

Chris Gibbs Teaching Philosophy

As a teacher of hospitality and tourism courses in a business school I feel that student engagement is enhanced by particular teaching methods that best reach our diverse student population. It is my responsibility to create a learning environment that engages students in course topics using experiential teaching methods. I believe that the best way to achieve such engagement is through passion, process, projects, and people.

Passion. At the heart of my teaching style is the passion to be a teacher and I take great pride in the opportunity to impart knowledge and shape lives. I use my energy and enthusiasm to engage students in the courses I am teaching. I achieve this through the use of verbal (tone, pitch and speed) and non-verbal (walking around, eye contact and body language) cues. I also frequently ask question and use in-class activities to capture the students interest. Common words from faculty course evaluations used to describe my teaching are enthusiasm and energy.

Process. I believe it is important to be process oriented when teaching. In order to advance my understanding of the teaching process, I completed the Ryerson University Teaching Development Program during the 2012-13 academic year. From the program I learned and applied process based principles such as active learning, storytelling and a systematic approach to the delivery of content (BOPPS). Throughout the year I experimented using these principles by including the use of videos, organizing class debates, short think-pair-shares, and regular class activities. The students responded positively by including supportive comments about the interactivity in class evaluations. As part of process, I also use the course goals and align them with the activities or course assessments.

Projects. I've learned that students learn best when they are engaged in opportunities or tasks that are similar to the work of professionals within their discipline. Wherever possible, I use my twenty years of professional experience to share stories that bring alive the content of the course. If appropriate for the topic and course, I also work with industry professionals to create student projects using real businesses. Along with hosting industry professionals for a guest lecture, I will work with them to develop a problem or assignment for the students to learn from. Recent companies that I've partnered with on industry projects for students include Cayman Island Tourism Board, Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance, Fairmont Hotels, CN Tower, Royal Ontario Museum, Global Dimension Capital Inc. and DMZ.

People. At the core of teaching is understanding that students are first people and second students. Recognizing this, I endeavor to create a classroom climate whereby students feel comfortable expressing themselves and where they see me as approachable. In order to achieve this, I encourage students to ask questions in class, create topics to stimulate class discussion and respect their point of view. Students do not learn in a single way and it is important to connect with all students at their own level. Frequent comments in my faculty course evaluations from students speak to my being approachable and friendly.

As I progress in my teaching career, I learn from each course that I teach and I use student feedback to make modifications to create a better learning environment. To demonstrate that I listen and learn from student feedback, I have communicated feedback from course surveys and how that feedback has changed the content or my delivery of the course. I remember the first time I did this with a course, on the next course survey I received comments like "taken comments from last year and improved on his course" and "Gibbs valued the student feedback from HTM402". The students appreciated learning how I used feedback to improve the course and more importantly I think they felt like I cared about their success.

Within three to five years it is my goal to develop a new courses and Ryerson University Minor related to events and live entertainment management.