

If the Walls Could Talk: Student Perspectives on What Makes for a “Good” Teacher

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Conflict of Interest & Affiliations

- There are no conflicts of interest for any of the researchers or presenters associated with this presentation or the work described
- Affiliations:
 - **Terry Valiga** ... Duke University School of Nursing
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Session Objectives

- Describe the major themes that emerged from a study of graduate students' comments about characteristics of excellent teachers
- Discuss barriers to & ways to support faculty efforts to be excellent teachers

The Study



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Purposes

- **Describe qualities of “good teachers”** as provided by students enrolled in a graduate-level nursing course focused on *Facilitating Student Learning*
- **Identify differences, if any,** in how students enrolled in the course describe “good nursing teachers” & “good teachers in general”
- **Compare descriptions** of “good nursing teachers” & “good teachers in general” provided by students enrolled in the course with descriptions of “good teachers” found in the literature

Course Foci

- Principles of adult learning
- Concepts of learning styles, student engagement, & domains of learning
- Teaching practices & strategies

Discussion Forum Topics

- *Philosophy of Education*
- *Principles/Theories of Learning*
- *Learner Characteristics ... Generational Differences ... Learning Preferences*
- *Engagement of Learners ... Student/Teacher Relationships*
- *Creativity & Innovative Teaching Strategies*

Study Sample

(N = 76)

Semester	# MSN Students	# DNP Students	# Other Students	Total # Students
Summer 2011	9	9	1	19
Fall 2011	1	12	0	13
Spring 2012	8	7	1	16
Fall 2012	5	6	1	12
Spring 2013	9	4	3	16

of Substantive Forum Posts

(Expected: 476; Received: 1,070)

Semester	Total # Students	<i>Philosophy of Education</i>	<i>Principles & Theories</i>	<i>Learner Characteristics</i>	<i>Engagement of Learners</i>	<i>Creativity & Innovation</i>
Summer 2011	19	94 (19)	31 (19)	27 (12)	21 (12)	83 (19)
Fall 2011	13	39 (26)	22 (13)	35 (13)	42 (13)	46 (26)
Spring 2012	16	Unavailable	20 (16)	22 (16)	16 (16)	74 (32)
Fall 2012	12	48 (24)	73 (24)	25 (12)	32 (12)	42 (24)
Spring 2013	16	56 (32)	76 (32)	27 (16)	41 (16)	78 (32)

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses indicates the # of posts that were expected.

Emerging Themes

Humanism

Respect

Relationships & Connections

Create a Positive Environment for Learning

Engagement

Various Teaching Strategies & Creativity

Passion & Enthusiasm

Humanism

- Tell personal stories
- Allow self to be vulnerable
- Let your personality show
- Admit to being imperfect



One of my favorite instructors, as well as the majority of my classmates', was an instructor who shared her personal life with us, her insights, strengths/weaknesses, & just the simple fact of being human. ... [She] was not intimidating like the others, she was very genuine in her actions & teaching, & one could just sense her sincerity in wanting others to succeed.



Respect

- Don't belittle
- Don't intimidate
- Acknowledge students
- Use appropriate behavior
- Be professional



The ones that I valued the most were the instructors that treated me like an adult. More specifically, they respected me as an individual ...

Relationships & Connections

- Get to know students
- Individualize learning
- Care about students
- Inspire students

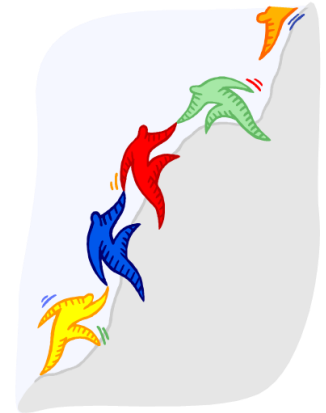


Maybe we subconsciously work harder in classes where we feel the instructor is invested in us & our education.

*I believe this is what teaching is all about: being able to spur students to accomplish what they feel is impossible or insurmountable. And, as a student, knowing that someone believes in you is **SO** important.*

Create a Positive Environment for Learning

- Listen
- Ask questions
- Challenge
- Set high expectations
- Be supportive & ensure that the environment is safe



*...an environment where every question is valued
that even the most anxious student feels safe in
asking a question or posing a theory.*

*Probably the most important part of [my best class]
is that I came out of it feeling changed.*

Engagement

- Give timely & focused feedback
- Be prepared & organized
- Be responsive
- Give clear directions
- Be available
- Be involved



He listened to our group discussions & offered information we were missing or praised us for solving a problem.

...the expectations were extremely clear & all assignments felt useful, no busy work.

Various Teaching Strategies & Creativity

- Tell stories
- Use humor
- Be flexible
- Allow & encourage students to be creative
- Teach in different ways

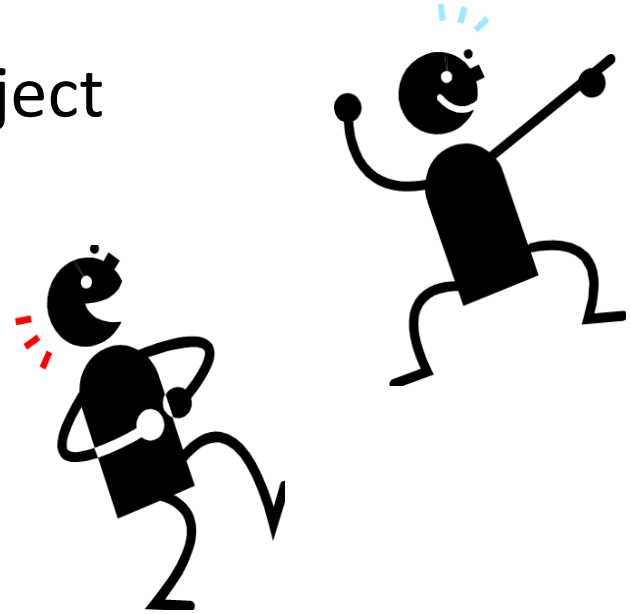


The best teacher “touches” the student in some “deep” way ... & uses many strategies to balance both support & freedom/challenge.

I think using a variety of teaching methods will prevent burnout (for both the teacher & the students), as it would be something new & exciting each class, & would not be repetitive. I think this would keep the students engaged & interested in the topic at hand.

Passion & Enthusiasm

- Be passionate about your subject
- Be energetic
- Be excited
- Let students know that you want to be there



I believe that an educator should be passionate about their profession... the teacher who gets up, has excitement, prepares interesting materials & lectures, & who has an apparent passion for teaching.

Your Thoughts & Insights

What barriers get in the way of
teaching **EXCELLENCE**?

How can faculty be supported to achieve
teaching **EXCELLENCE**?

in conclusion

Concluding Remarks

So what does it all mean?

Chickering & Gamson's Principles (1987)

- Student-Faculty contact
- Cooperation among students
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- High expectations
- Respect for diversity
- Time on task

Powerful Student Comments

- If faculty never take risks, how do we expect our students do to that?
- **Sometimes as students we need to remember to stay strong in our goals & dreams for our own future success.**
- Sometimes I look at teachers & their interactions with students, & it seems like they absolutely hate teaching.

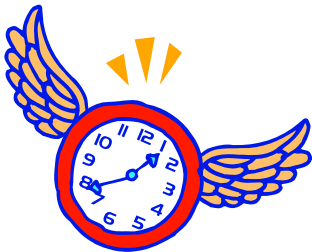
Powerful Comments (continued)

- I will never forget [my absolute worst learning experience], for I feel that it “scarred” me for life.
- **It’s amazing the far-reaching legacy of a single teacher.**
- It makes me wonder what, if anything, has changed in education over the last 20-25 years, other than the advent of more technology.



Change needs to
be within
ourselves

The Time is NOW



Technology is
NOT the only
answer



Thank You

Merci

**THANK
YOU**

Obrigado!

Bedankt

Ευχαριστώ

Grazie

Vielen
Dank

Hvala

תודה

Thank You !!!