The Power of the Teacher

We all have stories.

We have teaching techniques that worked, and teaching techniques that did not work.

We have had students share their thoughts with us.

Let’s share what we have learned and experienced
Teaching techniques that worked

- Getting students in their learning
- Group work, activities, projects
- Discussing topics, discussion groups
- Reaching out to students who are not doing well
- Students develop test and quiz questions
- Presentations
- Hands-on
- Concept maps
- Use of ipads to learn about a topic
- Diagramming
- Relays
- Created an online how-to tutorial with student sign-in and certificate of completion at the end that could be printed
- Played upbeat music and had students move around the room backwards swinging their arms, to wake them up
- Allowing students to use their imagination or artistic skills
- Relating current news stories to class topics
- Choice with framework
- Humor
- Passion for subject matter
- Organized but informal
- Repetition
- Account for different learning styles
- Tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, tell them, and tell them again
- Open to questions
- Relevance to real life
- Giving students more responsibility for developing content
- Organized groups for whole term (established relationships)
- Popcorn reading
- Guest speakers
- In class journaling
- Pre-reading survey
- Ad analysis
- Learn everybody's name quickly
- Board work
- Being approachable
- Asking students to reflect on their learning and their goals for the class
Teaching techniques that worked continued

- Providing detailed instructions for assignments
- Practical demonstration of textbook concepts
- Give several examples of same concept; vary the examples to make each slightly different
- Engineer projects so that students must utilize examples given in the textbook
- Give students a lot of feedback on their assignments
- Having students revise and re-submit written work
- Activities that are several pages long that address something the students can relate to and requires them to discover and struggle a bit with the material
- Pair share - have students talk to each other and explain a concept in their own words
- Large post it notes on wall - allow students to concept map
- Connecting personalities with the students
- Techniques that help students feel successful and see their hard work pay off
- Mixing it up with some content, group activity, reflection
- Have students with math anxiety read articles about fixed mindsets and success in math
- Showing compassion
- Establishing a culture of inquiry by promotion of student's ideas, by listening, validating, and challenging their thinking
- Having students set the expectations for the class
- Station-to-station on the first day, orienting student's to class/syllabus
- Case studies where students identify with person/character and discuss
- Kahoot
- Respond "Thank you for sharing"
- "Extra-credit moments", extra credit question answered on an index card for points, at start of class to get students to come to class on time
- Thanking students for attempting an answer, for participating (even if the answer is wrong)
- Stating "we are practicing together so it is okay to make mistakes" every time students are answering questions and/or working together in class
Teaching techniques that did not work

- Giving too many handouts (even with graphics)
- Lecture
- Being punitive
- Asking students to answer question in class - it's always the same 2-3 students
- Being unfair/applying rules differently
- All talk - no action
- One minute paper - they don't like writing
- Group work of 4-5 - someone always absent/takes charge/sits back/doesn't participate
- Student presentations - students picked article, took liberties, didn't really delve into the article
- Lecture content without examples
- Read textbook then ask instructor clarifying questions
- Give only a single example of a concept
- Assign projects that have no relation to the textbook material, forcing students to turn toward on-line resources
- Give no feedback on assignments, give only a grade
- Not giving out detailed instructions for assignments
- Sometimes what works well for one class doesn't work for the next
- Only power-point lectures
- Vague questions like, "so what do you think?"
- When I talk too much
- Not putting notes on blackboard
- Not prepared/practiced
- Letting one student take over the direction of the class
- Letting people interrupt other people
- Not allowing for pauses/checking in see if is clear
- Not repeating information
- Too much theory and statistics
- Making assignments so open that students sit overwhelmed and come up with crap
- Assigning a team lead in a lab group - everyone in the group resented it
Special Student Story

• A student of mine nearly quit college because she hated math. I didn't let her quit. She ended up transferring to UCB. Before she transferred, she ended up being my math tutor.

• I had a student that was fulfilling a req. He said his sister was the artist of the family. I kept pushing and praising him. Took the class on field trip to Claremont Colleges. He came back a few years later and told me he had gotten a full scholarship all through Grad School.

• Aha moments

• Student argued about grade very aggressively. I didn't know how to handle it well, firmly, confidently, hold my ground

• Returning student, single mother, despair, rejuvenated to continue learning and transfer/pursue her dream of teaching.

• I had trouble getting students (English majors) to invest in a group project. I tried telling them that they were developing career skills. This argument didn't work. In a reflection, one student told me, "if we wanted career skills, we'd be English majors." He helped me see that I'd made a marketing error.

• I had a student who started out the semester not doing too well. She almost failed her first exam. I always made myself very approachable, and so she felt comfortable coming up to me every day with question. She took all me advice, started doing homework every day, and ended up getting an A in the class.

• I referred a student to DSP&S who was having a difficult time in the class. It turned out that she didn't know about that service. Later, she told me that that referral was what allowed her to complete her course work and graduate!

• On several occasions, students have approached me and stated that my class has influenced, positively, their decision to major in computer science.

• Personal contacts to help students to be successful

• I know that I make a difference - multiple students share stories with me over the semester/year that I connected with them and impacted their college experience.
Special Student Story continued

- Students graduate and get jobs. It is so rewarding to hear students transform their lives after completing the program.

- They're all too long to write down.

- I overheard two students talking about their assignments. When one asked how his project was coming, the reply was it was in the process of realization. I think this is how to look at the students. they are all in the process of realization.

- Student who took the concepts and applied it to his relationship with family and work.

- I had a student who was considering changing his major or just dropping out, especially when family issues added to his already unhappy experiences. I encouraged this student to continue, told him that he had the intelligence to succeed, and I told him "Life gets interesting sometimes and you just have to breath, and decide whether it's going to make you laugh or cry. I always choose to laugh and just keep going." The student did continue and secured a prestigious internship while still at COC. He has thanked me profusely for not letting him give up and for just listening when he was having a hard time.

**Magna publication has an app that affords us Teaching Tips daily - made specifically for Higher Ed.**