

Detailed List of Headings and Notes (with Page Numbers)

1 What Is Teaching? 1

2 What Is Science? 3

- Purposes of Science 3
- Hallmarks of Science 5
 - Note: The Scientific Method 6
 - Note: Creativity and Science 6
- Dealing with Creationism and Other Nonscientific Beliefs 6
 - Note: Teaching Evolution 8
 - Note: Teaching about Global Warming 8

3 One Key to Student Success 9

Learning requires effort and study.

- Note: What Counts as “Study” 9
- The State of U.S. Education 10
 - K–12 Education 10
 - Note: Study Expectations Vary Greatly Among Schools 10
 - Note: Options for Increasing Study Time 10
 - College Education 11
 - Note: Validity of the Decline Claim 11
 - Note: There Is Less Decline in Science 12
 - Note: Reversing the Decline Trend 12
- Multitasking 13
 - Note: Technology Can Be Beneficial 14
 - Note: Distracted Drivers 14
- Consequences to Education — The Pressure to “Dumb Down” 14
 - Note: The Common Core Standards 14
 - Note: Digital Textbooks 15
- Consequences for Society 16
- Changing the National Conversation 16
 - Note: An Equation for Success 17

4 Three Big Picture Ideas about Teaching 19

Big Picture Idea 1 19

You can't actually "teach" anything to anybody; you can only help people learn for themselves.

Note: The Importance of Modeling Behaviors for Your Students 20

Big Picture Idea 2 20

Brains are brains.

Note: "Knowing" Things That Are Not True 20

An Example of "Brains Are Brains" 21

Note: More on Visualization 22

Note: Nearly All Scientists Can Do Well Speaking to Children 23

"Today's Students Learn Differently" 23

Note: Old Teaching Strategies Can Still Work 24

Note: Learning and Age 24

Big Picture Idea 3 24

People have known how to teach successfully for thousands of years.

The Art of Teaching 25

Note: The Art of Teaching Can Be Studied Scientifically 25

Teaching Today 26

5 Five General Suggestions for Successful Teaching 27

General Teaching Suggestion 1 27

Above all, try to ensure that your students study.

Time on Task 28

College Education 28

Note: Students Do Not Know the Rule of Thumb 28

Note: For Science, the Main Issue Is in Nonmajor Courses 29

K-12 Education 29

Note: The Homework Debate 29

Note: Helping Students Who Lack Home Support 30

Educating Students about Time-on-Task Expectations 30

College Education 30

Note: Students for Whom the Rule of Thumb Cannot Fit the Actual Number of Hours in a Week 31

Note: Policy Changes to Allow Students More Time to Graduate 31

Note: It's OK to Take Longer 32

Note: Students Who Complain about the Rule of Thumb 32

K-12 Education 33

Implications of Time on Task 33

Note: On "Teaching to the Test" 33

Note: The Value and Limitations of Educational Research 34

Note: The Value and Limitations of "Flipped Classrooms" 34

General Teaching Suggestion 2 35

Provide structure and assignments that will help your students study sufficiently and efficiently.

- Class/Direct-Contact Time 36
 - Share your enthusiasm 36
 - Use demonstrations, props, and experiments 37
 - Note: Discrepant Events 37
 - Note: Role Playing 37
 - Move when you talk 38
 - Be Socratic 38
 - Note: Clickers and Attendance 38
 - Promote controlled interaction 39
 - Note: Use Cooperative Learning Strategies 39
 - Note: More on Classroom Control 40
 - Don't expect to cover everything 40
 - Provide feedback 40
 - Note: Application to Online Courses 40
 - Note: On Self-Paced Learning 41
 - Note: On MOOCs ("Massive Open Online Courses") 41
- Assignments 42
- Reading 43
- Homework/Independent Assignments 43
 - Activate the brain 44
 - Practice and drill (but don't kill) 44
 - Note: There's No Such Thing as "Dumb Mistakes" 44
 - Note: Games Can Help 45
 - Return again and again 45
 - Mix it up 45
 - Note: Problem-Solving Strategies 45
 - Note: On Grading Selected Problems 46
 - Note: Prompt Feedback and Record Keeping 47
- Exam Preparation 47
 - Tests should help students learn 47
 - Note: Pros and Cons of Multiple Choice 48
 - Tests should reflect assignments 48
 - Note: What to Test in Introductory Courses 48
 - Tests should be cumulative 49
 - Frequency of tests should be "just right" 49
 - Get students to review their tests 49
 - Note: "Exam Rebates" 49
- Grading 50
 - Note: The Problem of Grade Inflation 50

General Teaching Suggestion 3 50

Teach for the long term by focusing on three linked goals for science teaching: education, perspective, and inspiration.

Education 51

Perspective 51

Inspiration 52

Note: The Unfortunate Decline of Field Trips 52

Monetary Inspiration 52

Elementary School Inspiration and Attitudes toward Science 54

Note: Don't Be "Bad at Math" 54

Note: How Much Science Should Elementary Teachers Know? 54

Inspiring Girls and Young Women and Other Underrepresented Groups 55

Confidence issues 55

Note: Perceptions of Study and Effort 56

Hidden biases 56

It's an American issue 56

Role models 57

Note: Bring Role Models to School 57

General Teaching Suggestion 4 57

Have high but realistic expectations, and spell them out clearly.

Setting High but Realistic Expectations 58

Guidepost 1 58

Guidepost 2 58

Note: The Guideposts and Fear of Science 59

Note: The Guideposts and Negative Attitudes toward Science 59

Note: Using the Guideposts with Different Audiences 59

Making Your Expectations Clear 60

Note: Behavioral Expectations 60

Note: Sample Syllabus 60

Grading on Your Expectations 61

General Teaching Suggestion 5 61

Be human.

You can't reach everyone 62

Note: Help Your Students Get Help 62

Show empathy 62

Make your teaching a two-way dialogue 63

Note: Homework Evaluation 63

Don't let the turkeys get you down 63

6 Seven Pedagogical Strategies for Success in Science Teaching 65

Strategy 1 65

Begin with and stay focused on the big picture.

Note: We Can't Expect Students to Know What They Haven't Been

Taught 66

Identifying the Big Picture 67

- Opening with the Big Picture 68
 - Note: Choose an Effective Order of Presentation 68
 - Note: On the Lifelong Learning Goal 68
- Maintaining Focus on the Big Picture 69

Strategy 2 69

Always provide context.

- Mental Binning 70
 - Astronomy 70
 - Biology 71
 - Geology 71
 - Mathematics 71
 - Climate science 71
- Relevance 72
 - Note: Relevance and Curiosity Are Not Opposed 72
 - Planetary science/Geology 73
 - Biology 73
 - Physics/Engineering 73
 - Mathematics 73
 - Astronomy 74

Strategy 3 74

Emphasize conceptual understanding.

- Use the Concepts to Guide Your Selection of Facts 74
 - Note: On the Next Generation Science Standards 75
- Simplify but Don't Lie 75
 - Note: Think of "Extracting" Rather than "Simplifying" 76
- Beware of the Pressures of Testing 77
 - K-12 Education 77
 - College Education 78

Strategy 4 78

Proceed from the more familiar and concrete to the less familiar and abstract.

- "Bridges to the Familiar" 79
 - Note: The Counting Example with Elementary Students 80
- Context-Driven versus Content-Driven Teaching 80

Strategy 5 81

Recognize and address student misconceptions.

- Recognizing Misconceptions 82
- Dispelling Misconceptions 82
 - Note: Age Effectiveness of the Paper-and-Rock Demonstration 82
 - Note: Eggs on the Equinox 83
- Seasons 83
 - Note: At Least They Knew Something 83
 - Note: The Importance of Scale 84

- Weightlessness 85
 - Note: Why I Don't Say "Microgravity" 85
 - Note: On "Apparent" vs. "True" Weight 85
- Gravity on the Moon 87
 - Note: It's a Super-Bowl-Class Misconception 88
 - Note: Heavy Boots 88

Strategy 6 89

Use plain language.

- Note: Jargon Reduction Is Not "Dumbing Down" 90
- Note: Please "DNUA" 91
- Translate When Possible 91
 - Note: A True Story 91
- Seek Simpler Choices (of jargon) 92
 - Note: Pay Attention to Jargon in the Media 93
 - Note: When Jargon Is Unavoidable, Point Out Word Roots and Etymology 94
 - Note: Please Don't "Type"-Cast Science 95
 - Note: A Dwarf Quiz 95
- It's Nice to Honor Them, But... 96
- Be Accurate, But Not Persnickety 97
 - Note: When Earth Wasn't a Planet 98
- Be Clear When Jargon Conflicts with Common Usage 98
 - Note: Why I Still Like the Term "Theory" 98
- Don't Make a Bad Jargon Situation Worse 99
 - "The God particle" 99
 - "The Goldilocks zone" 99
 - "Ice giants" 102
 - Note: So What Should We Call Uranus and Neptune? 102
 - "Flipped classrooms" 103

Strategy 7 103

Challenge your students.

7 Putting It All Together 105

Appendices 107

- Appendix 1: How to Succeed Handout 109
- Appendix 2: Sample Syllabus 114
- Appendix 3: A Dwarf Quiz 120

Excerpts 123

- Excerpt 1: What Makes It Science? 123
- Excerpt 2: Evolution in the Classroom 143