



Teaching For Success®

Quick Answers

QA 10.5.2

Q: The Initial Fun Has Dissipated; What Can I Do?

A: Get Back on the Ball: Here's How I Do It

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As you make your lesson plans for the next class keep in mind that teaching is a ball! You accepted the call to teach because you thought it would be fun and meaningful work. But you may be so mired in the slog of course administration that you feel like the fun is gone. What is the answer to your dilemma?

Teaching should be a ball. It's the time you spend among a class of open-minds that is your *raison d'être*. To restore your energy, you must make teaching fun once again. One method I've discovered that works for me is to remind myself that teaching is a ball, both symbolically and imaginatively.



Envision yourself standing at the front of your classroom bouncing a ball to your students. They either bounce it back to you, or if it misses its mark, it bounces out of reach at a crazy angle reminiscent of particle collisions in physics. Thinking of how a ball bounces; sometimes back to you, sometimes at obtuse angles so you have to dive to catch it, is how I view trying new ways of presenting materials.

I am constantly bouncing balls—trying new approaches to teach my students. So, for some of you who are afraid to try new things for fear of failure, try to imagine bouncing a ball. Sometimes it will come back to you as when your lecture sinks into those open, curious minds, but every so often it will bounce away at a crazy angle just like those blank stares you receive when your students haven't a clue about what you just said. Don't despair, walk over, pick up the ball and bounce it again. If it doesn't return as expected then, shift your body, twist your wrist, change your release, do anything to try new styles that may yield the desired learning result.

So, don't be afraid to try those new teaching methods and style that you read about in Teaching For Success. Don't be afraid to bounce the ball. Know that it will not always hit its mark, but you can walk over, pick it up, and try again. I often carry a small orange rubber ball in my pocket and occasionally bounce it down the hallway outside my office—now you, my students and my division chair know why!