2021 EDITION!

TEACHING & LEARNING CONFERENCE TIPS

NDSU | OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The following tips, you can incorporate into your class, are taken from the sessions offered in the 2021 Teaching and Learning Conference. References and citations for any data or statistics listed here can be found in the videos posted on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/ndsuotl.

Teach With Empathy (Not Sympathy)
Sympathy is not empathy. Sympathy is a feeling of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune. Empathy is a way of connecting with people that shows you understand they are experiencing something meaningful- even though you may not understand exactly how it feels for them. Instructors high in teacher empathy do not lower standards; they identify and remove obstacles to learning.

Get To Know Your Students
In order to make an impact on students' lives you need to understand them first. You can do this by deploying a student survey. You can ask students to write a "This I believe…" essay. You could also ask students to create their reflexivity statement.

Adopt A Growth Mindset
Help students adopt a growth mindset. This is the belief that I will need to persevere through difficulty before I succeed. The desire to work hard consistently with the courage to ask questions when confused.

Inclusive Course Policies
Design course policies that reflect a deep understanding of students' personal and social situations – Incorporate course policies for greater inclusion and equity. Inclusive and equitable teaching provides opportunities for success for students from ALL identities.

Build Trust With Your Students
Trust your students, assume they are trying their best. Recognize each student has different pressures on their time and energy. Help your students understand the learning goals. Tell them the "why" behind each assessment.

Collaborate With Students
Let students lead the learning process by collaborating with students to discuss progress on meeting their learning goals. Invite students to set personal learning goals within the domains of the course. Enable students to complete self evaluations and reflections across the semester. You might also reconsider strict deadlines.

Ease Asynchronous Learning
For asynchronous learning, make it easy for students to access materials – make it obvious where to start, mention clear, attainable goals and objectives. Mention the standard methods of submitting assignments.

Create An Organized Course
Create streamlined content for students to follow. An organized course is the key to student success. An unorganized course will cause delay in assignments being completed. Make Blackboard navigation easier. Allow for students to have easy, accessible, and organized materials on Blackboard.

Be Flexible With Your Students
Flexibility improves the learning experience of your students. Post notes, assignments, class materials at least 5-7 days before deadlines. Provide structure by having assignment deadlines but have a flexible deadline policy. Allowing students to resubmit assignments or retake tests increases their motivation to learn.

Create An Engaging Learning Environment
Using a variety of ways to display and provide information is optimal for desired learning outcomes. Offering opportunities for choice and autonomy is one way you can create a more meaningful and engaging learning environment. Often students do not understand or appreciate the reason why what they are learning is important. Establishing the "why" behind what you teach will help your students see relevance and value in the material.

Use Creative Ways To Engage Students
Instructors can use creative ways to engage students. For example, Dr. Sylvio May presents finger puppets alongside his presentations about the specific scientist being discussed. Dr. Beena Ajmera created themed weeks for students to create backgrounds on Zoom to fit into the themes. Dr. Jenny Linker shared how she used Swivel software in the classes she holds in the gymnasium. The camera follows the professor and can be integrated into Zoom.