

TIPS FOR THE ON-CAMPUS TEACHING DEMONSTRATION

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Every campus is a little bit different and every search committee is looking for different things. That said, here are a few things I think I learned from my three teaching demonstrations:

- Don't expect to use the same teaching demonstration at more than one school. Each demonstration needs to be tailored to the specific class you'll be teaching. As soon as you find out you'll be giving a teaching demonstration, ask if you can be put in touch with the instructor of that class, then contact that person and ask to see a syllabus. Even better, ask the instructor what they've been doing lately in class and if the instructor has any specific things he/she would like you to accomplish while you're there. This may seem like a little thing, but it's important to make the instructor happy, even if he/she isn't on the search committee. Chances are, the instructor will be asked what he/she thought of your performance, and if you've done some legwork before the demonstration, the instructor will be predisposed to like you.

- Use a variety of teaching methods. Don't lecture for 50 minutes, even if you're brilliant. Don't present a 50-minute PowerPoint presentation, even if it's the best PPT presentation in the world. Don't use the Socratic method for 50 minutes, even if you're Socrates. Mix it up. Divide your allotted time into three or four sections, then use a different method for each section. For example, start with a Q&A to get the students thinking, then present a short PPT to narrow the focus, then conclude with a small-group activity to help the students apply the principles you covered in the PPT. The committee wants to see that you can successfully use a lot of teaching methods/styles.

- Having said that, the **most** important thing you can do is to get the students talking. A hiring committee wants to see how you interact with students, so don't talk **to** them, talk **with** them. Ask open-ended questions and then be patient enough to wait for a response. Then wait for another response. The waiting can be incredibly painful, but it will be worth it -- once the students realize that you genuinely want their input, they will open up and start talking. My #1 piece of advice for teaching demonstrations is this: do whatever it takes to get the students talking.

- Provide the students with a "takeaway." In your own classroom, you would probably have students read an article or chapter **before** they come to class, but that probably won't be possible for your teaching demonstration. Instead, bring copies of an interesting article or chapter and send it home with the students. Even if no one reads it (and they probably won't), bringing some type of handout shows that you have thought about how to make connections between your in-class activities and your at-home readings. Even better than an article or chapter would be a one-page quick-reference guide that summarizes the key concepts covered in your teaching demonstration. This type of handout, of course, would take much more effort to create.

- If the class is 50 minutes, don't plan on taking the full 50 minutes for your demonstration. They will probably introduce you at the beginning of class, and the instructor might have some business to conduct before you begin. Likewise, leave at least five minutes at the end of class for the instructor to review due dates, upcoming assignments, etc. Again, making the instructor

happy goes a long way.

- Don't be shocked if they ask the students in the class to fill out evaluations on your performance. It's not just the search committee you're trying to impress; depending on the school, the students' evaluations may carry serious weight with the search committee. At some schools, the students may be filling out the evaluations *while* you are teaching, so be prepared for this distraction.

- Finally, arrive over-prepared. You might get to the classroom and find out that the bulb in the projector has burned out and you won't be able to show your PowerPoint presentation. Or you might have planned for a 20-minute discussion, only to have the students stubbornly refuse to participate. Whatever the case, make sure you have a Plan B. If you're teaching a 50-minute class, prepare 65-70 minutes of material, knowing that you probably won't get to the last 15-minute section. If everything goes well, you won't need to use the last section at all, and you shouldn't mention that you're skipping something because you "ran out of time." You didn't run out of time; it just so happened that Plan A worked. 90% of the time, Plan A will work just fine, but it's always a good idea to be ready for the 10% of the time that you need a Plan B.