

When I take a class from a “great” teacher, I walk away feeling that my time and money were well spent, regardless of whether or not I ever use the skills I learned. Unfortunately, when the instructor is bad, what I do learn is overshadowed by the instructor’s lack of good teaching skills. So what is it that makes someone a good instructor?

First, you need to love teaching. If you are teaching more for the money you earn than for the joy of imparting knowledge, your students will sense that. There is little satisfaction for anyone if you are not interested in awakening the creative spirits of those in your class. This is their time...value their participation and take an active role in their learning process.

You must be knowledgeable in the area you have chosen to teach. There are not many things more frustrating than an instructor who cannot answer a student’s question...or who gives a vague or inadequate response. If you don’t know the answer, don’t be afraid to say so. As a teacher, you are not required to know everything, but you should be a resource for your students. Something as simple as suggesting an internet search could make a difference to the class. You could also offer to follow-up and get back to the student(s) via email or telephone.

Have a passion for your art/craft medium. Students will sense your excitement for the material you are using, regardless of whether you are demonstrating a simple technique or a complicated procedure. Talk about why you work with that particular product, what you like about it, how it contributes to your creative energies. Your enthusiasm can be contagious and may shift a class from being ho-hum to dynamic.

Make yourself available - walk around the room and check in on how everyone is doing. Some students are often reluctant to raise their hands in class, but will readily ask you questions if you stop by their workstation. This is also a good opportunity to offer guidance where necessary and acknowledge the work they are doing. Keep your criticism constructive...do not discourage students with a negative critique...you are the expert here...guide them in completing the project successfully. Your attention to individual students imparts a sense of interest in their learning and contributes to their total class experience.

And, last, but clearly not least...have fun...chances are, if **you** are not enjoying the experience, neither is anyone else. Make **your** time worthwhile and your students will benefit. If you find yourself not having fun, consider changing your definition of what it is. Remember, fun is what **you** make it...and **you** can make it fun.

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