



# White Board

Become An Effective Teacher & Save Your Valuable Teaching Time and Energy

Center for Effective Undergraduate Teaching (864) 388-8426

## 10 Practical Approaches to Teaching

STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT walks of life converge in a classroom for learning. They have different capabilities and personalities, adding to the diversity that comes with learning institutions. As such, if you want to be an effective teacher, you need to formulate and implement creative and innovative strategies that are practical and meet the needs of students. This applies to all teachers despite the duration they have been teaching. However, it can be difficult to know what works best with your students and what won't work.

You cannot apply a 'one size fits all' approach. You have to blend a range of different strategies practical enough to your practice. To offer the best classroom experience to students, you need to improve your teaching practice, build collegiality, and delve deeper into content knowledge. As such, here are some practical teaching tips for educators:

### Watch Fellow Teachers

If you can watch your fellow teachers do their craft, you can become better at teaching. To avoid isolating teaching as a profession, you should visit other classrooms to enhance your growth. You can follow up with specific questions and provide and receive advice from your host. Find out why they did certain things, how they deal with challenging students, and why they chose to teach that specific topic.

### Listen to Those Who See You Everyday

It may seem unsettling but listening to students applies to practical teaching for educators. Students can provide good information concerning their teacher. This is because they interact with him or her every day. They can share their views concerning an instructor's practice and its effectiveness. However, a high level of trust is required from these students, and their input may be necessary to affirm their role in the classroom.

### Focus on Student Experiences

If you build your relationships, it should not be limited to your colleagues. If you can engage with colleagues from other institutions, engaging with students can be an effective and practical way of exploring learning capabilities and experiences for your students.

### Engage with Same-Subject Colleagues

If you want to improve content knowledge as a teacher, you can engage with colleagues who bear the same responsibilities. If you can arrange with your curriculum coordinator, and find time to collaborate with your colleagues, you will make the right progress in your career. You can use this as a chance to talk about the best classroom practices, getting deeper in content knowledge, as well as sharing effective leaning techniques. This helps you to avoid isolation, which sometimes happens in the teaching profession. Your effort will break down the alone time and enhance your experience.

### Always Remember to Teach Students, Not Content

If teaching was all about content, then the best mathematicians would be among the best teachers. However, if you can combine your understanding of the content and ability to effectively work with your colleagues, and the knowledge on how your students learn, you will achieve effective teaching.

Since the classroom is a dynamic environment, incorporating excellent practical approaches to teaching can prove effective. This enhances the success of your students. Consider the following practical teaching for educators as strategies:

### Visualization

As a teacher, you are expected to bring to life academic concepts through visual and practical learning experiences. You can have an interactive whiteboard to display photos, videos, and other illustrations. Let students

participate in out-of-classroom experiments and local excursions.

### Inquiry-Based Instruction

You can pose thought-provoking questions and encourage students to have independent thinking. It also makes them independent learners. You can also invite them to ask their questions and investigate ideas to enhance their problem-solving skills and have a deeper understanding of the academic concepts. These are very crucial skills not only in the academic world but also in life. The questions can be subjective to encourage learners to express their unique views.

### Professional Development

As a teacher, you can involve yourself in various professional development programs to enhance your teaching and learning. Education policies are constantly changing,

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Classes End - Dec 2  
Reading Day - Dec 3  
Exams - Dec 4-10  
All Grades Due - Dec 12  
Commencement - Dec 18  
Holiday Break - Dec 24-31

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Center for Effective  
Undergraduate Teaching  
Carnel Learning Center, Suite 106.  
Phone: 388-8426

# The Focus is You: Kathleen Koenig

ALTHOUGH KATHLEEN KOENIG was terrified of public speaking as a student, she now teaches lecture classes with 135+ students. As an associate professor in the Physics Department at the University of Cincinnati, Koenig says her former teachers would never have envisioned her in this role.

**Q: What would your students be surprised to find out about you?**

Koenig: My students would be surprised to find out that I am actually pretty shy and from grade school through college absolutely dreaded speaking in front of others. I now teach large lecture classes with 135+ students and have come to learn to enjoy being in front of the class guiding student learning. My former teachers would never have envisioned me in this role though and I can still remember my terror in middle school when I learned I had to do a 3-minute speech for English class!

**Q: How do you keep things fresh in the classroom?**

Koenig: I absolutely love to show selected Youtube videos in my physics classroom to keep students excited about the material and also bridge the content to everyday life. I particularly like it when the video lends itself to my pausing it so I can ask students to predict an outcome. Often students' intuition is such that many predict incorrectly. I then have students discuss their ideas with their

peers and make a second prediction before showing the outcome on the video. This is usually followed by "ah-ha" moments of understanding, and without my asking, students who were correct frequently jump into conversation with those around them to explain it again.

**Q: If you could pass on any wisdom to your students what would you share?**

Koenig: I share this with my freshman STEM majors every year. I am not sure where I first heard it, but it is very powerful. There are three things every student should get out of college to set oneself up for a content life. First, find what it is you absolutely love. It could be a subject of study or it could be a process such as problem solving. Second, get good at it. Do everything you can to master it. Third, figure out how you can use your passion and newly learned skills to make the world a better place.

**Q: What constitutes as a "good day" in class?**

Koenig: A good day at school is one in which everything flows. That is, my mini-summaries of the homework readings are met with students nodding their heads in agreement, the majority of students then actively engage in discussing the conceptual clicker questions or problems I give them to solve, and the demonstrations I do are met with smiles and laughter followed by

the majority of students answering related clicker questions correctly. And perhaps most importantly, a good day is one in which I get through all the planned material and activities and have enough feedback from students to know that they both enjoyed the class and learned what I expected them to learn.

**Q: What is the hardest thing about being a teacher?**

Koenig: My biggest challenge with being a teacher is reaching every student. I teach large lecture physics classes and my students are diverse, not just in ethnicity and socio-economic status, but also in math literacy and scientific reasoning abilities. Most are freshmen living away from home for the first time and many are struggling with issues that interfere with their ability to focus on learning, such as financial worries, concerns related to first generation college students, and mental illness, to name a few. I have been teaching for 25 years and although I work to continuously improve my teaching to support student learning, I think my biggest challenge is reaching each and every one of my students and providing them the support they need to be successful.

Faculty Focus; The Focus is You: Kathleen Koenig; November 7, 2019; [ <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/the-focus-is-you-kathleen-koenig/> ] December 2, 2019.

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and as such, it is important to attend events and be inspired by other teachers and academic technocrats. See it as a valid excuse to get out of class and engage with fellow teachers. Also, make your students aware about the best custom academic writing services that can help them while writing an academic essay.

### Take the School Year as a Marathon

Every student is unique. This implies that they will take different learning paths. In response, you have to be a source of guidance to them during their academic journey, which is why they need you. They are more inclined to trust in your input, especially in learning and enhancing their performance.

### Your Identity as a Teacher is Important

You need to find your identity as a teacher because it is important to the learning student. Ascertain what makes you curious, reasons for teaching, and what you love about your students. This will be your brand that everyone, not only your students, will use to identify you. In other words, your brand should set you apart from the rest of the teaching fraternity.

Being an effective teacher can be challenging, but the above practical teaching tips for educators can make your experience even more rewarding.

*Bio: Scott Rios is an accomplished educator*

*who has been advising teachers on how they can become better at their profession. He has taught for a long time and interacted with educators at all levels. He prefers a more practical approach to teaching as opposed to theory. Rios has also made it easy for students to engage with their teachers. Through his teacher-student relationship programs, he hopes to ensure both parties feel fulfilled, especially with achieving academic goals.*

Scott Rios; 10 Practical Approaches to Teaching; Faculty Focus; November 6, 2019; [ <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/practical-approaches-to-teaching/> ] December 2, 2019.