

My teaching philosophy is engagement. The three most important aspects of my teaching philosophy are continuous class interaction, exploration of concepts through multiple means and perspectives, and the chance for interaction and experimentation. The goal is to not just learn tools, but to learn skills and to find immediate application.

Engagement is the most important responsibility of any instructor. Techniques for promoting engagement can vary, but mine is motion. I talk with my hands, I move through the classroom. I turn and face the screen so that a problem is no longer mine posed to the students, but a puzzle we are all trying to solve. Once I was teaching students about subject headings in catalogs. As an analogy I'd whipped up a story about my brother's new girlfriend appearing in Facebook photos. "Now" I asked the class "I see her in these pictures. She's been showing up for about a month. Her name is tagged at the bottom. What's the first thing I'm going to do?" "Click on the name" a student said with a laugh almost falling out the chair. "Exactly." I said before extending the analogy to how subject headings can find related material. As I looked across the class, heads nodding in agreement, students leaning forward into the question, answers being given with a smile instead of a sigh, I knew they would remember how to use subject headings. I try to keep the back and forth as active as possible. I try to remember that the longer I speak to students without engaging them with questions, problems, or group work, the fewer concepts they will remember.

When I finish a session, my goal is for all students to be confident enough to approach library research. Of course, everyone learns differently. So I make it a goal to do three things with every tool or concept. I show it to them. I explain it to them. I make

the try it out. In this way, I engage the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles of learning. I try to have no more than three learning objective to express and I try to engage the students in the three ways for each.

Finally, I believe that relevance is only achieved through actively using tools and concepts to solve immediate problems. Working in groups is better than working alone. And having students work on their own assignments is better still. Every time I give a group assignment the room will pause as people uncomfortably shuffle, but eventually will become louder and animated as students begin pointing at the screen and writing down answers. During this time I can move quickly through the room interacting directly with groups, finding common misperceptions and hang-ups. It's far easier to meet with five groups of three people in ten minutes than to meet with fifteen individuals.

By engaging students, working from multiple perspectives and taking time to interact and experiment, I find that concepts are more clear and become more firmly embedded. Given the chance to brush through ten topics or examine three from multiple sides, I'd choose the latter. When learning research skills students need to work in the muck as often as possible, trying out concepts as they learn. In a short class period there is a chance for puzzlement, experimentation, mistakes, discovery, and synthesis. That is what I try to provide.