Recommendations for Strengthening Teaching Competency

The teaching paradigm in higher education has shifted from an older "teaching and teacher-centered" model (focused on the role and action of the instructor) to a "learning and student-centered" model (focused on the learning environment and what students should know, be able to do, and/or value). This shift has emerged from research on how people learn. It is important to develop teaching skills that address and serve the learning processes and needs of our students.

- **Create a plan prior to each class session that lists outcomes** — what you want the students to take away from the class or be able to do. The plan should list the topics you wish to cover; but more importantly, it should include the steps or activities you will use to have the students reach those outcomes. It also helps to indicate the amount of time you will allot for each activity. This will assist you in setting realistic goals for the class and managing your time well.

- **Communicate the learning outcomes to students.** Write your learning outcomes and a list of tasks that target those outcomes on the board. This will enable your students to be clear about the goals and purpose of activities.

- **Use a variety of instructional methods or strategies,** since people learn best when processing new material in varied ways. Incorporate visual, verbal, auditory, individual, and group learning activities into your teaching. Consider your goals when choosing an activity - find ideas for activities to achieve your goals in this [Getting Started with Active Learning Guide](http://commons.ucsd.edu/educators/future-faculty-programs).

- **Encourage participation.** Student participation can cement understandings of course material as well as generate new understandings and knowledge that may benefit the entire class.

- **Assess learning.** How do we know that our teaching is effective and that students are making progress in achieving the learning outcomes? Consider informal classroom assessment techniques such as the "minute paper" or the "muddiest point" (see [Active Learning Guide](http://commons.ucsd.edu/educators/future-faculty-programs)) to monitor what students are learning and what remains unclear. In addition, more formal midterm and end of the quarter evaluations are also useful tools for gauging student learning, and the [Teaching + Learning Commons](http://commons.ucsd.edu/educators/future-faculty-programs) offers workshops and consultations to help you interpret and integrate those evaluations.

- **Take steps to develop your teaching skills** and foster your professional development by attending teaching-related workshops and conferences. The Engaged Teaching hub in the Teaching + Learning Commons offers a series of Teaching Workshops prior to the start of each quarter, as well as workshops and other events throughout the year (http://commons.ucsd.edu/educators/future-faculty-programs). Your department may also hold teaching-related events, and the department’s Instructional Assistant Faculty Advisor is a great resource for guidance and support.

- **Get to know the literature on teaching and learning** in your discipline. Most professional associations publish a journal or newsletter on teaching. Use that publication to keep apprised of discipline-specific teaching strategies.

Resource adapted from University of California Berkeley’s Graduate Student Instructor Teaching & Resource Center

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