

I spent the summer of 1986 working as a Boy Scout camp counselor teaching Pioneering Merit Badge. Throughout my career, teaching has been an important part of my life. My reputation around campus is that, given the opportunity, I will take advantage of a "teachable moment." I began formally teaching in the higher education classroom in 2000, learning many lessons from teaching. Some of these lessons have been through my involvement in the UNH Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, and some of these lessons have been learned through risk taking and unsuccessful teaching attempts. I can sum up my personal teaching philosophy with a few basic statements that I follow with explanation.

1. ***Lecturing alone will not engage students.*** My first teaching assignments were three-hour night courses delivered via lecture mode. I soon discovered that not only were my students bored with my teaching, I was bored too. I changed the format, introducing more Socratic methods and project-based learning into my presentation style and altered the topics of the evening's class every 15-20 minutes to keep the students engaged. Having learned many active learning tools and methods from PFF workshops, I can now adjust course presentations to be the most effective for a class of students and keep my teaching very engaging. Students and colleagues of mine remark that my style of Socratic questioning to discover the direction to pursue is a hallmark of their engagements with me.
2. ***Students appreciate answering the question "who cares" early in the learning topic.*** I had a back-row student who asked me each class meeting, "Who cares about this stuff?" He really was asking the question, "When am I going to use this study topic outside of the classroom?" Anticipating his usual question, I began introducing new topics in the course by describing real examples where the fundamental technique or model was in use, often bringing examples, when practical, into the classroom. That student stopped asking the "who cares" question, and later convinced the owner of his company to hire me as a consultant to solve his company's technical problem and teach his employees the basic tenets of networking communications. And we still work together today.
3. ***Frontloading a course with active learning assignments is better than smashing the learning at the end of the course.*** Being a student while being an instructor made me acutely aware that most faculty backload their coursework because they are desperately trying to get enough knowledge into the students to make assignments worthwhile. I take a different approach and work diligently to frontload the courses I teach. This offers me a variety of benefits as the instructor. First, I engage the student from the first moments of the course. Second, I can assess the performance level and learning style of the student early in the course. Finally, my students appreciate the fact that I tell them up front that the most work in the course will not be at the end, which relieves them and encourages them to stay engaged in my course through the semester's end. By following Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of creating, evaluating, analyzing, applying, understanding and remembering, my students come away from a course with a method for learning that they can apply to anything before them.
4. ***Being the person in the room with the broadest knowledge of the subject is critical, but saying that you don't know something and need to find the right answer is just as critical.*** When I was a student, the instructor was always seen as the smartest person in the room. As I became an instructor and researcher, I came to realize that there are so many questions for which I don't have the answer. To me, the role of the instructor is that of one who manages the learning relative to the course, rather than the oracle of knowledge. I use a number of classroom assessment techniques (CATs) to tease out of the students those topics and questions that some of them are reluctant to present verbally. Through these methods, I find that I am able to give all of the students the best guidance as they learn the topics of the course.

When a student completes my classroom experience, I want to be sure that more than the material was learned. I expect that the student will start a new habit of reviewing current literature or ask a question of herself that she never considered before. If I can have a role in doing that, then I know that the knowledge, skills, techniques, methods and tools introduced in the course will be the seeds that were planted on good soil and result in a bountiful harvest for others to enjoy.