

Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence



Teaching Tips

Creating Enthusiasm

People become more attentive when they believe something meaningful is happening. Create ways to encourage students to look for connections to the course material.

✓ Make it meaningful



1. Introduce a topic by challenging students to think of how it might connect to past, present, or future experiences. Students can share orally at the end of class or write a short response. You can bring in copies of newspaper or magazine articles (fair-use copyright), a newscast, or even a radio broadcast from Public Radio.
2. Ask your students to identify something in the reading material or lecture that has personal significance for them.
3. After giving examples, pause and ask them to provide examples from their experience.

✓ Make it thoughtful

When people are not certain with what will happen next, they often become more alert. By contrast, when a teacher simplifies information, students feel they can adopt a mindless attitude.

1. Use conditional verbs - should or could - in a description to encourage students learn better. Find appropriate ways to tell your students that the idea "might be" right... but needs some thoughts.
2. Students stop thinking once they believe they have the right answer. Encourage hypothesis testing to make thoughtful mistakes. For example, ask them questions like "What if _____ were to happen?"
3. When reading a text, ask your students to consider the material from multiple points of view, not just the author's. Ask them to consider how the same event or description would change.



✓ Make it challenging

Boredom comes from a routine acceptance of information. Challenge students to actively look for distinctions in what is happening.



1. Try beginning each segment of a class by setting up a problem and explaining why it is interesting and important.
2. Rather than asking students to memorize a formula, teach them how to derive the formula and identify its parts.
3. Encourage students to imagine ways of solving the problem before you begin to work the solution together. This takes advantage of the skills the students already have and encourages them to actively extend their knowledge.
4. Try solving the problem in two different ways. This gives students a sense of how best to approach a problem, and it may prevent mistakes. This technique also holds the students' attention because they will want to see if the answer is the same in both cases.

For other ideas, visit these resources:

<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-3.htm>

<http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/tips/part.html>