

There are a multitude of ways to facilitate student learning but in my experience I have found that the best way for me to be an effective instructor is to adhere to a teaching philosophy based around certain key concepts, including: passion and caring, communication, fairness, humor, questioning, 'true learning', flexibility, and applied learning.

To be an effective teacher, one must be passionate about a topic, passionate about communicating that interest to others, and must care about the effectiveness of the methods for the students. Consequently, effective teaching requires the ability to convey subject matter to students so that it is understandable and applicable, and yet dynamic enough to reach the range of variability present in every class. Communication can insure fairness; being clear about the purpose of each exercise or assignment will increase the rate at which material is learned. Fairness also means relating to students as individuals, with their own individual backgrounds, goals, and expectations and treating them impartially, while maintaining a compassionate attitude that encourages personal responsibility for student performance. Humor, or rather the ability to relate to students through laughter, can serve to engage students. Engaged students are also more likely to question course material, to make individual decisions regarding the validity of concepts and methods, and improve a lecture class by making it more interactive. This interactive dynamic provides a continuous feedback loop for the instructor to assess the efficacy of lectures. Likewise, true learning, as opposed to memorization, involves active thinking and conceptualization of critical ideas. A focus on questioning and learning in this sense is best achieved through a flexible topical lecture format. Strict adherence to syllabi should not stifle course discussions; instructors should be able to adapt to student interests as they arise without sacrificing course content. Lastly, an emphasis on applied learning, or direct 'hands-on' implementation of concepts in laboratory or small-group settings, can serve to make abstract concepts more tangible. This is particularly true of many archaeological methods, such as sampling, surveying, and research design.

Anthropological methodology, for many students, is most readily learned through discovery-based exercises. Course evaluations and student feedback suggest that students learn these lessons more effectively, *and more enjoyably*, when material is presented in hands-on ways. The study of the material past, for example, lends itself to this kind of interactive learning process.

In an attempt to make my courses more hands-on, I implement the use of multiple concurrent, mutually enforcing, and supplementary modules of instruction: lectures and readings, laboratories, artifact 'show and tell', student presentations, and, when possible, computer simulation exercises. This multi-pronged approach is designed to specifically address the many different ways of learning that are present in any group of students. By approaching class material from different angles, in complementary ways, I hope to increase the likelihood that students correctly process course material and learn new skills.

One final way of increasing the effectiveness of a course is by making it relevant to students. This is particularly important when teaching courses, like introductory archaeology and anthropology that may include a high proportion of non-majors or students that are unlikely to pursue these topics further in their academic or professional careers. I have found that the easiest way to make archaeological course content relevant is to explicitly include significant diversity (geographical, cultural, and chronological) in the examples used in course exercises and assignments and to solicit topics of interest from students as the course progresses. The flexibility required for such a goal must be inherent in all areas of the approach to teaching.