

# Everything That New And Adjunct Business Faculty Members Should Ask About Teaching, But Don't Know Enough To Ask

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## Abstract

*This paper is a user-friendly manual designed to minimize the growing pains associated with college-level teaching.*

*Specific topics include syllabus development, classroom teaching methods, proper use of the initial class session, and advice related to answering student questions. Many new and adjunct instructors are met with unexpected challenges in the classroom. This manual will help them anticipate those challenges, improve the quality of instruction, and allow the instructor to better meet the course objectives.*

Keywords: Teaching Tips, Adjunct Faculty, New Faculty

## INTRODUCTION

Many full-time faculty in higher education consider themselves to be very good and very dedicated classroom teachers. The desire to guide and develop students in a particular field of study was most likely a key component in the decision to choose a teaching career path, and it is most likely cited as a reason for educators being satisfied with their career choice.

Teachers all recall their first experience in the classroom, the first time they had a sea of thirsty minds expecting them to not only simplify an overly-complex textbook, but to make the simplification process enjoyable as well. As teachers progress and add a mix of experience and dedicated efforts, the challenges of classroom management became secondary; there is an increase in confidence level and teachers are able to focus on objectives more closely related to the course and the curriculum.

Even though the troubled economy has resulted in budget cuts for many academic departments, the interest in and importance of proper faculty development remains high. As more accreditation learning agencies require more assurance that learning measures are achieved, the commitment to quality classroom teaching and high-level instruction has increased on both conceptual and practical levels. For those who have spent their careers delivering what is hopefully quality instruction, this paper could be regarded as a compilation of many ideas, many "tricks of the trade" accumulated over many years.

However, there are many entering the profession who are unaware of nuances that come natural to those more experienced. New professors can make the same mistakes their predecessors made. Unfortunately, the vast experience of the veterans does not pass to the rookies by osmosis; in many cases, a new professor is unceremoniously thrown into the swimming pool to tread water as long as it takes to learn to swim. Many professors survive; however, the learning curve could have been much more abbreviated.

A possible remedy to this problem is a requirement that teaching internships be required for graduate students. The theory is to match the training of graduate students with the needs of the campuses where most of them will teach (Burke, 2001). This internship requirement would certainly increase the quality of those teachers beginning a career

as full-time educators.

As critical as proper guidance and direction is for the professor at the opening stage of his or her career, the need is even more for the unassuming part-time or adjunct instructor. The adjunct instructor is usually asked to perform at the same level as a full-time faculty member, often on very short notice before the course begins, often without access to the same resources, and always for significantly less pay. These expectations are certainly high and possibly unrealistic. However, the reality is that many institutions rely on adjunct professors to be an integral part of the academic team. Sometimes this reliance is caused by a need to staff courses scheduled at times or locations unattractive to full-time professors. Sometimes this reliance is due to a need for practical expertise in the classroom, expertise so specific that it is not cost-effective to allocate a full-time faculty slot to a professor with similar experience. Sometimes, especially in recent years, colleges have relied on adjunct professors to save money and avoid having to commit to someone for more than a semester (Mangan, 2009).

This author has taught for 30 years at a school that has placed significant reliance on adjunct faculty, and the support for that reliance includes all three above-mentioned reasons, plus a few more. Most of those 30 years have been as department chair, assisted by two full-time professors. Chair responsibilities include hiring, directing, and evaluating approximately twenty-five adjunct professors. For the department to meet its goals and maintain its standards, these adjunct professors need more than that unceremonious push into the swimming pool.

This paper is a user-friendly manual designed to minimize the growing pains associated with college-level teaching. It is a compilation of many personal experiences and the experiences of several faculty members. To make the new professors' classroom experiences more effective, efficient, and enjoyable, this manual was developed to cover many suggestions which are second-nature to veteran professors but sincerely appreciated by incoming instructors. Although the experiences listed result from managing an accounting department at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the majority of the topics are common and basic to most specialties in higher education.

Full-time faculty in the beginning stages of their careers and adjunct professors making a contribution to higher education should realize that the experienced faculty members are more than willing to share advice and stories. Many believe that today's students can be more aggressive and have higher expectations than those students in the classroom decades ago. Many new instructors were dedicated college students who focused only on professors and student colleagues with similar levels of dedication and attitude. Those new instructors must adapt to focusing on all the students, especially the students who need help the most to succeed.

## **SECTION 1: SO YOU WANT TO BE AN INSTRUCTOR?**

Most instructors at the college or university level are competent, qualified professionals in their field of study; however, this does not automatically make them good instructors. Expert knowledge must be coupled with an ability to communicate effectively and with the ability to manage the administrative functions of a course. Competent teaching also requires developing and implementing reliable grading procedures and stimulating student desire to learn. Competent teaching involves more than simply disseminating information.

It is surprising that a college or university will often expect instructors to effectively administer a semester-long course with little exposure to the various methods of achieving academic objectives. University teaching, which places the development of minds in the hands of neophyte teachers, is one of the few professions that does not require certified experience (Minter, 2009).

This manual provides guidance to the instructor by focusing on ideas, concepts, and suggestions for college instructors to become better teachers.

Although this manual was written with the adjunct (part-time) faculty member in mind, it could be useful as a refresher for more experienced full-time instructors. In addition, it was written for business school instructors, although many of the ideas and suggestions are appropriate for non-business courses.

The responsibility of teaching includes certain expectations. A few things to consider:

**Instructors are very influential people.**

Most professionals, when asked to mention names of individuals who have influenced them during their careers, will credit at least one professor from their college or university. An instructor is in a unique position to help each student, even though there are numerous students in the class and "contact" hours are 50 or fewer. Those who truly enjoy teaching realize their potential to be an integral part of the professional development of each student.

A college professor should present himself or herself as a "person" as well as an instructor! Even though it may not be feasible to get to know all students on a personal level, a professor can demonstrate human qualities during class lectures and discussions to earn the respect and admiration of the students.

**Money cannot be the only incentive.**

Salaries for educators (especially part-time educators) are usually lower than one can earn at a for-profit organization in the "real world." To be a good teacher requires a commitment to education; if an instructor compares the amount of time necessary to be an excellent instructor with the monetary rewards, it will become clear that teaching is not worth the effort. Instead, one must focus on the combination of adequate compensation and the non-monetary benefits of participating in the education process, along with the personal satisfaction of professional achievement. Most new teachers take teaching seriously because they want to enjoy teaching (Boice, 2000).

**Teaching is less supervised than other professions.**

In many career positions, the employee is supervised by and reports to a person "higher up" the administrative chart; this supervision is more direct and consistent than the supervision experienced by the instructor. Although the instructor can seek a department chairperson's or coordinator's direction and recommendations, the critical hours in the classroom are virtually supervision-free.

Most instructors welcome this level of freedom, but it forces them to take the initiative in order to improve teaching skills. Consultation with experienced instructors and various self-evaluation procedures are necessary. Evaluations submitted by students are also a helpful tool, although they should not be used as the sole evaluation method. Instructors must focus on the result. What is important is learning, not teaching. Teaching effectiveness depends not just on what the teacher does, but rather on what the student does (McKeechie, 2009).

**Teaching is a "lonely" world.**

Since direct supervision is non-existent in teaching, the instructor must struggle with the constant atmosphere of "me vs. the student" in the classroom. Meetings with colleagues (fellow instructors) occur only outside the classroom, absent pressure from students.

Although it may appear that every student cares about nothing but his or her grade computation, realize that most students are expecting some educational benefit from the course. The instructor must create an open, positive atmosphere while maintaining an objective, no-nonsense application of rules and policies.

**Being an excellent instructor will become increasingly difficult if the instructor becomes complacent.**

Many instructors equate success with the completion of a term in which no student protests occurred. They are satisfied with their performance at a basic level without considering what additional learning objectives could be met in the classroom.

In almost all cases, instructors can look back over a semester and think of something that can be improved for the next semester, such as improved efficiency to create time for coverage of new topics critical to the course objectives.

Teaching requires effort. The standard baseline formula for college instruction is three hours of preparation and

follow-up for every hour in the classroom (Louis, 2009). Quality instruction requires this type of commitment.

## **SECTION 2: THE SYLLABUS**

Planning is the most essential factor in effective teaching, and the syllabus is the most essential factor in the planning process. It is the "contract" to be used throughout the semester and should establish the course rules and objectives.

Deviations from the syllabus could jeopardize the required equitable treatment of all students in the class.

Items that could be included in the syllabus include:

1. Instructor information (employer, position, phone numbers and email).
2. Office hours.
3. Text/readings (including any optional or recommended materials).
4. Course prerequisites (per college catalog).
5. Specific learning objectives (topics to be covered, skills to be developed) as well as class procedures (lecture, homework, cases, etc.).
6. Grade determination (schedule of points and percentages on which grades will be based).
7. A statement regarding academic misconduct. This should address cheating on exams and quizzes as well as plagiarism on written assignments. Most students understand what constitutes cheating on a test, but overestimate what is allowed when compiling a written report.
8. List of assignments.
9. Course time summary (chronological listing of topics covered during each class session). Class meeting time and timing of "breaks" if appropriate.
10. Attendance policies. Check the college catalog to determine that policies do not contradict the official school policies. Consider a policy so that consistent student absences will have a detrimental effect on a student's grade.
11. Class cancellation policy. Is there a procedure in effect to schedule make-up classes? What is the student's responsibility if a class is canceled? Any change from the regularly scheduled class meeting time should usually be discussed with the department chairperson. Of course, cancellation of class should be avoided. The instructor can sometimes find a substitute instructor to minimize the effect of being absent.
12. Expected student in-class participation (and its effect on the grade computation).
13. Library projects, required outside readings, and online projects.
14. Policy on make-up exams and late assignments.
15. Dates for exams and quizzes.
16. A reminder that exams will not be a simple reiteration of homework problems. The exams will test student application skills and conceptual knowledge. Also, if appropriate, a policy that communication skills will be a component in the grading of all student assignments.
17. A discussion on student ethics, especially when case analysis and team projects are included in the class requirements.
18. A policy on the maintenance of student exams following their return to the students and subsequent discussions. Some colleges require the re-collection of exams, which are then maintained by the instructor or academic department.
19. A notation that students are responsible for all classroom announcements, even if they do not attend a class meeting.
20. The availability of final grades.
21. Lab fees, library cards, diskettes, blue books and other required materials.
22. Alternate grades and what is required to qualify for them. Examples of these grades include W (Withdraw), I (Incomplete), and P (Passing).
23. Tutoring, counseling, and other options available when students encounter problems.
24. Methods and timing for return of exams, projects, etc.
25. A bibliography of required or suggested readings. This list should consist of up-to-date materials that are relevant to the course objectives. If students are directed to the library or the Internet to find any listed items,

- be sure that the resources actually are available and accessible.
26. Policies on cell phone and laptop computer use in the classroom. Some students are so talented they can send text messages with their cell phones securely hidden in their pockets! Realize that students who use computers for surfing the Internet, communicating with friends, or checking fantasy team stats are not only rude and disrespectful, but distracting to other students as well.
27. A policy on outside-of-class communications with the instructor. Most instructors prefer emails. However, certain guidelines should be considered:
- If available, only the university/college email system should be used. No emails from personal email addresses will be acknowledged.
  - All email language will be tactful and professional. Informal methods such as “text speak” or “SMS language” are not allowed.
  - Any confidential information on student grades or other course performance indicators should be communicated using approved methods.
  - Students should not ask questions which could be answered by reference to the course website, fellow students, or other sources available to all students.

### **SECTION 3: INITIAL SESSION**

The first class meeting is critical; the rules, expectations and objectives of the class should be discussed. Administrative problems throughout the semester can be reduced by an effective initial session and a thorough course syllabus.

Unfortunately, many instructors do not use the entire time allotted for the initial session and dismiss students early. These instructors consider a discussion of the syllabus reason enough to meet and believe the remaining class time cannot be very beneficial because the students are unprepared.

The instructor should spend whatever time is needed to explain the syllabus and other administrative matters. Following that, material should be covered using the full classroom time allotted, even though the time may not be used as efficiently as the time will be used in later weeks. Some colleges require "advance assignments" for courses so that students enter the first class meeting with homework completed.

Dismissing class early communicates to the students that class time is not important, both for the first class and all subsequent class meetings! There should be a lecture and/or class discussion in the initial session; the students should benefit from a lecture or discussion even though they are not prepared for class. Other suggestions include a practice quiz or a case analysis with students forming teams. Try to have the students say to themselves, “This is going to be an interesting course” as they leave the first session!

Another drawback of early dismissal is that students conclude that the length of every subsequent class session is also "up for grabs." Ending class at the designated time will send a message to the students that every class minute is important; they should come to class prepared and they should expect the full scheduled time to be used.

In the initial class, many instructors also obtain information on the students' academic background, type of practical experience, and expectations for the semester. Recommend that students exchange names, phone numbers, and email addresses so they can determine what was covered in any class they cannot attend.

The instructor should consider assigning a "full load" of homework between the first and second class sessions. This may not win any popularity contests, but there are advantages:

1. Students have adequate time to spend on assignments in the early weeks of the semester; there are probably no exams, research papers, or case presentations in any of their other classes.
2. This initial emphasis on homework sends a message to the students that homework is an essential requirement and will be taken seriously.
3. It is better to assign heavier loads in the early portion of the semester and then "lighten up" as the semester winds down instead of vice versa. This avoids the frustration caused by several exams and assignments

"crammed" into the final weeks of the semester.

Another suggestion for the first session is to give a practice exam based on material from prerequisite courses. This exam score is officially ignored, but it can later be used when counseling students experiencing difficulty with the course material. It also provides an effective "wake-up call" for the new semester!

Provide as much as possible in the first session! For example, some students need direction regarding the course website, library databases, publisher-managed student companion websites, and useful sources of course-related information.

#### **SECTION 4: CLASSROOM TEACHING METHODS AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The use of different teaching methods will naturally depend on the course, the instructor, and the students. Methods include, but are not limited to, lecture, homework coverage, casework, case presentations, question and answer, and group discussions. Various technological advancements provide opportunities for instructors to further enhance delivery techniques and make classroom time even more efficient and effective.

Whatever method is used, it should not be used to the point of being a "crutch." For example, some instructors spend the entire class time going over homework problems instead of devising and delivering lectures that complement the textbook. Another "crutch" example is the classic "reading aloud from the textbook" or "reading the PowerPoint slides" referred to by students in their negative evaluations of the instructor.

Still another "crutch" is the constant use of class time for "break-out" group discussions. These group discussions are excellent for emphasizing a problem-solving approach and developing team communication skills. However, the instructor should consider whether some of these team discussions could be assigned as homework, allowing the class time to be used for student presentations or discussions. This is especially true in the second half of the term when the students have become proficient in the team discussion method.

An instructor who consistently ends a class meeting before the prescribed time should consider implementing a wider variety of teaching methods. A reliance on only one or two methods can result in a decreased student attention span; the students then become less responsive and the instructor will erroneously conclude that the final minutes of the session are not worthwhile. There is no doubt that student attention spans have shortened over recent years. Don't try to take the students back to the "good old days." Instead, use methods they will accept! Remember that they'll learn less if they don't enjoy being there!

With many choices of instructional methods available, the instructor should use the appropriate mix of methods; a knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of some different methods is useful. Here is a brief summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional lecturing, homework review and case discussion techniques. Following that summary are suggestions related to use of technology to complement classroom activities.

##### **Lecturing Advantages**

- \*Efficient explanation of technical material to students.
- \*Presentation of textbook material in a different manner with a different emphasis.
- \*The frequency and depth of student questions can be used by the instructor to gauge the students' understanding of the lecture.

##### **Lecturing Disadvantages**

- \*Lectures can often be boring, especially if based on the text.
- \*Little student interaction.
- \*Lectures are often an exercise in note-taking by the students with the instructor speaking and the students merely writing whatever they hear.

### **Lecturing Suggestions**

- \*Don't read from the text or PowerPoint.
- \*Be organized; don't let the lecture wander. Whether using the chalkboard, whiteboard, PowerPoint slides, or other electronic delivery methods, the instructor must be sure the students can read everything! Always provide a handout for anything important projected on a screen.
- \*Lecture to the entire class, not just the first row.
- \*Supplement the lecture with handouts to avoid excessive writing in class. (Students take notes at an amazingly slow pace!)
- \*Don't hide behind the podium. Walk around, especially out into the area students are seated.
- \*Lectures should not be monotone; vary the speed and volume of your voice. When saying something critical, use a very loud voice or even a very soft whisper. There is usually an increase in the attention level.
- \*If possible, learn the names of your students and call them by name. Even though a "seating chart" may appear to be inappropriate, it will be accepted by all the students if they realize the chart will help the instructor learn students' names. (Students tend to sit in the same seat each class anyway.)
- \*Make a video recording of lectures. Review the video to become aware of weaknesses in presentation skills, including overuse of certain words and phrases (especially "you know" and other meaningless phrases used to fill gaps during conversation).
- \*Display some enthusiasm. If instructors appear bored by the subject matter, students will follow the lead.
- \*Ask questions throughout the lecture. Students will think when forced to do so. The students' answers can be used to measure their understanding of the material. The instructor should rely on feedback from a variety of students, not just the brightest students.
- \*Consider using "practice quizzes" to measure understanding and emphasize the importance of the lecture.
- \*Do not use guest lecturers simply to fill time. They should be used to supplement lectures and to encourage a more thorough student understanding of concepts. If the instructor is not present and listening to the guest speaker, many students will conclude that the lecture is not important. If possible, include questions pertaining to the guest lecture on the next exam.
- \*Supplement lectures with real-world examples. Do not limit explanations and comments to those on an academic level.
- \*Beware of using examples that require on-board calculations; most instructors are not "quick-on-their-feet" when forced to compute answers in front of a discriminating audience. Prepare these examples in advance to avoid this risk.
- \*Invite a faculty colleague to attend class; ask for advice on improving teaching techniques.
- \*Ask faculty colleagues for permission to attend their classes to observe their teaching methods.

### **Homework Review Advantages**

- \*Assuming students have done the homework, in-class homework review provides clarification and answers.
- \*The homework problem provides a "structure" for the material to be covered.
- \*Certain homework problems can result in class discussion and debate.

### **Homework Review Disadvantages**

- \*Student awareness that all homework will be reviewed point-by-point in class lessens the student's incentive to complete the homework prior to class. They develop a reliance on the instructor to get the homework done.
- \*Students who have correctly completed the homework do not benefit as much as possible from the class meeting.
- \*Excessive homework review turns class time into a "copying" session, with students (slowly) copying what the instructor writes.
- \*Students erroneously assume that a thorough study and understanding of the homework is sufficient to earn a high grade and meet the course objectives.

### **Homework Review Suggestions**

- \*Do not feel obligated to review all homework problems. Consider a thorough review of critical or difficult problems and then a discussion of key points (or no discussion at all) for less difficult problems. Possibly provide some check figures or complete solutions for the problems not covered during class.
- \*Be aware of students who consistently ask questions but have not spent the appropriate time outside of class.
- \*Encourage student questions and participation. Don't allow homework review to be simply a one-way communication.
- \*Assign a mix of both short-term homework (due next class) and long-term homework (due in two or three weeks). This will keep productivity high while also developing time management skills needed in a career.
- \*Require at least one speaking assignment to emphasize oral communication skills.
- \*Realize that some students who complete the homework correctly may have been able to refer to the homework of another student who completed the homework in the current or prior semester.
- \*Consider making selected homework answers available to the students, either by distributing copies or by placing copies on library reserve or a website. This will decrease the need to use classroom time for writing out homework answers. However, it is probable that the students will spend less time and fail to develop critical thought processes if homework answers are available. A combination of homework with available answers (for student review) and homework without available answers (to submit) may be appropriate.

### **Casework Advantages**

- \*Develops team concepts and analytical skills in real-world situations.
- \*Can be combined with a student presentation of the team findings to emphasize oral communication skills.
- \*Promotes the development of research skills that students will need following graduation. These skills will allow the students to practice "life-long learning" throughout their professional careers.

### **Casework Disadvantages**

- \*Grade determination for casework is more subjective than grade determination for exams, quizzes, etc.
- \*Relevant, up-to-date cases are not easy to find.
- \*Using the same cases term after term will allow students to obtain answers from prior students.

### **Casework Suggestions**

- \*If several cases or topics are assigned during the semester, allow the students to select their first topic so that they become familiar with the case method without the burden of an unfamiliar, technical topic.
- \*Following the initial case, consider assigning topics to a student or teams. This will usually force the students into independent research instead of allowing them to gather information from students who took the course in a previous semester or to use a topic they previously researched in another course.
- \*If possible, do not base a student's semester grade solely on group cases and research. There should be at least one individual project to better assess the skills of each team member. Also, the casework portion of the class should usually be combined with some type of objective method of assessment.
- \*If student presentations are required, possibly require students to create a video of their speeches well before their presentation date; the instructor can review the video and offer suggestions. This will make the actual student presentations much better. The audience will appreciate it!
- \*Be careful of using grading methods which rely heavily on evaluations by fellow students and team members. While this is a convenient way to take the burden of grade determination off the instructor's shoulders, it results in biased grades that are influenced by peer pressure and other non-performance factors. A student on a team comprised of friends has a distinct advantage over a student on a team comprised of strangers.
- \*Develop some exam questions that will require the student to use knowledge gained from the case or research project.
- \*Require students to make oral updates on their projects during class time.

### **Technology Use**

- Explore and master all classroom technology provided by the college/university. This demonstrates versatility

- and concern for maximizing what students can learn in the classroom.
- Post all course materials to the course website, if one exists. This reduces photocopy costs, allows student access to materials for missed classes or lost materials, and encourages student resourcefulness.
  - Consider discussion boards with netiquette protocol clearly defined and explained during the initial class session. Discussion boards allow students to create study groups and assist each other with course content.
  - Any material projected electronically should be presented to students in small components in order to not overwhelm the student with data overload. Any information projected should be accompanied by a hardcopy for all students.
  - Consider using classroom response systems. These CRS (or “clickers”) can enhance the learning process and make class time more interesting for those students needing such incentive. However, realize that the use of CRS can sometimes be a “crutch” to fill time. They also can be an expensive requirement for each student.

### **SECTION 5: STUDENT QUESTIONS**

Instructors should be sure that students are comfortable asking questions in class; assuming that these questions pertain to the course content, they can be beneficial to all students in understanding the material and maintaining interest.

When listening to a question, be sure the student is loud enough for all to hear. If not, repeat the question before answering. To maintain an atmosphere that encourages questions, the instructor might begin the answer with "That's a good question" or some other positive remark. This is a good technique, especially when the question is one asked several times before!

In many cases, student questions lead to classroom discussion and debate among students. Such interaction can be a truly beneficial learning experience. The students not only learn but develop an appreciation for the course as well. Of course, some students ask questions that appear inappropriate because they're off the subject or pertain to material already explained at least once. In order to maintain class time efficiency, the instructor should identify inappropriate questions and deal with them carefully.

Students will sometimes ask questions unrelated to the class material. It is certainly important to allow real-world experiences into the course to a certain extent. However, beware of students who consider the class an opportunity for a personal discussion with the instructor, constantly asking questions relating only to personal interests. Examples include questions concerning their personal tax return, buying or selling a house, issues at their place of employment, and their personal views on the economy. This type of student sometimes sits in the first row, making the student even more unaware of the other students; class time is viewed as a faculty-student personal discussion.

If these issues are addressed during class time when such discussions are encouraged, all students can certainly benefit as long as the time spent is within reason. However, allowing such questions when the other students are expecting the instructor to explain required material takes class time away from the majority of students for the benefit of one or two.

If a student continues to ask questions of this nature, the instructor should reply that “the questions are appreciated, but there is new material to cover.” Also indicate that the student can "continue the discussion outside class time." This is being fair to the student and, more important, the other students in the room.

A more difficult situation involves the student who asks a question concerning material already covered in class. The instructor should consider the reason for the question in determining the answer. Is the student asking the question because he or she did not attend (or listen to) the lecture which addressed that material? Perhaps the instructor should answer the question and use it to reinforce the points made in the previous lecture. This will satisfy the student, encourage future questions, and act as a review for all students.

However, it may become apparent with subsequent questions that the student is hoping for a “re-lecture” on the missed material. The instructor should then consider the welfare of the other students and indicate that the student should save the question for a time outside of class. At that time, the instructor can determine if providing an answer is

appropriate.

The instructor should also consider this possibility: Does the question represent the fact that many students share the same "confusion" on the topic and maybe the explanation during the initial lecture was not sufficient? The question may indicate a need for a re-lecture or quick review; the instructor can then get a better indication of the depth of understanding shared by the students and re-assess the need for further review. A "practice quiz" is a good tool to determine the possible need for re-emphasis of material.

For these and other reasons, attempt to be either the first person in the classroom before class or the last person to leave the classroom (or both). This gives students the opportunity to ask questions they may consider inappropriate for class time.

An uncomfortable situation for many inexperienced instructors is when a question is asked and the instructor does not know the answer. Some instructors will make the mistake of trying to "fake" the answer. Do not be embarrassed to reply "I don't know." The students do not expect the instructor to know everything; in fact, they might be impressed with the instructor's honesty.

The instructor should possibly ask other students for input, generating a class discussion. Decide if the question is truly pertinent to the class. If it is not, move on to other material or questions.

However, if the question does relate to the course, indicate that an attempt will be made to determine the answer before the next class. Remember that if it truly relates to the material, the question could possibly be asked by students in future semesters; the instructor might as well find the answer this semester.

Now comes the true test of the instructor, one that can either build or kill the instructor's reputation. Nothing is worse than responding "I'll answer that question next class" and then the issue is never mentioned again. The instructor must come back with the best answer possible. Responding demonstrates high regard for the student's question and for the education of all the students. The act of responding is probably much more critical than the response itself.

## **SECTION 6: CONCLUSION**

A commitment to education and a desire to help students are absolutely necessary for teachers to be effective. However, other factors such as classroom management, development of and adherence to course policies, and the use of appropriate teaching methods are also critical for teachers to succeed. For some, especially new teachers and part-time adjunct teachers, the transition into the classroom can be an unexpected challenge. This paper is designed to assist those dedicated educators increase their effectiveness, which will hopefully be beneficial for the academic program, the students, and the teachers themselves.

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