

Interface 2016: Tips, Tools and Timesavers

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Presenter: Thomas Knight

Make Class Enjoyable

- There is huge buzz around the idea of facilitating and/or encouraging student engagement, but there seems to be a discomfort with the idea that class should be enjoyable.
- If students like the classes they are taking, and the instructors with whom they are taking them, they are more willing to exert effort and become more engaged with the course material.
- This does not have to mean a class is easy, nor that rules must be flexible!

Establish A Well-Structured, Thorough Syllabus

- Providing a syllabus that is well-structured and thorough allows the instructor to establish the “rules of the game” on Day One.
- Establishing the rules of the game early (*and sticking to them*) allows the instructor to set a serious tone for the course. Students will expect rigor.
- Establishing the rules of the game early (*and sticking to them*) allows the instructor to simply serve as the enforcer of the rules, not the “maker” of the rules. Oddly, this disconnect is feasible to achieve.

Be Personable, Demonstrate Respect, and Show Empathy

- Students respect instructors who respect them. Students work harder for instructors they respect.
- Students often voice concerns that instructors do not care about them. We cannot (or should not) ALWAYS try to accommodate students’ wishes....but we should keep this in mind.
- An engaging classroom is one in which students want to participate. This requires instructors to set a positive and energetic tone.

Solicit Participation...Make It Fun

- Use questions with “no right answer” to ease the fear of participation. This can be especially useful for breaking the ice.
- Use practice problems or sample scenarios to get students to think about the material, and ask them for their thoughts. Ask other students if they agree, or disagree.



- Think about using the Catch Box! It makes participation fun...and funny.

Even Online Students Benefit

- Online students can enjoy this engaging environment.

