

Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Special points of interest:

- The *Teaching Tips Newsletter* is a publication of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at the UWI, Mona.
- The newsletter is published three times during each semester and a summer edition. It provides tips for improving teaching and learning in higher education and is available online (<http://myspot.mona.uwi.edu/cetl>) as well as in the office of the CETL.
- If you need additional teaching tips on specific classroom practices please contact us.

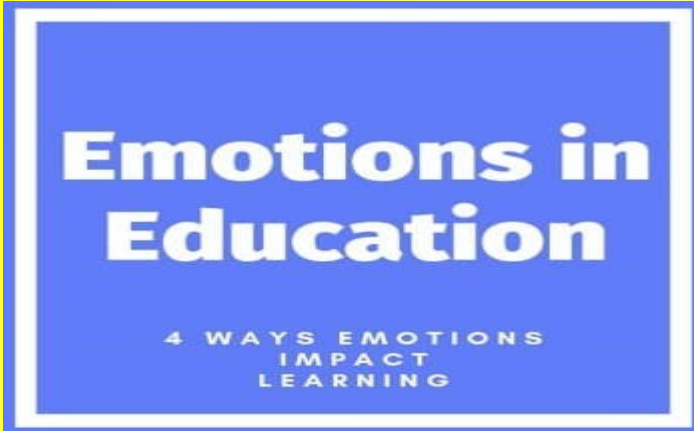
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Emotions and Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Reflecting on your Practice

PART ONE



The emotions have always mattered in teaching and learning in higher education even if they were not acknowledged. There are those who believe that there is need for the integration of feeling and thinking in the process of teaching and learning in higher education (Eyler, 2018; Quinlan, 2015). Generally, the research is clear that positive emotions affect learning outcomes in positive ways and negative emotions decrease these outcomes. There are a few cases where this might not have proven true. For instance, Artino (2009) found that frustration caused increased metacognitive activity (this was observed after controlling for other variables). In this instance, it might have occurred because students had to spend additional cognitive resources in engaging the subject matter content. However, since there is general agreement that positive emotions are important in improving learning outcomes, there are those who argue that in teaching and learning, college and university teachers should conscientiously seek to enrich the positive emotions associated with the key relationships in the learning environment.

There has been an upsurge of interest in understanding the place of the emotions in teaching and learning, especially in higher education (for instance, there has been a greater focus on engagement, contemplative practices and direct

interest in how students and teachers show emotions in the classroom (Quinlan, 2015). In the classroom the emotions are central to relationships. When we talk about engagement in teaching and learning, we are overtly or covertly underscoring the place of emotions since, for engagement to be properly realised, relationships must be forged. How students feel about other learners is central to the quality of the relationships that will be developed.

Quinlan (2015) offers a framework for our reflection on pedagogical practices that are mindful of the emotions. At first, she calls attention to the relational nature of education and then she highlights four key relationships:

1. Relationship with teaching and the subject
2. Relationship with students
3. Relationship with peers
4. Relationship with self.

These four key relationships are important in using the emotions in teaching and learning in higher education. Consequently, you are invited to think about these relationships and determine for yourself how they might be used to impact/improve your teaching. In this edition of *Teaching Tips*, we will focus on the first two elements of the framework, the relationship with teaching and the subject and the relationship with students (PART ONE). In the next edition of *Teaching Tips*, we will focus on the other two elements of the framework: relationship with peers and relationship with self (PART TWO).

The first concern is: Communicating “how we feel about our teaching and the subject?”

Here are some questions that will get you reflecting on how you really feel about your teaching?

1. Do you feel very passionate about your teaching?
2. Are you an engaged teacher?
3. Are you concerned that your passionate thought about your subject might be alienating to students?
4. Are you more concerned about the content more than the students?
5. How does your non-verbal communication indicate to students your passion for the teaching and the subject?

There is a place for the passionate thought of the teacher who is immersed in teaching the content of the discipline. Show your passion through tangible expressions of enthusiasm and fascination with the discipline. Demonstrate to students that you truly love the discipline but this should not be at the expense of connecting with your students and communicating your concern for their wellbeing and welfare.

The passionate teacher will also want to teach in ways that put students into relationship with the subject and its key authors and ideas. You will want to invite them to join this community of scholars and communicate in meaningful ways that they too can become authors of their own ideas.

The second concern is forging relationships with students



UWI Mona, Engineering Students– Expressing Emotions

The research on how teachers communicate with students is showing that it impacts them emotionally. Clearly, the emotions play a keen role in the relationship between student and teacher. When students believe that their teacher listens and responds to their

concerns, they are better served. Oftentimes, from this experience, a sense of closeness is derived between the student and the teacher and this augurs well for deepening the relationship between the teacher and the student. In fact, it is likely that this will cause the student to experience the class in more positive ways (Baker, 2004; Titsworth et al., 2010).

Teachers' emotionally-related communication competence also correlates with students experiencing more enjoyment, pride and hope (Titsworth et al., 2013).

University teachers need to ask themselves some questions:

1. How might I communicate with students in ways that underscore my willingness to listen to them?
2. How accessible am I to my students?
3. What is my emotionally-related communication competence?
4. Have I caused students (by my behaviour) to experience heightened negative emotional reactions, for instance, shame, anger and/or anxiety?
5. How do I respond to my students as whole persons?

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