationale explained. Simple and consistent grading criteria need to be announced in advance to maintain students' trust. Students need to earn the teacher's trust. They should never attempt any act of plagiarism, or claim any false excuse for violating any class policy.

Caring. A caring teacher needs to hold frequent office hours that accommodate various schedules of all students, including special times by appointment. A teacher needs to encourage students to share and discuss their long-term plans and offer advice and help whenever needed. Prompt response to email and requests for special meetings would reinforce a teachers' care for students. A teacher needs to solicit students' feedback regularly throughout the semester, analyze their opinions, and make adjustments if needed.

An effective teacher needs to deal with each student as a unique human being. Regular feedback will help the teacher adjust to the needs and expectations of the students. A caring teacher recognizes the potential of each student and helps them realize it. Students need to be assured that their teacher is on their side and wants the best for them, not only in class but in their future careers and their lives in general. They can rely on their teacher

when they need recommendation letters or career advice long after their graduation.

One issue that we usually face is attendance. I never adopted any of the standard policies, such as extra credit or unannounced quizzes. Instead, I encourage the students to come to class by presenting a metaphor for “reverse shoplifting.” Skipping class means that they invest their time and money merely to obtain a transcript and diploma without the full experience. I ask them what would they think about me if I go shopping for an expensive jacket and pay the full price. Then, while the cashier is distracted, I walk out of the store with the receipt while leaving the jacket behind. I encourage the students to use all kinds of adjectives to describe such action. I can see the looks on their faces as they start to realize the relevance of such a fictional story. Then I explain that the receipt may help me show off and brag among my friends for a while. But, sooner or later, when the weather gets colder, my friends would expect to see me with that jacket. Similarly, an employer may be impressed with the grades on my transcript. However, to continue with a successful career in the long run, a transcript becomes less relevant, and we need to rely on the experience that our teachers share with us when we enroll in their classes.

My relationship with many of my former students has continued over more than forty years. Social media, such as LinkedIn, Research Gate, and Facebook have enhanced our contact and increased my connections to include many who settled in other countries. They send me regular updates on their careers and personal lives and I feel very proud of their achievements. I also enjoy receiving greetings on Teacher's Day from their countries. I treasure all their messages and have compiled them in my blog Ode to the Ordinary. http://ordinary.sawan.ca/?p=2572.

Finally, a teacher needs to encourage students to be humble knowledge-seekers throughout their careers and lives, following the words of President John F. Kennedy, "The educated citizen knows how much more there is to learn."

Diane Scott

Teach to the highest common denominator

As I reflect back on what is now more than 20 years in the collegiate classroom, I note the innumerable times that students appeared not to care, not to be paying attention, or not to put forth full (or even minimum) effort toward their work. In my current semester of teaching, I could rattle off without effort the names of such students enrolled in my classes. Every professor could do the same. It is the basis of many a faculty water cooler conversation. It is difficult not to be insulted and revert to an attitude of, “If they don’t care, why should I?”

Or to internalize the snubs, assume it is your failing and adopt a defensive posture and resort to punitive grading schemes, rigid policies and less than demanding curriculum. What 20+ years of hindsight, however, has shown me are many things that refute the very human inclination to set up rigid structures, systems and mental attitudes to teach to the lowest common denominator.

First, for every student who seems disengaged, there are always others who are deeply engaged—those who pay attention, work to (or beyond) ability, and care about their education in the moment. It, of course, would be wrong to disenfranchise those students by structuring the class, the work, and our attitudes, to the students who appear to be the opposite.

Second, in a current role that includes an active advising component, I have found repeatedly in discussions with these students that their disengagement has nothing to do with me, my course, their abilities, their drive, or the institution. Students, like all humans, face a myriad of personal issues that supersede a specific course, or their collegiate education as a whole. Students who are facing the archetypical issues of young adults—a bad breakup, difficulty with friends, a disruptive roommate, or fear and uncertainty towards

their path in life. Beyond the archetypical, I've known more students than I can count with issues far surpassing these-- terminally ill parents, food insecurity; addiction (personal or familial); and victims of abuse and trauma.

Third, and most importantly, time has allowed me the benefit to interact with many of the disengaged students of my past years later to find that many of the most important elements of my courses were firmly embedded in their psyches, actions and current pursuits. That even though by all appearances they were simply checking a box or warming a seat, they were indeed learning and incorporating the lessons they appear to rebuff or ignore. Maybe they were ideas they weren't ready to incorporate or apply. Maybe they weren't in a place in life where there was space to utilize the theories. I have found, sometimes with complete amazement, that students I thought would not succeed, do a complete 180, and to come out the other side with many of the benefits of the coursework they appeared to disregard.

As a result, I always recommend (and try to practice) teaching to the highest common denominator—the most motivated, the most engaged, and the most able--and assume that all my students are in that pool. When I'm designing my courses, I aim for rigor, I avoid

punitive structures or grading schemes, I assume that students have done the reading before they arrive. This provides the greatest experience for those who are in that space at the moment, and for those who by outward appearance don't appear to be.

Michelle Wallace

We are in this together

It is easy to define our duties in teaching specific elements of our discipline but supporting our students and helping them to be successful in their aspirations is just as great a responsibility. Students are unique in their preconceptions, their background, how they learn, the pace at which they grasp information, and their support systems. Being an effective teacher to a broad group of learners requires the following:

- **Offering materials for multiple learning styles.** Often we teach best to learners who are similar to ourselves. What makes

most sense to us may not make the best sense to other learning styles (read/write, aural, visual, and kinesthetic learners). I work hard to provide my content in a way that reaches each type of learner. When a student comes to me struggling, I often start by asking them how they are studying and end with a plan including new strategies for their individual learning style. I provide written notes that accompany my lecture along with visual aids throughout the slides and notes. I take intentional breaks to have students pair and share what they are learning and understanding. I have patient cases and discussions built into each of my courses.

- **Providing relevant learning materials.** The information in our respective disciplines is constantly evolving which means that teaching can never become stagnant. I spend time before each lecture searching the literature for new information about the topic I am presenting. We must not only provide up-to-date and relevant information we must also create opportunities for our students to find information in the literature on their own so that they may develop the skills of a life-long learner.
- **Communicating clear expectations.** I want all students to be successful in my courses which starts by outlining my

expectations and letting them know what their responsibilities are. I provide clear expectations for learning outcomes in my syllabi and then post specific instructional objectives for each module. I refer to the instructional objectives when creating assessments including cases, assignments, quizzes, and exams.

- **Mutual respect.** I want each student to know that I respect them and truly care about their success. It is only when my students see how hard I am working for them and that I am here to support them in their learning that I gain their trust and respect. With this mutual respect, I find that students work harder to uphold their responsibilities in my course and together we can succeed.
- **Being available to students.** My office is located in an area convenient to my students. I have an open-door policy and my students know that they can drop in anytime. Along with being physically available I work hard to be approachable. I never want a student to hesitate to ask a question or seek help.
- **Expressing my care and commitment.** I make it known that I care for my students' success in and out of the classroom. I go out of my way to check in with students who may lack a social network. I have attended

#WSUWeSupportYou training and proudly display a sticker on my office door that states “I Will Listen”.

Gamal Weheba

It has been my personal experience that a majority of students are taking classes to maintain their current employment, achieve higher positions, or start new careers. They love to feel that their instructor is helping them achieve these by using real-life examples and sharing his own experience as a member of the profession. Aligning courses to professional standards and including widely accepted best practices offer a great vehicle for doing this.

During my tenure at WSU, I have designed my courses to cover topics from the body of knowledge required for professional

certifications offered by the American Society for Quality and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. I have encouraged my students to take these certification exams upon completion of my courses. The results were outstanding in many ways. First, the students' success rates in the certification exams offer an excellent third-party assessment of the quality of the course design and its delivery. Second, the students' perceptions of the value of my courses have significantly improved. Third, students' feedback attests to the positive effect of the certifications have on their academic competence and professional careers. Fourth, professional societies acknowledge the value of our programs and the ability of our graduates to bring value to their employees.

Based on these and many other benefits not highlighted in this article, I strongly recommend that other instructors look for similar opportunities within their area of expertise and help their students prepare for the future. I feel that the benefits gained outweigh the efforts required to redesign or update the courses. Just keep in mind that you may do this gradually as part of your continuous improvement efforts.

Michael Flores

Beyond Four Walls

I arrived at WSU in the Fall of 1998. If I only knew then what I know now! Obviously, that's impossible. But I do wonder: what if this book (and its predecessor) would have been available to me back on Day One? Perhaps my learning curve wouldn't have been so long, and painful! It never occurred to me that I could expand my classroom beyond four walls.

So much has changed over the past two decades. So much has changed in the last two years! I believe my teaching style today bears little resemblance to what it was in the late nineties. More remarkably, the undergraduate classes I now teach are the ones I swore I

never would (or could, for that matter)! Further, I just completed teaching these classes entirely online, something I firmly believed couldn't be done (at least by me). Indeed, I'm haunted by the old Yiddish adage: "Man plans, and God laughs." So, I've always tried to continually improve my teaching as much as I can. With all the changes I've seen, I must confess that there have been many times that I've felt utterly clueless. But as I've gone down this road with all its twists and turns, I've tried to hold on to the only guiding principle that's ever made sense to me: Always treat others the way you'd want to be treated.

About five years ago, John Belt asked me to make a presentation for the Academy for Effective Teaching, outlining my approach to teaching. After much introspection and reflection, I came up with this title: "Knowing Your Limitations: Teaching an Unloved Topic Using Applied Learning." This presentation, as well as AET's entire Teaching Lectures series were recorded on video and can be found here: https://www.wichita.edu/faculty/aet/AETlectures.php.

Knowing Your Limitations: Teaching an Unloved Topic

Here's a typical conversation meeting someone in our community for the first time:

Them: Where do you work?

Me: I work at WSU.

Them: Wow! That's great! What do you teach?

Me: Accounting.

Them: Oh….

This really does happen, all the time. I love accounting! I find it intensely interesting! It allows someone to study the inner workings of virtually any organization of any size. But not everyone agrees with me, despite my best efforts. I try to combat the "not my job" or "not my major" folks with the "you don't know what you don't know" argument. I'll show them actual financial statements of a formerly publicly traded firm in Kansas City. It has a fatal flaw in it. It's absolutely brilliant in its audacity. I'll tell the students that someone like me (a CPA) is playing them for a fool and challenge them to find the flaw sitting right in front of their noses. Generally, no one finds it, and I have to point it out to the class. Even the

non-majors sit up and pay attention. I show the same set of statements to my Executive MBA course. One of my stated course goals is for them to learn not to trust (blindly) someone like me. Learning and mastering accounting (given students' preconceptions on the topic) doesn't always seem achievable, but sometimes getting students to experience insights at unexpected times and places sometimes can be the beginning of comprehension.

Using Applied Learning

I've gone back and read the words I wrote ten years ago for the first edition of this Handbook on Teaching. My work was titled "A Sensor for Salience." My vision was exceptionally narrow. I had been a faculty member at WSU for more than thirteen years at that time. My singular focus was on campus, and in the classroom. But I was on the cusp of a time of incredible change in my life. Around the time of my first writing, I began volunteering on various committees at what is now known as Ascension Via Christi – Wichita. I now sit on their Kansas-wide Board of Directors. That experience led me to join the Board of Heartspring. I just completed serving a two-year term as their Board Chairperson. That

also led me to join the Kansas Heath Foundation's Audit Committee, which I now Chair.

What's the point of all this volunteerism? Relevance. My students recognize my service as a benefit to their community and evidence that their teacher has to know what he's talking about. He's not just teaching accounting, he's still doing it, and at a very high level. At my age, I'm working hard to not become the moldy old professor I remember having back in my salad years. I share my experiences with my students as much as I can, being careful never to divulge confidential information. But my students have walked with me through capital campaigns at Ascension, program growth at Heartspring, and watched the KHF work to improve the health of the people of the State of Kansas.

The world of nonprofits is rich and enriching to me, and to my students. About eight years ago I made a major change in my classes. Instead of studying publicly traded firms, we now study nonprofits using the website Guidestar.org. Each student selects their own nonprofit and studies them in detail, including examining the entity's actual tax returns. This is an opportunity to make the semester project very personal, and hopefully more salient to the student. In addition to examining the

accounting dimension, students explore concepts such as executive compensation, sustainability, transparency, and mission success. The timing of this could not have been better: a few years later, WSU began implementing the concept of Applied Learning in all academic programs. My Guidestar project perfectly satisfied that goal for our accounting programs. For a direct injection of reality in my classes, I have the CFOs of these organizations speak to my students.

This project is not without risk, however. Some students are deeply hurt and/or disappointed by their findings in their semester study of a nonprofit. Some of the most profitable firms in our country are nonprofits. Some of the most highly compensated senior leaders are those in nonprofits. And most seriously, some nonprofits fail miserably in fulfilling their missions. But these outcomes often lead to rich discussion with students, both individually and at the classroom level. This can lead to immersive critical thinking, and consideration of the ethical dimension in business. Some students go on to find actual errors in the tax returns filed with the IRS. It's really satisfying to see the look in their faces when they find a mistake on a return made by someone like me. And they're only a student!

I'm a very different person today. Ten years is a long time. My efforts have made my classroom much bigger for my students. A willingness to serve helped me and helped my students as well.

Teaching Resources

From The Academy for Effective Teaching

Recommended Books

Due to a generous donation by an anonymous AET member, the WSU Library has a special collection of books on teaching in higher education. These books represent the best current thinking on college level teaching and are highly recommended by the Academy for Effective Teaching. The titles and a synopsis of the content of each book can be found at:

https://libraries.wichita.edu/aetbooks

Seminars

The Academy for Effective Teaching is devoted to fostering effective teaching by engaging in various activities. One such activity is to sponsor seminars that focus on teaching and learning strategies. These seminars are conducted by outstanding teachers on campus and deal with topics that are of interest to all teaching faculty. The Academy typically offers two seminars each year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Announcements will be made in advance for each seminar. Look for them!

Videos

The Academy and Media Resources have collaborated on producing a series of videos on the art of teaching. The videos cover a wide range of topics on teaching philosophy and techniques and feature award-winning WSU teachers sharing information with fellow teachers. These videos can be accessed through the following link:

https://www.wichita.edu/faculty/aet/AETlectures.php

Mentoring

The Academy sponsors a mentoring program for teaching faculty. Although the program was originally designed for new faculty members, it has been expanded to include any teacher who wishes to improve their teaching performance. If you want more information about this program, go to our blog at:

https://wsu-aet.blogspot.com

Previous Edition of Handbook

The first edition of *A Handbook of Reflections on the Art of Teaching* can be found at the following link:

https://www.wichita.edu/faculty/aet/AET_Handbook_First_Edition.pdf

Notes

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