How Do You Teach?

A Checklist for Developing Instructional Awareness

1. What do you do with your hands? Gesture? Keep them in your pockets? Hold onto the podium? Play with the chalk? Hide them so students won’t see them shake?
2. Where do you stand or sit? Behind the podium? On the table?
3. When do you move to a different location? Never? At regular ten-second intervals? When you change topics? When you need to write something on the board/overhead? When you answer a student’s question? At what speed do you move? Do you talk and move at the same time?
4. Where do you move? Back behind the podium? Out to the students? To the blackboard?
5. Where do your eyes most often focus? On your notes? On the board/overhead? Out the window? On a spot on the wall in the back of the classroom? On the students? Could you tell who was in class today without having taken roll?
6. What do you do when you finish one content segment and are ready to move onto the next? Say okay? Ask if there are any student questions? Erase the board? Move to a different location? Make a verbal transition?
7. When do you speak louder/softer? When the point is very important? When nobody seems to understand? When nobody seems to be listening?
8. When do you speak faster/slower? When an idea is important and you want to emphasize it? When you are behind where you ought to be on the content? When students are asking questions you’re having trouble answering?
9. Do you laugh or smile in class? When? How often?
10. How do you use examples? How often do you include them? When do you include them?
11. How do you emphasize the main points? Write them on the board/overhead? Say them more than once? Ask the students if they understand them? Suggest ways they might be remembered?
12. What do you do when students are inattentive? Ignore them? Stop and ask questions? Interject an anecdote? Point out the consequences of not paying attention? Move out towards them?
13. Do you encourage student participation? How? Do you call on students by name? Do you grade it? Do you wait for answers? Do you verbally recognize quality contributions? Do you correct student answers? On a typical day, how much time is devoted to student talk?
14. How do you begin/end class? With a summary and conclusion? With a preview and a review? With a gasp and a groan? With a bang and a whimper?


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