

Attitudes and Strategies for Becoming a Great TA!

You have been given the opportunity to teach some of the best students in the world – congratulations!

Though it will be hard work, you really master a subject when you have to teach it – so you will learn a lot too!



This is your chance to pass the baton.



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John Cairns



The foundations of a great class

Preparation, Preparation, Preparation

Know your subject cold

Put yourself into their shoes

Reaching out

Media is not as important as being with them

Work with them

Provide a nurturing environment

Inspiration

Bring a sense of wonder

Remind them of their own potential

Organization

Steps to take before each class

Homework and Quizzes

Having a good attitude!

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The Foundations of a Great Class

Preparation Preparation Preparation



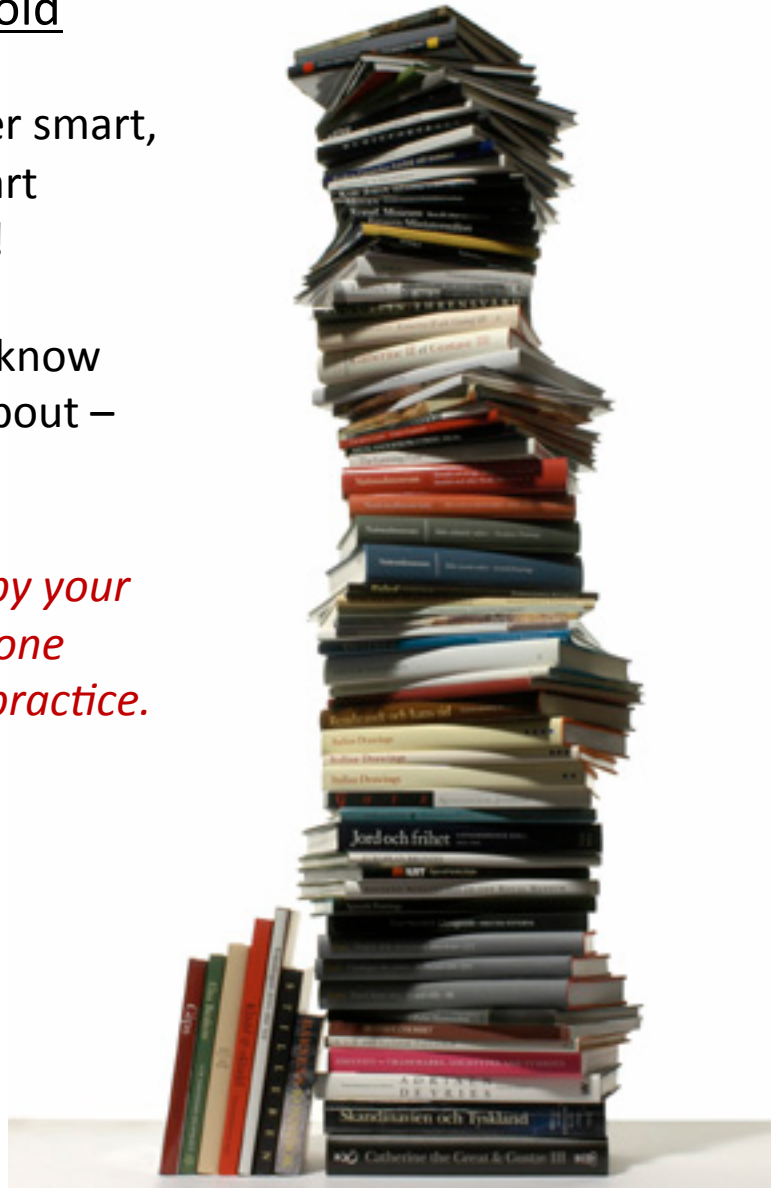
- An organized plan for laying out concepts
- A good sense of how long things will take
- A clear vision of what it is you want to convey (be able to answer the question “what will you be teaching today” concisely)

Know your subject cold

Your students are super smart,
but you are plenty smart
enough to teach them!

Be over-prepared and know
what you are talking about –
“no B.S. please” !

*If you are intimidated by your
students, there is only one
solution: preparation/practice.*



Make sure the students are confident in you

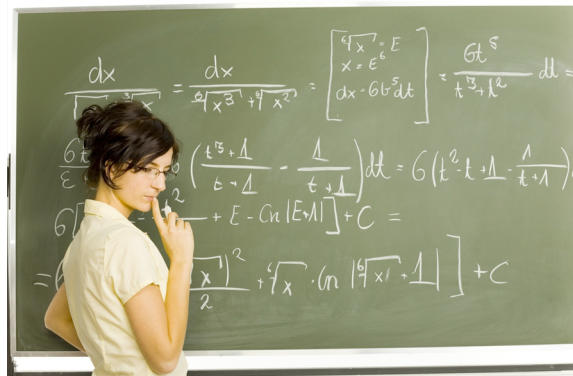
If you are new to teaching, **preparing will take a lot of time.**

Don't wait until the last minute.

Don't go to sleep until you have mastered all the materials

Get them to respect you right off the bat by showing them that you are knowledgeable.

Make sure they know that *you* know what you are doing!



Put yourself into their shoes

If there is just one key to success, it is to *put yourself into the shoes of your students.*

Remember what it is like to be new to the subject, and constantly remind them of the bigger picture.



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Reaching Out



It's NOT about the media, it's about being with them

It doesn't matter what you pick – board, slides, etc. **All formats can work well.** Use what you are comfortable with.

The key is to be with them, and not talking at them...or at the board!

Try to make it a two-way conversation

Learn their names

Call on people using a random list so that one or two people don't dominate the class too much. By doing so, students are much more likely to come prepared.

Try not to be threatening – if someone looks uncomfortable either help them out or just move on to the next person.

*Try to walk away from the podium,
and into the classroom*

Teaching from the front of the class can put a distance between you and your students.

Venture into the room – this will speak volumes to your being on the same team as them.



Provide a nurturing environment

The atmosphere in the classroom should be demanding, but not critical.

You never want students to be afraid to speak up.

You want them to be interactive.



To put students at ease, you can do some of these things:

- ♦ Get to know their names
- ♦ Help students think through questions/problems
- ♦ Bring humor with you (happiness increases learning capacity)

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to be
inspired is great,
to
inspire
is
incredible

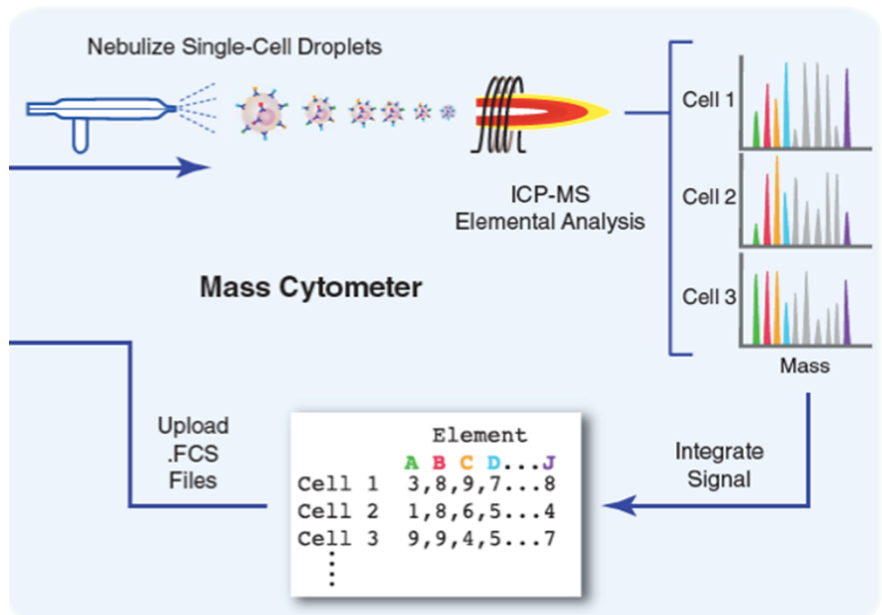
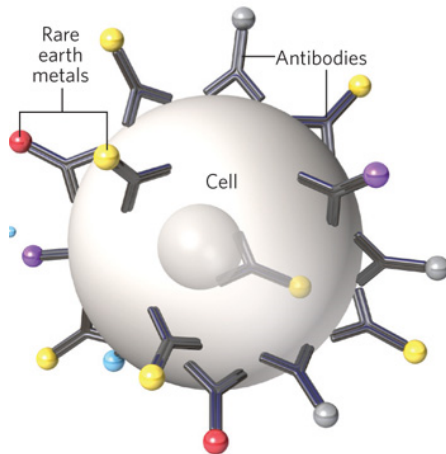
Bring a sense of wonder

Bring a sense of wonder! Never leave your fascination with life sciences behind you – bring it to the classroom.

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Mass Cytometry!!



Flow Cytometry for the Masses

Tagging antibodies with rare earth metals instead of fluorescent molecules turns a veteran technique into a high-throughput powerhouse.

<http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/31438/title/Flow-Cytometry-for-the-Masses/>

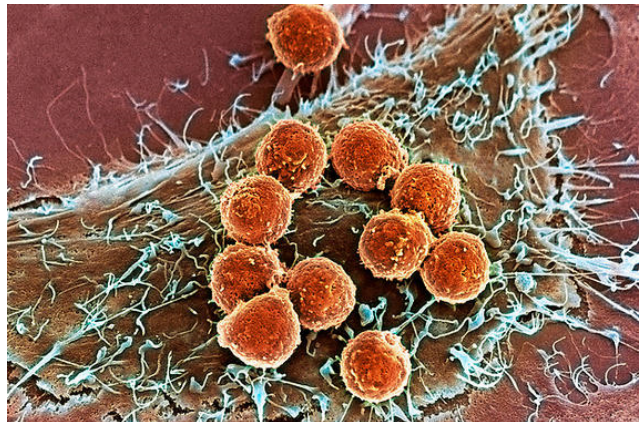
Inspire them by reminding them of their own potential

Give many perspectives – contributions in basic science, public health, academia, biotech, pharma....

Inspire them by examples of current and past leaders

Remind them that they are **tomorrow's leaders!**

“Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you too can become great.” – Mark Twain



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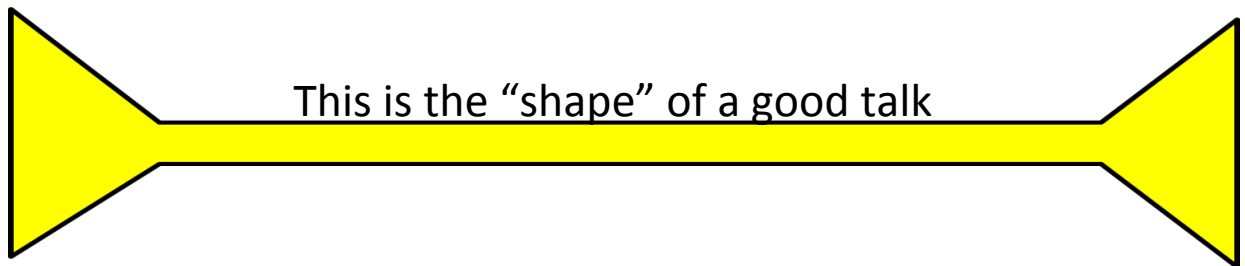
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Go through your slides and ask yourself “what am I trying to say with this part of the course” - PRACTICE

Refer back to the outline repeatedly so that everything is in context (down to details, and back out again)

Be sure to recap at the end of class – don’t crunch the end of class.



***“Tell them what you are going to tell them,
tell them, tell them what you told them.”***

Make sure the homework and quizzes really reflect what was covered in class.

After each class, quickly write down a list of what was covered.

You can then use these lists when preparing tests and quizzes.



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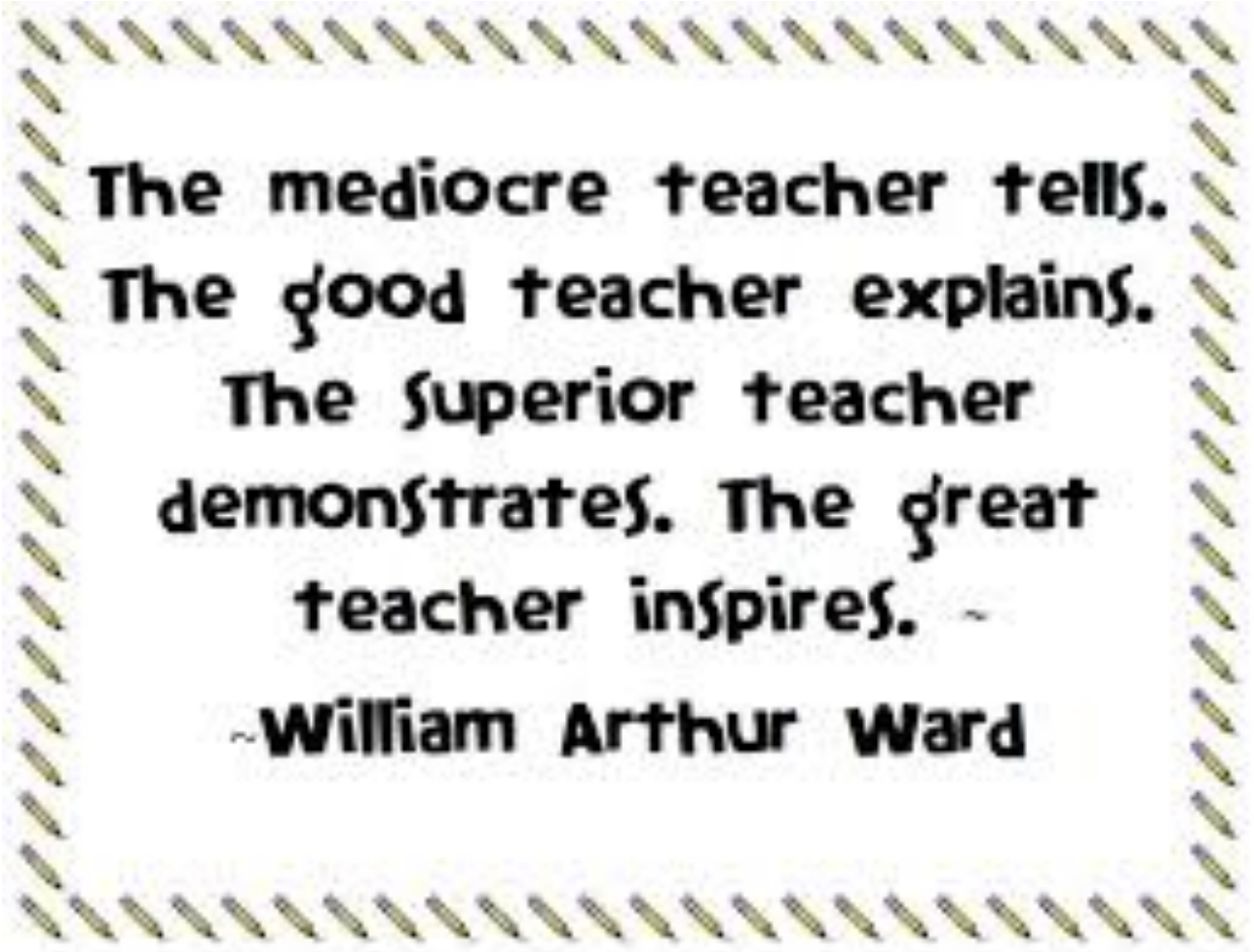
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**The mediocre teacher tells.
The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher
demonstrates. The great
teacher inspires. ~**

~William Arthur Ward

William Arthur Ward is one of America's most quoted writers of inspirational maxims. [Wikipedia](#)

What is the makeup of an Inspirational Teacher??

By far the most important trait they identified was **enthusiasm** and **passion** for the subject. Almost a third of those who voted said they were inspired by those lecturers who were genuinely **excited about their subject**. One student said about their lecturer: 'He **excitedly** cites relevant material from memory, rousing students' interest and **maintaining [the students] attention as if it were vital to their existence** - and sometimes, I am convinced of it.' Another stated: 'His inspirational teaching and **enthusiasm** for the subject is overwhelming. His lessons are delivered with such **passion** that **you cannot help but leave inspired and with a thirst to learn more.**

Final comments

Be friendly

Have a sense of humor

Develop a good rapport with students

Effectively communicate expectations

Understand that students CAN'T read your mind

Be organized

Be super-well prepared

HAVE FUN!!