



# Teaching For Success®

## Quick Answers

No. 817

### Q: My Students Are Unhappy

### A: Thirty Ways to Better Teaching

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**N**ot sure what to do to improve your teaching? Here are thirty ways to improve your teaching gleaned from twenty years of teaching experience:

1. Repeat: "I am here for the students."
2. Learner-centered teaching works.
3. Respect for students comes with with increased teaching competency.
4. Learn from your students' successes in class.
5. Learn from your students' failures in class.
6. Tests are not an absolute measure of student mastery.
7. Good tests aren't easy to design.
8. Good tests aren't easy to grade.
9. Be an expert; not a know-it-all.
10. Students gain more by learning to look up information.
11. Students gain more by learning to apply information.
12. Students gain more by learning to evaluate information.
13. Do regular formative assessments of student learning.
14. Give students resources, not just facts.
15. Good teachers instruct students on life skills.
16. Good teaching goes beyond presenting basic content.
17. Quality of content coverage is more important than quantity of content coverage.
18. Good laboratory sessions are open-ended and encourage inquiry.
19. Good laboratory sessions stress safety and environmental stewardship.
20. Encourage students to ask questions.
21. Cut down on lecture and increase active learning.
22. Pause in a lecture to give applications and examples of factual information.
23. Stress that knowledge was acquired by the scientific method.
24. Be excited about teaching.
25. Be excited about science or your specific area of knowledge.
26. Show enthusiasm for learning.
27. Appropriate humor improves learning.

- 28. Be friendly and smile.
- 29. Avoid too much criticism and cynicism.
- 30. Good teaching takes a lot of work.

Teaching has moved from giving lectures to teaching using the latest pedagogical strategies. In addition, there is a growing emphasis on developing a learning environment rather than just providing a physical classroom or laboratory space for teaching. Faculty are now expected to provide the skills students need to master the information and to be life-long learners.

The best instructors now emphasize applying educational theories to improve retention and success in science and other courses.