

in learning rather than a detached director and judge.

"It's just a dynamite concept," says Walvoord. "I use it in my workshops all the time and the response of people in these workshops? They just go Oh! Ah!"

Walvoord and Anderson describe three steps to follow in shifting the three phases of teaching around:

Step 1. Analyze what students will need to learn.

Step 2. Analyze *how* students will learn what they need to learn.

Step 3. Reconsider the use of class time.

The key to an alternative paradigm that uses class time for processing and response obviously lies in making students responsible

for first exposure on their own outside of class. Even advocates of "Just-in-Time Teaching" have found that challenging ["Engrained Study Habits and the Challenge of Warmups in Just-in-Time Teaching," *NTLFV17 N4*].

Having students bring a one-page response to study questions on the outside exposure as a stimulus to class discussion offers one solution. Students get credit for bringing their response; no credit if they did not. The emphasis in this paradigm falls on class discussion. How to grade that? Walvoord and Anderson offer a detailed rubric. Indeed, their book provides a rich array of checklists, rubrics, and artifacts from actual practice as well as narrative examples to flesh out each of their pieces of advice, including how to involve students themselves in the process of assessment of their own and their peers work.

Development Ungraded

Somewhere along the line, however, teachers end up having to

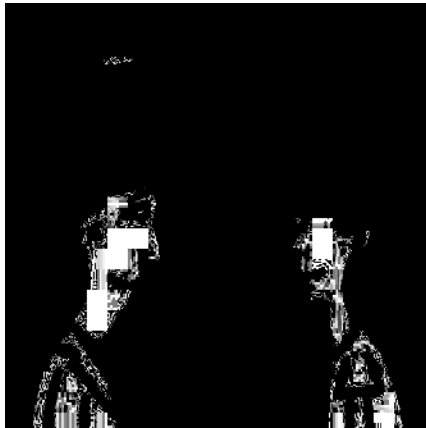
make some hard choices when it comes to grading. One of the sharpest perhaps has to do with effort. Many students work harder and learn more in making a C than some of their peers do in making an A. "Teachers all have to make a philosophical decision about whether or not they are going to grade developmentally," says Walvoord. "I personally do not grade developmentally, but there are rewards you can give a student other than a grade. In the relationship I develop with my students, my congratulations are important."

Perhaps the wise mixture of graded and ungraded assignments offers a means of melding the various kinds of rewards into a

satisfying learning experience. "It's important to give enough feedback as to how they are doing so that the anxious students are reassured. And then if there's some ungraded writing within that context, I think it can be very positive," says Walvoord. "Sometimes students will say 'I really liked

the ungraded journals because they gave me a chance to experiment or not to worry about grading.' So you are trying to have a mix, and you are trying to use ungraded writing for what it does best, which is to free the student up and relieve the student from having to look over her shoulder all the time about 'What grade am I getting?'" In a sense, Walvoord agrees, ungraded work on which she offers ample feedback caters to students' developmental needs, but allows her to keep the final grade (which she sees as a communication to employers and others in the future) pure.

"Teach what you grade and grade what you teach," says Walvoord. "Our aim always is learning, not anointing." |||



CLASSICS

Teaching in the Inspiration of St. Augustine: Seven Augustinian Principles

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Sixteen hundred years ago, a deacon wrote to his bishop to ask for instructions about how to teach the candidates who sought to become Christians. As with my own students, some of the candidates came with a sincere desire to learn, but others were there "to secure advantages in this world or avoid the troubles of life" (5.9). The deacon wanted to know *what* to say, but the bishop (as was his custom) gave him more than he asked for. He told him what to say but also *how* to say it, giving him not just content but pedagogy. In fact, the bishop, St. Augustine of Hippo, turned his advice into a short book called *Instructing Beginners in Faith*. Augustine's context was different from my own. He was speaking about candidates who would soon become his brothers and sisters in Christ; I teach in a contemporary American university with students of all different religious commitments. Despite the differences, his remarks have inspired me in a number of ways. Some of what he says lends confirmation to things I have learned from my own reading and experience; beyond that, his thinking—especially his focus on the student-teacher relationship—has helped me rethink my own pedagogy. Here are seven pedagogical principles with an Augustinian flavor, intended not as a final word but as a starting point for thinking and dialogue.

Suggested Principle	Practical Implications	In St. Augustine's Words
<p>1. The teacher-learner relationship is vital. As Augustine reminded us, a classroom is a dynamic system; the enthusiasm of the teacher for the material creates a positive response from the students, which then further inspires the teacher. But if the students become bored and unresponsive, and if an adversarial climate develops, the teacher will become less effective and the students will learn less.</p>	<p>If we want to be effective teachers, we must create an environment where the students are excited about learning, not merely jumping through hoops to get the highest grade for the least work. This means giving high priority to creating a positive classroom dynamic so that students enjoy learning and “drink in the knowledge with pleasure” (14.22). Their response is important, in other words, because it will bring out our best efforts.</p>	<p><i>We are given a much more appreciative hearing when we ourselves enjoy performing our task. Then the texture of our speech is suffused with the very delight that we take in speaking, and our words flow more easily and more pleasingly (2.18).</i></p> <p><i>When we see no reaction from our hearer, it is really tiring to continue speaking right to the end of the allotted time (13.18).</i></p>
<p>2. Creating a positive learning environment is even harder than getting the content right. We are often so concerned with packing in content that we lose sight of the task of creating a positive classroom dynamic. But unless students are engaged by the process, they won't really absorb the knowledge.</p>	<p>We need to reframe our thinking to ask not how much material we are covering, but how much the students are actually learning. If the students are unmotivated and hostile, they may still absorb the facts, but in order for them to get to higher level thinking, they need to be positively engaged and excited by the educational experience of our class.</p>	<p><i>The difficult part of our task is not in giving rules about [covering the content]. No, our greatest concern is much more about how to make it possible for those who offer instruction to do so with joy. For the more they succeed in this, the more appealing they will be. But for cheerfulness to be present at the opportune time depends on the compassion of the teacher (2.4).</i></p>
<p>3. Know your students and customize the class for them. Real learning is a function of the character, motivation, skills, and limitations of the learner. As Ken Bain says in <i>What the Best Teachers Do</i>, “the best teachers try to find out as much as possible about their students” (157).</p>	<p>Some techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students about their background and interests. • Understand the pressures students face. • Throughout the semester, give ungraded assessments to find out what students are learning. • Familiarize yourself with research on student development, learning styles, backgrounds. 	<p><i>In my own experience as a teacher, I am swayed now in one way, now in another, according as the characteristics and background of the person that I see before me to receive instruction. And it is in keeping with these various influences that my actual address opens and moves forward and comes to a close (15.23).</i></p>

<p>4. Understand student fears, and help overcome them. Many professors ask why their students are so quiet and shy in the classroom, although the students are noisy enough before and after class. Students are often quiet and shy because of fear and insecurity. We need to create a safe space for them to express themselves. Students are often afraid to appear either stupid or as “teacher’s pets.”</p>	<p>Some strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin discussions by asking questions that do not have a right answer (e.g., “what is an example of this?”), rather than asking students to provide the content for your lecture. • Give students time to think before they are asked to respond. 	<p><i>With gentle encouragement we should drive out the exaggerated fear that prevents the student from making known where he stands, and we should temper his shyness by instilling in him the value of our fraternal communion. By asking questions we should try to find out whether he understands what has been said, and we should give him confidence to voice freely any objection he thinks ought to be raised (13.18).</i></p>
<p>5. Constantly reset the students’ attention. Students often live chaotic lives, have poor time management skills, and don’t get enough sleep. Even good students lose attention, and good teachers look for ways to re-engage them, especially during lectures.</p>	<p>Some ways to reengage students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inject humor or anecdotes. • Interject a period of small group discussion to break up a lecture. • Ask students to do a brief ungraded writing assignment. • Have students stand up and stretch for a moment. 	<p><i>It often happens that someone who was listening in the beginning with pleasure later becomes tired and now he opens his mouth no longer to express approval but to yawn. We should reawaken his attention by making a remark spiced with seemly good humor and appropriate to the subject under discussion. Or we can relate something that arouses great awe and astonishment (13.19).</i></p>
<p>6. Connect learning to the student’s own experience. Students are often most engaged by things that touch on their own lives; we can use this focus to capture their interest.</p>	<p>Some techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate material with practical, real world applications, especially from the students’ own experience. • Use role plays, simulations, and active learning techniques. 	<p><i>What we say should touch preferably on the student’s own situation so that, stung by solicitude for himself, he may become alert again (13.19).</i></p>
<p>7. Find the joy in making the old things new. Most of us got into our field because we were fascinated by the deep puzzles and challenges of our discipline, but Augustine reminds us that as teachers we need to find joy in making ideas simpler, rather than more complex, and in watching students learn, even if we have done the same material many times over.</p>	<p>We need to take on a new task, every bit as challenging as what we face in our research: how to make students feel some of our excitement, even though they do not share our initial interest. If we can learn to find joy in this challenge, our work will be pleasant and rewarding. If we cannot engage with it, teaching intro classes will be a painful task, not very rewarding for either us or the students.</p>	<p><i>Although we may pay no attention to the beautiful sights of the city where we live, our own enjoyment is revived by sharing in the enjoyment that others derive from seeing them for the first time. And this we experience the more intensely, the closer our friendship is, for the more the bond of love allows us to be present in others, the more what has grown old becomes new again in our own eyes as well (12.17).</i></p>

Augustine's words provide some sound classroom advice (break up the lecture, make the material relevant, overcome student fears), but his thought also calls us to a deeper principle as well. Teacher and learner function in a dynamic relationship; when it works well, each side brings out the best in the other. Our task is to help the students help us be more effective teachers, so we can help them be more effective learners. ■■■

Additional material and sources:

- Augustine of Hippo. 2006. *Instructing Beginners in Faith*, trans. Raymond Canning, ed. Boniface Ramsey. Hyde Park: New City Press. Some of the quotations have been shortened or slightly altered to make them more consistent with the format of this article.
- Bain, Ken. 2004. *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Immerwahr, John. 2008. "Augustine's Advice to College Teachers: Ever Ancient, Ever New," *Metaphilosophy*, 39/4-5: 656-665. This article discusses Augustine's pedagogy in more detail.
- Immerwahr, John. www.teachphilosophy101.org. This website of resources and strategies for instructors of introductory philosophy courses has many additional pedagogical ideas in an Augustinian spirit.

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REPRISE

The *Forum* has long suggested faculty acquaint themselves with David Kolb's learning model. Many models of learning exist, but Kolb's seems the most robust. Many other important insights into learning fit well onto his model and seem to translate immediately from theory into practical ideas when mapped on his diagram of learning's sequences and their interaction.

Kolb isn't an educational theorist by training. He's a professor of business. Somewhere early in his teaching career, he became frustrated with the ineffectiveness of traditional teaching. His response was to aggressively study what was known about learning and to distill it into a practical model of great utility.

The *Forum* first wrote about Kolb in 1992, but as with so much of the material we've published over the years, what Kolb had to say then seems as timely today as it did yesterday. His comments on grades and grading make interesting reading alongside our lead feature in this issue on Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Anderson's forthcoming second edition of their popular book *Effective Grading*. But we were moved to reprint the fruits of our interview with Kolb by the version of his model diagram published in *Focus On Faculty* (V14 N4), the

faculty development newsletter of Brigham Young University. This version underscores what we've always felt about Kolb's model and the way it welcomes and makes better integrative sense of a variety of new insights into effective teaching than most anything else floating around. In Brigham Young's version, you'll see lots of fleshing out of how to capitalize on the various stages in the cycle of learning.

Brigham Young's version spells out in a very informative way the spectrum from passive learning to active learning and how that spectrum looks in each of the four major divisions of Kolb's model.

Our thanks to Lynn Sorenson and Brigham Young University for their kind permission to reprint their excellent graphic.

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What Kolb Says

David Kolb speaks with a weary confidence about the utility of the learning theory he first described over ten years ago. "The learning cycle theory has held up well, but I think if anything it's only *starting* to be recognized empirically," he admits.

Is his theory the be-all and end-all of insight into learning? Hardly, he says. "It's not so much a theory of learning really as it is a whole framework in which different approaches to learning can fit." The dynamics of the model have the strength of fundamental principles and thus easily embrace a wide variety of teaching techniques, especially the active and cooperative learning approaches.

The approach that doesn't work, says Kolb, is the traditional teaching model where the teacher dispenses the information and the student takes it in. Compared to that arrangement, says Kolb, the experiential learning model "has some real advantages." "One is that it is equalizing," he says. "Everybody gets something, because it's a process in