

The Practical Professor

No. 12

Quick and easy tips, tools, and ideas for improving teaching and learning.

Bad Teaching Advice

Ask The Practical Professor #3

Dear Practical Professor,

*I enjoy reading your tips every week, but do you have any **bad** advice for teachers? It would be fun to read, and it might also be good to know. Thanks!*

J.F. – Good idea! Here’s some **bad advice** for anyone who wants students to seek them out for help.

B.S. – Always sound as smart as you can in class. Use lots of jargon and “college words,” and never, *ever* admit when you don’t know something. Be perfect and all-knowing.

J.F. – You also want to make sure you project your clear assumption that students are weak, lazy, and not dedicated. This is especially important on the first day of class. You should organize your course this way (with pop quizzes, surprise assignments, etc.) and make your syllabus as intimidating sounding as possible. Take a defensive tone in all your interactions and communications with students.

B.S. – That’s good! Never *require* that students meet with you and never remind students of your office hours and availability after the first day of class. Never mention in class that students have been meeting with you. Always do your most important prep work right before class, so that if a student swings by before class, you can’t talk. Fill your schedule immediately before and after class with meetings, so that you’re unavailable when students are most likely able to talk.

J.F. – This should go without saying: always keep your office door closed. Give students nothing more than the room number of your office. Don’t use reference points on campus to make it easier for them to find you. Even better, teach back-to-back classes. That way, you’re less able to help students before and after class when they are already on campus and likely most aware of the questions they have and the help they need.

B.S. – When you’re teaching, pretend that you have no personal life and at the same time make the class all about you and what you know.

J.F. – Yes, and under no circumstances ever mention any recent interactions with children or dogs. You do that, and students may find you approachable and start coming to you for help.

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Teaching

A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty

The Top 10...

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- No. 4 – Ways to Show Students that You Respect Them
- No. 5 – Promote Effective Student Study Skills
- No. 6 – Components of a Well-Planned Class
- No. 7 – Observe Your Teaching Tendencies
- No. 8 – Ways to Keep Your Students Learning
- No. 9 – Ways to Get Feedback on Teaching from Students
- No. 10 – Using Short Writing to Assess Learning
- No. 11 – Getting More (and Better) Student Questions
- No. 12 – Mixing Things up Mid-Semester
- No. 13 – Engaging Different Input Preferences
- No. 14 – Helping Students Stay the Journey
- No. 15 – Ways to End Your Course
- No. 16 – Resources for Learning and Teaching
- No. 17 – Create a Memorable AND Functional Syllabus
- No. 18 – Ways to Build Your Students' Self-Efficacy
- No. 19 – Practical Study Tips to Share with Your Students
- No. 20 – Laddering Thinking Skills
- No. 21 – Learning Based Ways to End Lessons
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- No. 23 – Using Student Groups
- No. 24 – Components of a Complete Learning Experience
- No. 25 – Ways to Use Visuals for Learning
- No. 26 – Students' Locus of Control
- No. 27 – Help Students with Rigorous Writing Assignments
- No. 28 – Ways to Shake Up Your Teaching
- No. 29 – Teaching to Inspire
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