

Teaching Learning Center

PREPARING TO TEACH:

Many of the best teachers plan backwards when preparing a course. They actually begin with the results they hope to foster in their students. A study was conducted and the outcomes are detailed in Ken Bain's book "What the best college teachers do." There were four fundamental inquiries which emerged in the study:

- ◆ What should my students be able to do intellectually, physically, or emotionally as a result of their learning?
- ◆ How can I best help and encourage them to develop those abilities and the habits of the heart and mind to use them?
- ◆ How can my students and I best understand the nature, quality, and progress of their learning?
- ◆ How can I evaluate my efforts to foster that learning?

When planning a course, there should be a big question the course raises and ideally the students should be motivated to pursue the answer. Next, it must be determined what skills are required in order for students to answer the question raised and a framework must be implemented to guide students toward reasoning themselves to find the answer. Ask yourself what experiences can be put into the course to encourage students to refine their reasoning abilities?

Students will always come to you with a set of mental models; decide which ones you will want them to challenge. Try putting them in situations where their existing models will not work. Help them reason or create and use new information to solve problems, not rely on you to tell them everything they need to know and understand. Try to ask "what key information or concepts can I clarify to provide students with foundations (scaffolds) from which they can continue to build their understanding?" A much richer question than "what will I cover?"

There is a tendency, some areas of study more than others, to give students facts and insist that they memorize them in order to "know" the material. They will most likely not remember any of the facts shortly after the course or test has ended. There are many "good" students who excel at memorization and at figuring out what is expected of them in order to receive an "A." They appear to be head and shoulders above the pack but in reality are no closer to true understanding of the material than the so called "weaker" students. The very best teachers determine ways to incorporate new truths that challenge and pose questions. They teach students how to learn, how to think and reason, how to read more actively and effectively and how to understand what they have read.

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SYLLABUS CHECKLIST:

- ◆ Office hours & contact information
- ◆ List of required materials
- ◆ Attendance Policy
- ◆ Drop statement
- ◆ Withdrawal policy
- ◆ Financial Aid statement
- ◆ Make-up exam procedures
- ◆ The Texas Success Initiative statement
- ◆ Code of Conduct
- ◆ Classroom Etiquette
- ◆ ADA statement
- ◆ Grading scale
- ◆ Semester Calendar
- ◆ Course description & learning objectives



PREPARING TO TEACH CONT'D...

Students must learn to judge their own work. They simply must be able to analyze their learning and determine what is interesting to them. They must know the questions they need to ask in order to remain excited and interested in a given subject.

Highly effective teachers develop better learning experiences in part because their focus is on fostering learning in their students. Everything they do is geared towards the development and understanding of their students. Ken Bain notes the best teachers “follow few traditions blindly and recognize when change in the conventional course is both necessary and possible.”

From “What the Best College Teachers Do,” Ken Bain

“What should my students be able to do intellectually, physically, or emotionally as a result of their learning?”

-What the Best College Teachers Do

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WE CAN HELP:

- ◆ Drop by the TLC often to check out eCampus tips and tricks.
- ◆ Find out the latest multimedia options for your classes.
- ◆ Learn how to use Articulate to add tutorials or lectures to you site.
- ◆ Take part in great, informative workshops.
- ◆ Check out books to learn more to enhance your students' learning experience.

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WELCOME BACK! HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER!!