



▶ A Handbook of Reflections
on the Art of Teaching

Offered by Past Winners of the
Academy for Effective Teaching Award





The Academy for Effective Teaching

The purpose of the Academy for Effective Teaching is to recognize the impor-



Teaching is extremely serious to me, and I hope it is serious to you. I have had a very successful career in teaching here at Wichita State University, but it almost never happened. A university professor very early in my undergraduate degree so dismayed me on accounting, on teaching, on myself as a person that I came within a sorrowful weekend of leaving the profession completely. That is why becoming a good teacher is so important to me. This booklet is a collection of importances.

When I arrived on campus in August 1998, I managed to completely miss new faculty orientation. As such, I felt quite overwhelmed. As time passed, I managed to survive those first few semesters with my wits intact and a reasonably competent teaching style emerging. I eventually became aware of an organization called the Academy for Effective Teaching. I came to look upon their w



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Diane Scott (2007-2008)

Failure and Freedom

I tell a story to new managers that applies equally well to new teachers. It goes something like this . . . When you first become a manager, what is different about you the day before you become a manager and the day after? Nothing. You don't know more than you did the day before. You don't have a new special skill set that you didn't possess the day before. This leaves you with two choices. You can be candid with others when there is something you don't know and, more importantly, open with yourself about your areas needing growth. Or, you can try to pretend with yourself and others that you know it all. The first option leaves open the ability to experiment; to try new things; and to fail, learn your lessons, laugh at yourself and try again. The second option locks you into a position of hiding, pretending to know things you don't, fearing you'll be caught in your ignorance and inexperience and protecting your turf (both real and imagined).



All the very best things I do as a teacher, I failed at the first time around. The most engaging exercises, the best illustrative stories, the most useful assignments, and the most effective classroom management tricks I use were almost all resounding duds the first time out. If I'd only stuck with what I knew I could do without any chance of failure or appearance of ignorance, I'd have never even tried the best things I currently use. Acknowledgement and acceptance of the fact that you're going to fail in front of your students gives you the freedom to try new things and learn how to do things better.

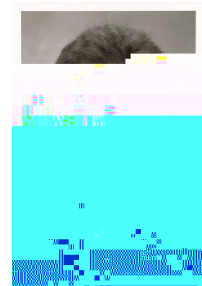






Steven Skinner (2004-2005)

Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care



To be a good teacher, one needs to be able to build and sustain a relationship with students, based on trust, mutual respect, and care. Students perform much better when you show a genuine interest in them, their future, and their progress. If students see that you take an active interest in them as individuals, they will do their best not to let you down. They will also be much more forgiving when you make a mistake in class.

To build this relationship, I always made an effort to greet students outside the classroom and gave them my full attention when I talked to them or when they came to my office for questions. I also did my best to learn each student's name by studying the visual roster on Blackboard.

Although a little time consuming, becoming more personally involved and friendly with the students made teaching more enjoyable and greatly improved my SPTe results.



Larry Spurgeon (2007-2008)

The Teacher as Artist

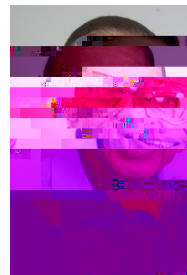
"I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that there are as few as there are any other great artists. Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit." John Steinbeck

To be effective, a teacher must be respected. A new teacher is granted a measure of respect by students because she has advanced degrees, a title —she is an expert. From that foundation, respect can be squandered or enhanced immeasurably. Some things are within the teacher's control --



Erach Talaty (2001-2002)

How Deep is the Ocean:
How High is the Sky?



The caption summarizes my philosophy: there is no limit to improvement.

- Adapt your lectures to the level of students you are teaching – come down to their level. Abandon the ivory tower.
- Every time I teach a class, I write out my lectures in detail and give students a copy. That way, they do not waste time copying from the blackboard or projector. Instead, they can devote their full attention to what I am saying.
- I also hold frequent help sessions' to work problems and clarify any difficulties. Use real-life experiences to drive home a point – which is easy to do in chemistry because its tentacles reach out into biology, pharmacy, medicine, physics, geology or astronomy.



Pawan Kahol (2002-2003)

An effective teacher:

- Is the one who introduces difficult concepts in an easy and comprehensible way;
- has the abilities to explain and re-explain a topic in many different ways;
- never loses sight of the big picture;
- keeps students interested and inspired;
- stays enthusiastic;
- helps students as much inside the class as outside;
- is always looking for and thinking about implementing further improvements;
- introduces a large number of easy-to-visualize-and-comprehend examples and demonstrations;
- elicits examples from students to gauge their level of involvement and understanding;
- makes connections with what is happening in the world to the fields of science, engineering, technology, and medicine;
- teaches with warmth, compassion, conviction, commitment, and creativity;





Pawan Kahol (2002-2003)

- considers teaching and working with undergraduate students as his/her creed;
- kindles a life-long fire of learning;
- places students before himself/herself;
- prepares students for tomorrow's world;
- makes learning happen;
- is never satisfied with meeting his/her teaching requirements minimally;
- strives to maintain the highest standards and expectations;
- looks after the small details;
- leads by example;
- goes that extra mile with the students both inside and outside the class.

An effective teacher's message to his students is: Do not ever be afraid to apply the principles you have learned to any problem that enters your mind!

Am I an effective teacher? Not that I am completely satis-



Jerry Shaw (1999-2000)

On Heritage and Family

- I come from humble people, Osage Indians.
- My mother told me to always speak from my heart.
- My father taught me the work ethic and to be on time.
- I am passionate about my people and that passion is reflected in my teaching. It's from these traits that my students understand my respect for them.
- My purpose in teaching is to develop a mutual respect with my students.



Charles Yang (2003-2004)

One World View

- Always consider fairness to all students.
- Treat students the way you would like the instructors to treat your own children in college





Hamid Lankarani (2000-2001)

Transcending Relationships

The first and most important thing about being an effective faculty member is to make sure that you know the subject matter quite well. If the course is one that the faculty is offering for the first time, it usually is quite time-consuming to go through the material, develop the lecture plans, material coverage, exams, homework assignment, etc. At first, this seems to take a tremendous amount of time, but the more time spent on initial lecture development, the easier it will be in the following semesters teaching the same course.

The teacher/faculty-member needs to convey to the students that he/she cares about them and their learning. Students can sense how much you care for them. Once they sense your caring, students become more interested in your topics and they tend to work harder.

Be passionate about your teaching. Not everyone is always attentive to your lectures, but you see in almost



Hamid Lankarani

I have always tried to build a life-long relationship with my students, especially with my graduate students. I have supervised over 300 MS and PHD students in my academic career, and I am still in touch with every single one of these former students. Whoever gets a promotion, gets married, has a child, buys a house, etc., I get an email on this. Teaching is monetarily not a very rewarding career, but there is no feeling better than seeing your former students becoming successful in their careers and seeing them grow.



M. Edwin Sawan (2008-2009)

Enthusiasm and Perseverance:

I believe a good teacher is one who is enthusiastic about sharing knowledge with others. A good teacher does not rely on external motivation, whether rewards or threats, in order to care for students. My strong feeling of care for students follows one of my



Martin Perline (1996-1997)

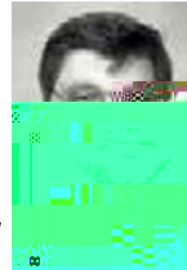
On Love and Teaching

What makes for an outstanding teacher? It seems to me that it is mandatory that one must love teaching and convey that love to the students. While there may be numerous do's and don'ts to be ea M e O



Peer Moore-Jansen (1998-1999)

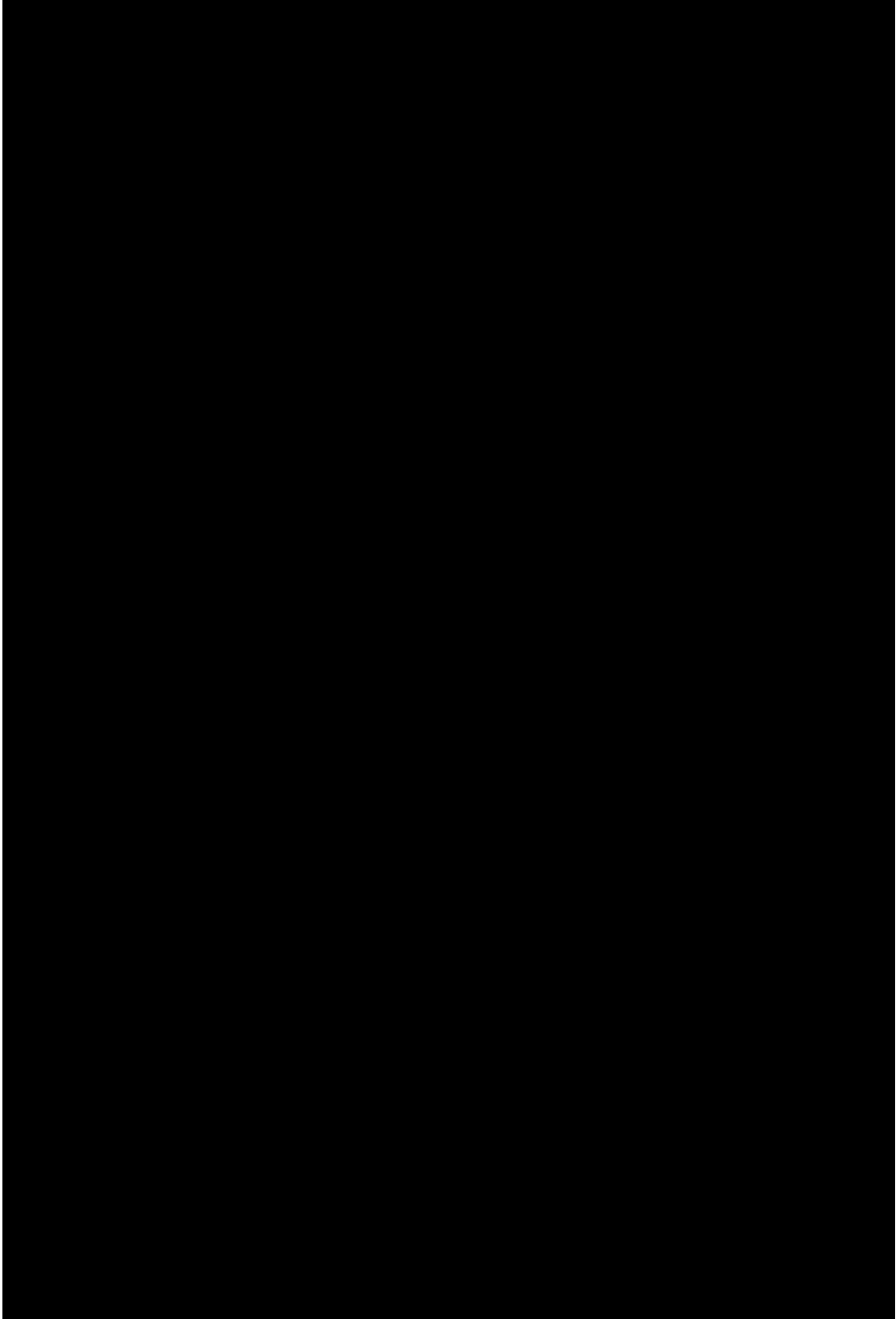
A Good Teacher



Different people have different philosophies of teaching. I am no different. Some people subscribe to models or trendy guidelines. I suggest teaching, especially good teaching is individually based, and a great teacher to one student may be the worst to another student. Good teaching is therefore not about earning "points" from audiences who may have vastly different reasons or foundations for assessing a teacher.

Nonetheless, quality teaching is what it is, a reflection of an instructor's willingness to reach out, engage and embrace each student.

- Good teaching includes defining the parameters of the teaching environment, the material and specific subject matter. Essential is the instructor's professionalism, level of knowledge, confidence, honesty, and perseverance together with student receptiveness to learning. The instructor who stays current with and brings research and service to their teaching effort is an instructor who is more likely to engage a student audience more holistically in the realms of the student's current environment. This includes the student's role in the University, the college, the major, and eventually, the student's career development.
- Good teaching focuses around engaging students so each is able to understand how the material taught relates to their personal growth and development, not just in their

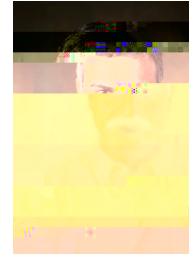




Prakash Ramanan (1998-1999)

Adaptive Lecture

Do NOT use slides (such as PowerPoint). It is important to be nimble ***IN*** the classroom and adjust what you are going to say based on what happened (such as student questions, lost looks, or any new ideas/thoughts you came up with) in the preceding 5 or 10 minutes.



This could involve the reordering of your thoughts and of the points you want to make. There is ABSOLUTELY no way you can predict the best ordering BEFORE you go to that particular lecture.

Slides lock you in with what you prepared before going to class, preventing you from adjusting your lecture ***IN*** the classroom. Teaching without slides (use handwritten notes YOU made) needs more preparation, as it would force YOU to understand the material and teach it better.





Stephen Brady

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 classroom 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 also. 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.

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



Mary Faragher (2006-2007)

Put it into Practice

Early in your teaching career, develop a philosophy. It may be based on personal experience, proven models, or someone else's philosophy. Keep it short, reasonable and logical for your area of expertise and practice.



Write it down, and keep it where you can see it daily. This keeps you focused, motivated and allows you to know when it needs to be updated.

Focus on three major foundational points and build from there. You will be surprised to find that your three points rarely change, although how you put them into practice does change.

Lesson: Keep it simple, and put it into practice.



Kathleen Perez (2000-2001)

Reaching Students In and Out of Class

- Be yourself in the classroom. Let your students come to know you as a person. You will be seen as more approachable by your



M. Edwin Sawan (2008-2009)

Responsibility rather than Authority:

In my opinion, a teacher needs to establish a relationship with her or his students based on responsibility rather than authority. This would help re-affirm such a relation as long-lasting friendship.

Each semester, I explain in detail the rationale of each item in the class policy as well as each test regulation. Some of these regulations may appear to be strict. However, they have never been violated or even challenged. Students are motivated by their sense of responsibility to



M. Edwin Sawan

Then, I solve the test problems a few days after preparing them to confirm that all the necessary information and tools, such as mathematical tables, are available.

I have not received any complaints about this policy. In fact, many students expressed their full understanding of my reasons for applying it. As I explain to the students, asking me questions about a problem during the test could end up hurting their effort to solve it. Asking questions during a test is different from doing so in class or during office hours. When they ask questions during class or in my office, I make every effort to be as clear as possible. However, to respond to their questions during a test, I make every effort to be as evasive as possible, or else I would be giving them unfair hints of the right solution. Furthermore, speaking with a specific student during a test will distract me and may compromise my role as proctor.



L. Scott Miller (1997-1998)

A Dose of Reality

Getting students to actually apply course content is amazingly effective—for you and your students. I'm talking about having the students do more than homework or exams. Specifically, take any opportunity possible to create projects or in-class activities that require students to actually use what they are learning. Make them feel like they are out of school and on the job. Don't worry about including every element of the topic in this effort. Focus on incorporating a reasonable set of fundamentals. A simple, yet realistic, project engages and helps students (and you) really learn.

From the instructor's perspective, I won't say project preparation and execution is easy. However, I will say everyone gets better at it the more they do it. The educational effect is amazing.





Royce Smith (2009-2010)

A Heart for Teaching



Royce Smith

Don't be afraid to take risks or to fail as a teacher. Try new approaches, explore new possibilities in your classroom, and share your visions with your







Nicholas Smith (2003-2004)



Nicholas Smith

where there is an exchange of ideas. How you handle that incorrect verbal answer can make all the difference in a student's attitude toward you and the subject you are teaching (which may also be reflected in your student evaluations). Instead of a blunt "No!" next person, you might first think about saying "are you sure?" and if the student still falters, move ahead with "Ok, does anyone else have something to say or contribute?" Critiques, whether they are written or verbal, should always encourage improvement and never belittle.

When I first came to WSU, I had the occasion to visit with one of the faculty members in my area who had been at the university for several years. I was trying to get to know him better and just asked him about the quality of the students at the school. I had been teaching at the University of Oklahoma for three years before coming up to Wichita and felt the move to be a good one as WSU's School of Music had a very good reputation. My colleague friend described the students as being good for the most part, but he really didn't seem too enthusiastic about them. Then he let out a statement which I have never forgotten and which should be the bane of any good professor: "Oh, you don't really need to worry that much about *the little people* anyway. They aren't that important." I quickly concluded our conversation and knew I would not align myself with his ideas. He only lasted another three years and moved to a strictly performance position in a full-time orchestra. While there are obviously great rewards for personal research, students learn quickly which professors are interested in really teaching and which seem impatient to get through the information so they can get back to their own projects.

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Jen-Chi Cheng (2010-2011)

Respect Every Student

With such a diverse student body at Wichita State University, I believe it is essential to address the particular learning style of each student. Every student has his or her own learning curve and personal obstacles to academic excellence. A key part of understanding and respecting students includes giving them the instructional support they need to succeed. Don't look down on a student simply because of his or her academic performance. To help my students further, I give small group review sessions in the three days leading up to each exam. The sessions are voluntary and are held at the Shocker Lounge or Panera Bread, lasting 1-2 hours each time. Students note that these informal environments are very conducive to learning.

My actions in teaching and advising are guided by putting myself in my students' shoes. I often pause to ask myself what I would have valued in a professor. Their progress is my comfort, their success my pride. Former colleague Dr. Maurice Pfannes-tiel gave me these words at his retirement: Applaud those who got an 'A' in your class because they make teaching fun, respect those who earned a 'B' because they have worked hard in your class, and show affection to those who received a 'C' as they very likely will be the main donors to WSU. While his sense of humor gave us a good laugh, his wisdom reminded me to treasure every student I had the opportunity to teach.



Denise Maseman (1998-1999)

Taking Stock

My best advice to a new faculty member is to connect with and listen to your students. That means beyond the end of the semester teaching evaluations you should ask questions about their views of the textbook, assignments, class format, etc. It doesn't mean you have to agree with all of their views, but it is very important to have a sense of the ever changing student attitudes and approaches to higher education.





Doris Burgert (2002-2003)

The Big Picture

Having been both a student and a teacher—often concurrently—I have frequently noted that students fail to see the big picture and, in fact, lose many of the details because they fail to retain the big picture. Their failure is caused by interference (too much new information interfering with older information) and simple time decay and failure to use the information.



Doris Burgert

make adjustments in my teaching. I view these informal assessments as assessment for learning instead of assessment of learning.

During class, I use the abbreviation CPR to help me review and assess understanding. This teaching tip came from a WSU workshop for teachers more than ten years ago. Accordingly I can't claim it as my own, but I've certainly used it to great advantage. The letters stand for Content, Participation, and Review. After about 20 minutes of teaching the content, I add some participation and review. The participation usually entails applying newly learned material to questions or exercises or real life situations and then reviewing those questions or exercises as a whole class. The review is done with the



Melvin Kahn (2006-2007)

Powerful Practicalities

I would suggest that you adopt a teaching philosophy that provides consistent benchmarks for your teaching approach. My philosophy is based on two important statements: The mind is a fire to be lit, not a vessel to be filled, and The effective teacher possesses the combination of goodness and wisdom.

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Barbara Gonzalez (1996-1997)

Necessary Transitions

Thomas Jefferson said "I cannot live without books." Times have changed as books now seem secondary to so many other means of information access. That

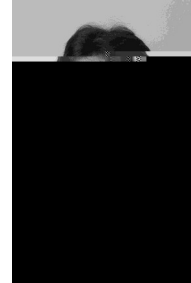


Michael Flores (2005-2006)

A Sensor for Saliency

Accounting, for all its representations in media and pop culture, is nothing more than reporting on an environment: the financial state of some thing or one. On the surface, a blander topic is hard to find. Images of tax returns and green eyeshades come to mind. My task is to take this thing called accounting, predispositions and all, and make it salient to my students. This environment is not confined to a textbook. The environment of accounting is all around my students: the internet, newspapers, journals, and local professionals.

My job is to be a sensor of that environment and bring salient material early and often into the classroom. New events and changes in the world can make the teaching environment more salient to the student. Students are much more likely to retain facts gleaned from a real life case as opposed to something generically written in a textbook by someone they don't know. For me, more salience translates to better learning for more students. I would give you the same charge: seek real information that makes your class more salient to your students. I'm convinced that if I can do it in a mundane subject such as accounting, you can as well!







Notes



Notes



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