

Advice to the New Teacher



These suggestions were generated at the 1994 POD Network Conference in Portland, Oregon, during the session about how to plan a Master Teachers Workshop. (Recorded as submitted.)

1. On the first day, ask students to fill out a student information sheet. While they are completing it, write down their names (chart form). Learn their names! Ask them to stay in the same seat for a couple of class periods.
2. Get and keep at least one faculty mentor.
3. Don't look at points (e.g., points on quizzes, exams, or homework) as your points that you give students. You are on the students' side - you want the students to get as many points as they can.
4. I can't teach students anything - they have to teach themselves, but I can facilitate that through course design and my enthusiasm and caring.
5. The liberating effect of being able to say "I don't know" is beyond estimation.
6. Listen to the students - not just what they're saying, but what they're not saying.
7. Be prepared - don't wing it!
8. Return student work promptly. (You will be recognized for being different.)
9. Give up some control.
10. Figure out ways to be organized in class sessions and diversify learning experience.
11. Be willing to try new ideas and share the results/outcome with others.
12. Respect the knowledge of each and every student.
13. Keep a sense of humor - laugh at yourself!
14. Be calm and confident - you're the only one who knows what is supposed to be happening!
15. Teacher as facilitator is not one who motivates but is one whose task is to find what motivates students.
16. Don't try to be the expert on everything taught in your class.
17. Don't be afraid to rock the boat, but always keep your eyes and ears open.
18. Your responsibility is to pass along the culture of your discipline - in order to do this you must be excited about that discipline. Show your passion for who/what you are, professionally.