

Practices of Effective Teaching Practical Tips

I. Consider the following tips to promote learning as you teach.

1. *Select a method to achieve the intended outcome: Teaching with Patients, Team Based Learning, Teaching Clinical Reasoning and Developing an Instructional Video for a Flipped Classroom*

Effective teachers communicate well in a wide variety of settings and are able to incorporate teaching strategies that enhance the learners' understanding, integration, and retention of the material as they interact in a meaningful way with that content.

Where good teaching can take place in both large and small group settings, faculty members must be skilled in choosing a teaching method appropriate to the setting, the content, the intended outcomes and audience. Topics/concepts that fit into this category include: pacing, focus, clarity, organization of material, motivating learners, providing rationale for why *this* material is important to *them* and audiovisual tools (the board, handouts, power point, etc.).

Good teaching also involves instructors' attention to the various ways that different students prefer to learn and, to some extent, accommodating different learning styles while also providing opportunities for students to learn "beyond their comfort zones." Understanding students' learning styles requires instructors to get to know a little about their students and their preferences, and then to incorporate various methods of teaching.

2. *Develop a climate conducive to learning*

Key elements in developing a climate conducive to learning for both teacher and learner include: the freedom to voice doubt and uncertainty, to safely say, "I don't know," to admit limitations, to foster mutual respect among all in the learning group and to ensure a personal and group sense of comfort. Important also in fostering a stimulating learning climate are the learner's involvement and active participation, as well as the influence of the physical setting and institutional environment.

3. *Communicate goals*

Explicitly communicating goals (with input from the learners where appropriate) is a key element of excellent teaching. These goals will be written in the curricular content and verbally discussed when appropriate.

Having clear goals helps learners anticipate what will be taught and what they will be expected to master. For example, the minimum body of knowledge to be assimilated should be clearly and rigorously defined, allowing learners to know the material for which they are responsible. Communicating goals also gives some guidance to appropriate teaching exercises and sets a basis for evaluating the learners.

4. *Promote learner engagement*

Effective teaching can be thought of as a dialogue over time rather than a unidirectional transfer of information. It begins by understanding where the learners are in terms of their knowledge base and then proceeds through exchanges and negotiation to setting educational goals relevant to both the learners and the teachers. Involving the learner in the teaching session offers the opportunity to make learning timelier, more personally relevant, and more effective.

Approaches can include: asking the learners questions; designing exercises in which they need to challenge, manipulate and integrate the content; involving learners in giving and receiving feedback; planning with learners for corrective action in the case of critical feedback; listening to learners to understand when and why they don't understand the material; listening to learners to find what they have to add to our understanding, etc.

Meaningful involvement of the learner in the process of learning at all phases has the ability to increase the amount learned and the amount retained.

II Next Steps

1. How might you know if your teaching is effective?

Engage in reflective practice, “an integrated way of thinking and acting focused on learning and behavioral change” (Osterman and Kottkamp, 1993, p.1). Reflection focuses on theory and practice, on thinking and doing. One first identifies and assesses current behaviors and then explores how to appropriately modify approaches in ways that enhance learning.

2. Ask for support:

Peer Observation and dialogue about teaching

Private Consultation on student feedback

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