Glass Campus ONLINE CLASSES

Teaching

Being able to do something doesn't mean you can teach it.

ATTITUDE

How well you do something will usually depend on the attitude you adopt while doing it. It's important to ask yourself why you've decide to teach. Is it because you expect that by teaching you'll create new customers for your product, or do you sincerely want to teach people. Will you be willing to share all your knowledge and teach everything you know or will you hold back some special secrets? Will you teach all alternatives methods or just your personal favorites? Why you chose to teach will determine how well you teach. Do you have an aptitude to teach or just the desire? Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you can teach it. Teaching is itself a skill.

ETHICAL INSTRUCTORS GUIDE

At the 2004 Victorian Glass Art Festival, a group of artisans and teachers got together to discuss teaching methods and produced a proposed "Principles of Ethical Instruction".

- ***Teach first – sell second.*** *The instructor should be there to teach, not to sell products.*
- ***Teach all alternatives.*** *Don't teach only your personal favorites.*
- ***Teach everything you know.*** *Hold nothing back. There should be no "trade secrets".*
- ***Be honest.*** *If you don't know something, or can't answer a question – admit it.*
- ***Be prepared.*** *Plan your class to run efficiently and effectively.*
- ***Listen actively.*** *Identify your student needs and try to meet them.*
- ***Be fair to all.*** *Treat all students equally.*
- ***Create participation.*** *Get everyone involved – especially the shy and reticent students.*
- ***Create obtainable goals.*** *Provide goals that students can realistically be expected to achieve.*
- ***Clearly define objectives.*** *Be sure everyone understands what it is they're trying to do.*
- ***Instructor to supply everything.*** *Students shouldn't be expected to pre-buy tools.*

SETTING

Where you teach can be as important as how you teach. Be sure the classroom is large enough to comfortably accommodate your class and that it has the equipment needed.

SAFETY

Take precautions to provide a safe learning environment. Plan in advance what to do if an accident happens. Take the time to inform your students of potential hazards and how best to avoid injury. Debunk myths. It's important to install caution where it's needed, but equally important to remove needless fears. Start by explaining how irrational the paranoia about lead poisoning is.

LIABILITY

You are legally responsible to create a safe environment for your students. Take necessary precautions and always get releases signed. Probably the best way to protect yourself is by distributing a prepared hand out listing possible hazards and recommended safety precautions. That way, no student can claim they weren't adequately warned of the dangers.

CLASS SIZE

How many do students do you think you can handle without assistance? A larger group will increase income, but if there are too many for you to provide the needed personal attention, then none of the groups is getting what they paid for.

TOOLS

What tools will you or the students need for your class? Will you have some extra in the event some students fail to bring what is needed? Have you considered all the contingencies?

PRICING

How much should you charge each student to take the class? Every instructor charges differently. If you're uncertain, you might use the guideline used by most Recreation Centers of $12.00 per hour per student. For example, a class that will provide 20 hours of instruction time would charge $240.00 per student. Will you establish a class price that includes materials needed, or charge separately for any materials each student needs?

INSTRUCTOR FEES

How will you determine how much to pay instructors? Some places pay a fixed hourly rate, others pay a flat per class rate, while some pay a percentage of the class revenue. Colleges usually pay per hour at the same rate their teachers are paid. Recreation centers usually take a 20 or 25% commission and pay the balance of all revenue to the instructor. GlassCraft Expo pays a fixed rate for each class $175. for half day and $400 for full day). Other conventions pay the instructor 50% of the revenue. At Victorian Glass Art Festival, we pay instructors teaching in our shop 50% of the revenue and instructors teaching in their own studios 75% of the revenue.

HANDOUTS

Will you provide print material to hand out to students to take home with them. This can be especially helpful. Everyone will forget some part of what they hear in the class, so hand out print material ensures they have paper copy of what was discussed.

PROBLEMS

Every class has some problem students. Part of planning and preparing for your class is planning how you'll deal with any of these. Here's some you can expect:

- **Chatty Cathy**. Some are more interested in talking to everyone than doing work.
- **Shy.** If some seem too timid to ask questions, make a point of asking them some.
- **Time Hogs.** Some want to take up too much of your time. It's important to not allow this.
- **Slow Poke.** Some like to work slowly and can easily fall behind the rest of the class. This makes it difficult for you to maintain a steady pace with everyone working at approximately the same level. You may have to give these students special attention or get one of the other students to help them.
- **Speedster.** Some are so quick they dash ahead of the rest of the class. This is as much a problem as the Slow Poke. You might get a Speedster to help out any slower students.
- **Slow learners.** Everyone learns at different speeds. Some will need extra time and extra encouragement. Maybe their skill level is too low and they shouldn't even be in your class. Can you still help them?
- **Prodigy.** Some learn quickly and can easily become bored and distracted. Use them to help with demonstrations and to help with the slow learners.
- **Knows everything.** Some students think they already know everything you're teaching them and might even argue with you. Perhaps the best way to deal with a "know it all" is to respond with a battery of information enormously in excess of their knowledge level. Tell them about numerous other alternatives that also work, but unfortunately this class won't have time to got into all of them.
- **Craft Gadfly.** Every class has one. These are people that have no specific interest in what you're teaching but take every craft class available. With few exceptions these students rush through everything they do and produce the shoddiest work.
- **Unsupplied.** Didn't bring necessary supplies. To allow for such students, you should always have a few extra tools and supplies available.
- **Unskilled.** A student that isn't qualified or prepared to take your class can be a huge problem. Often one will decide they don't need to take the beginner class but can start off at the intermediate level. Sometimes they can, but if they can't, you'll have to decide whether you want to give them the extra time that will be needed, or tell them they can't take the class.
- **Overqualified.** It's rare, but sometimes you'll have a student that has already mastered everything you're teaching. You can either try

to give them some special attention for advanced work, or perhaps get them to help you teach.

- **Lacking confidence.** Students that lack the confidence to try something can be the greatest challenge. That's where it becomes important to have some coaching motivation skills.

10 MINUTE RULE

Unless they receive some stimulation, few people will pay attention for more than 10 minutes. You'll keep you student's attention if you make some kind of change every 10 minutes or less. Use visual aids – even if it's only a blackboard of flip chart. Instead of standing in one place, walk around. If possible, walk through the classroom while talking. Don't just keep talking but interject with questions of the students. Probably the best way to keep your class paying attention is with humor. Just as you've thought about how to deal with problem students, build yourself a library of jokes that you can use to keep them interested.

PRESENTATION

Speak clearly, in simple language, and to the whole group.

- Explain what you plan to do, do it, then explain why it was done that way.
- Watch student's faces for reactions. Do they look confused?
- Be patient – some take longer to learn than others.
- Use voice inflection and tone change to show various moods.
- Be enthusiastic – it's contagious.
- If you can, move around the group so all feel you spent time with them.
- Watch your body language, If you don't look interested, they won't be.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Give each student equal attention.
- Emphasize skill development.

VISUALIZATION

The brain often can't distinguish between actually doing something and imagining doing it. You can use visualization to teach by having students imagine doing it. Some examples:

- If a student has difficulty holding their arm against their body while cutting glass, tell them to visualize that arm duct taped to their waist.
- To understand the need to bend over while cutting, tell students to picture a question mark and create that shape with their upper body.
- To explain how cutting pressure should be a uniform pressure, tell students to imagine an opera singer that can hold a note without it rising or lowering in pitch or volume – then ask them to apply that same uniformity to their cutting pressure.
- To help students understand that soldering requires balancing the movement of one hand in co-ordination with the other hand, compare it to the way both feet must be coordinated to use the clutch on a standard transmission.

DETECTION/CORRECTION

The ability to do this effectively is what separates average instructors from great ones. You should try to identify each individual's specific problems and suggest practice exercises to correct or improve. Develop a "bag of tricks" that you can draw on. For example, if a student seems to have trouble maintaining steady pressure while cutting, or if they seem to be pressing too hard, have them practice scoring glass on a bathroom scale. By being able to "read" the pressure they're applying, they can easily learn to apply the correct pressure.

MOTIVATION

It's not good enough to show students how to do something, you must motivate them to want to do it. Provide steady encouragement. Be liberal with praise. Provide a series of small wins to help build confidence. Confidence creates competence.