

I take an individualistic approach to teaching that is manifested in numerous ways. I see my role as more than a disseminator of information. Providing information is relatively easy, but it is important that students are challenged and that they learn to think and to apply the various concepts presented in class in other aspects of their lives. These abilities will enable a student to successfully tackle the many unique and seemingly insurmountable situations that are a part of life. Life is not a series of multiple-choice tests, and students need the "tools" to face the endless challenges that life and work will present them.

Too many students are unable to effectively apply seemingly "unrelated" information in unique situations. This stems largely from a neglect of theoretical perspectives and short-term interest in only learning what seems to apply to one's daily life as it currently exists. Furthermore, the education system's decreased interest in mathematics and logic has led to many of our students' inability to solve problems. It is critical that each student takes an active role in the learning process. My course assignments, exams, and classroom environment are designed to be consistent with this overall teaching philosophy. I prefer essay exams that require critical thinking, problem-solving, and applying/integrating course concepts. However, when objective questions are used, they also require critical thinking, problem-solving, and applying key course concepts. That is, questions do not merely assess the ability to memorize terminology.

In the past decade (prior to the COVID pandemic and campus closure), I developed both online and hybrid (a mix of online and face-to-face) courses. The hybrid course is in part conducted as a "flipped" format whereby students are expected to learn much of the knowledge base (content) on their own prior to class. Class sessions are then devoted largely to hands-on learning exercises that require students to apply the content. This format has been well-received by students and based on the quality of assignments and the major project, appears to enhance learning for the right type of student. In all my courses, students work on "real-world" projects: e.g., develop a complete marketing/advertising campaign for a newly launched automobile. I do not believe in wasting students' time with trivial or meaningless assignments -- projects should provide experiences and knowledge that are valuable for their future business careers.

I feel that it is important to instill an attitude that one should strive to perform at his/her maximum potential and that it is more important to compete with one's self rather than with others. Too often students get completely consumed with the notion that the only thing that matters is their rank order in a class. Although I have relatively high expectations, I have learned during my more than 35 years of teaching experience that students strive and perform in line with teachers' expectations. Over the years, numerous written student comments confirm that I am a demanding and challenging professor. One past student summarized it well: "Dr. Homer is very professional. She works hard and expects the same from you." I am happy to say that each semester many CSULB students meet those expectations – and then some. I get "high" when my students achieve.

I find that my reputation as a demanding professor "sets the stage" and "primes" students to work hard in my classes. My approach outlined above necessitates that I be available for one-on-one sessions outside of the classroom and that I respond promptly to questions sent via e-mail. I do not believe that the "sink-or-swim" approach is most effective (at this level), especially when so many come to college without solid communication and learning skills. No matter how often I teach a particular course, I revise it each term to reflect current thinking/knowledge and to "fit" the uniqueness of the class.

Lastly, I believe that it is important to keep my own political and religious views out of the classroom. I believe that doing the best possible job that you are capable of is very important, that nice guys finish first in life, that being truthful is a virtue, that one should think about the consequences of their behavior before acting, that one should treat others as they wish to be treated, and that one should consider others' feelings before acting or speaking.