

General teaching suggestions

1. THE SYLLABUS

Read the syllabus, understand it, and be prepared to enforce it. If anything in the syllabus is unclear, consult your supervisor or other TAs.

2. START WHERE THE LEARNER IS

Get to know your students – not as friends, but as learners. What do they already know? What interests them? Why do this? See #3.

3. BUILD A BRIDGE

If there is any way to relate the new material to something they already know, help them make that connection. If you can, use examples from real life, the news, movies, books, TV – just don't use deeply personal stories from your own life. Or better yet – have them create the examples. The examples they create will show you how well they understand the new information.

4. INTEREST

Getting to know your students also helps to keep behavior management issues to a minimum. When students believe you are interested in them as people, they respond with better behavior. Knowing them helps you to notice when things are not going well for them or if there is a drop in classroom performance. This makes early intervention possible. However, when getting to know your students, establish clear boundaries and avoid being overly friendly. Be authoritative and in charge.

5. PREPARE AND PRACTICE

Prepare your classes in advance. Over-preparing is better than under-preparing. If you're nervous, practice at home.

6. ACTIVE LEARNING AND CRITICAL THINKING

Whenever it's appropriate, use an ice-breaker, an activity, or something to involve them in the lesson. Having them do something meaningful results in better learning than having them sit passively. It gives them ownership of the lesson, and can lead to better retention. It is important first to ask questions which will measure how much they remember and understand information, but then ask different questions which go beyond recall and comprehension of facts – have them analyze and evaluate information, create new solutions and apply the information to real life.