June 2016

Tomorrow’s Teaching Newsletter

Tomorrow's Teaching newsletter is a publication produced by the MUSC Online Advisory Council and the Apple Tree Society providing news, advice, and resources for 21st century teaching with technology and innovative strategies.

Included in this newsletter:
- Quick Tips – What the Best Teachers Do
- Top Advice from an MUSC Faculty Member – Clint Blankenship, PharmD, PA-C, RPh
- Trends – M-Learning
- Resources
- Conferences
- Workshops

Quick Tips:

The Apple Tree Society hosted a student panel in April with the focus on “What the best teachers do”. The number one response was that “they show they care about us.” Here are ways to show you care about your students when teaching a class no matter the size or location:

Arrive early, start on time, and end on time. Showing your respect for everyone’s time will encourage your students to do the same. Arriving early will allow you time to get prepared and to talk with students informally. This informal interaction will help you establish a rapport with your students, which will in turn help them feel confident to participate and to ask for help when they need it.

Interact with students; include opportunities for active learning. Demonstrate from the first session that you are interested in what students are thinking. Include plenty of opportunities for students to ask and answer questions. While a lecture course will provide fewer opportunities for interaction than a discussion course, you will find that students will be able to learn and retain more material if you pause every 15-20 minutes to ask questions or to ask students to apply a theory, solve a problem, or discuss a debated point.

Show passion for the subject and for your students’ learning. One of the most effective ways to inspire your students to learn is to show that you are truly interested in, and excited about, the content/topic and their learning.

When responding to your students’ questions and comments, use both verbal and non-verbal cues to show them that you are listening and engaged. Do not use this time to look down at your notes or remind yourself of the next topic. Students can perceive these actions as indications that you are not truly listening to what they are saying.

Be flexible. Be prepared to have good days and bad days when teaching. If you are not getting
good results teaching in a particular way, try something new. For example, if the students in your
discussion section are extremely quiet, break them up into smaller groups to solve a problem or
answer a set of questions.

If students appear bored, include more opportunities for active learning. Pause in the
middle of a session to have students ask and answer questions, provide examples, or solve
problems. Do not assume that students look bored because they know the material and then
decide to speed up your pace; it may be instead that they are having trouble understanding what
you are presenting to them. It may also be that they are sleep-deprived, as students often are.

If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. Tell the students that you will find an
answer, and then get back to them. Present the answer to the entire group during the next session;
do not let the matter drop. You do not need to be all-knowing to maintain your credibility. One
way to lose it, in fact, is to bluff by giving an answer of which you are unsure and that students
may later find out to be untrue. Model intellectual curiosity and honesty. Your enthusiasm to
learn something new will inspire your students to follow your example.

When asking questions, do not be afraid of silence. Often, silence means that students are
thinking. Do not give in to the temptation to end the silence by answering your own questions,
which will only convince students that if they wait long enough, they will not have to think
because you will supply the answers for them. Wait 5-10 seconds for an answer. If, at that point,
you are getting blank stares and quizzical expressions, rephrase your question.

Top Advice from an MUSC Faculty Member

Clint Blankenship, PharmD, PA-C, RPh, is the 2016 recipient of the MUSC Teacher of the
Year Award and Assistant Professor in the College of Health Professions, Division of Physician
Assistant Studies.

Organization
This starts with early thought and preparation for your course. This not only relates to how you
organize information but even applies to details such as how you title your handouts on
Moodle. Organization of individual lectures will depend on the material but should flow
progressively and logically. If you present recurrent topics, break them down the same each
time. For example, in teaching about a disease topic, start with the basics such as epidemiology,
then how the disease will present (history and physical findings), differential diagnosis options,
and, finally, the management. Organizing the same for each disease will reinforce this approach
so students will think about things the same each time. Also, if you aren’t an organized person,
try getting someone else’s opinion or even ask your students about ways they’d like you to
improve your organization.

Show students you are human too
This may sound silly at first but being relatable to students is crucial to establishing a good
relationship. Share stories from your experience and don’t be afraid to tell students when you
don’t know something. They respect teachers just as much or more who aren’t “all-knowing”
but who come back after being “stumped” with answers.

Communicate
In health care we expect our students to be excellent communicators but I’ve heard some educators who think they shouldn’t have to explain reasons why they do things in class. This sets up an antagonistic environment that students will resent. I tell my students we are all in this together and explain the reasons I do things. I also take student feedback to heart and consider suggestions fully even if I can’t always follow through with them.

Everything you do should be for the learner
Know what you want to cover and think about it from the point of the learner. If they are new to the topic, you have to assume they know nothing so you must prepare that information accordingly. If they don’t “get it” the first time, it is YOUR responsibility to help them. You need to remember that it takes several exposures to material to truly become ingrained and we can’t assume “covering” a topic once is sufficient. It is also too easy for experienced clinicians/teachers to say “that’s not the way we did it in my day”. The current generation of learners is different from most of their teachers and I feel it is our (teachers) duty to adapt, not theirs.

Trends

M-Learning

M-Learning is the act of using a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet, for learning making content accessible anytime and anywhere. This trend allows the learner control over time, place, path, and pace of learning giving the learner a sort of blended environment where they can interact with content, the internet, and in class. Learners have the capability to exchange information and interact with others synchronously fostering social learning with communication and collaboration. This type of learning allows for a global learning experience without compromising contextual relevance and personalization. Faculty need to think about delivering learning in this sort of environment, which also greatly alters the content too. Content is adapting it to the small screen by providing materials in chunks, which has been proven to increase completion and retention rates. M-Learning is becoming even more popular, so take advantage of these tech-centric advancements for your on-the-move learners!

12 Mobile Learning Trends for the Near Future

- Flash to HTML5
- Device agnostic design approach
- Mobile app analytics
- Multi-screen usage
- Responsive web design
- Bite-sized learning
- Competency-based learning
- Gasified learning
- Geo-location sensitive learning
• Augmented reality
• Social mobile learning
• Wearable technology

MUSC Ed Tech Tools with Mobile Accessibility

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<tr>
<td>TurningPoint</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Polls can be accessed and replied to from mobile devices</td>
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Resources of the Month

Voss, Chris (2016). *Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It.*

Conferences (through June)

• Annual Faculty Institute at Barnard College, June 9 – 12, [http://reacting.barnard.edu/conferences-events](http://reacting.barnard.edu/conferences-events)
• National Effective Teaching Institute, June 23 – 25, [http://www.asee.org/conferences-and-events/conferences NETI](http://www.asee.org/conferences-and-events/conferences NETI)
• Learning and the Brain Summer Institute, June 28 – July 1, [http://www.learningandthebrain.com/](http://www.learningandthebrain.com/)

Workshops and Courses (through June)

Contribute to Tomorrow’s Teaching
Tell us what to include in this newsletter. Complete this brief poll: https://redcap.musc.edu/surveys/?s=7WA8ATWAK3. Or, contact mauldinm@musc.edu, annandu@musc.edu or hortmanm@musc.edu to submit ideas, resources or news directly.