

Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence Teaching Tips



Have a Dramatic Classroom

A good teacher must not only be a smart and approachable scholar, but also a dramatic success. Like actors, teachers can develop specific skills to enhance their communication of ideas.

Vocal Animation

Varying the pitch, volume, quality, and rate of your voice enhances your expressiveness and overall style. Allow your voice to vary naturally—and vary it deliberately once in a while to gain students' attention.



Physical Animation



Using eye contact displays confidence and conveys an interest in students. Facial expressions animate the material you wish to convey. Physical gestures—such as sweeping the air with hands—help you clarify, describe, and emphasize points. Gesturing and moving about the room can help constructively use up some of your nervous energy.

Classroom Space

Be sure that you can be seen and heard by students seated at various points in the classroom. Break away from the podium, desk, or whiteboard. Use space to emphasize important points and hold students' attention.



Humor

Try using constructive (i.e., non-hostile) humor: Show cartoons or tell funny stories that relate a point, put corny stickers that say "Good Job!" on assignments well done, and add some joke to an exam or assignment. Students learn more when they're having fun.

Role-Playing



You can portray a particular character—say, the central figure in the material being studied—using costumes and other props. You may also want to take on the role of narrator and tell a story to the class.

Props

Bring a three dimensional object or something to use with electronic media into the classroom to integrate into the lecture or discussion. You can even sometimes use the students as props or actors.



Suspense and Surprise



The use of suspense makes material more intriguing for students. Try developing an "anticipatory set" at the beginning of class: a question which you will answer by the end of class. You can display a prop destined for later use and let students guess what it is for. You can use surprise by beginning class with a surprising behavior or event.

For other ideas, visit these resources:

<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-3.htm>

<http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/tips/part.html>