10 Top-Notch Traits of Great Teachers
(as revealed by Educational Research & Dr. Ken Knight)

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1. Clarity –

- Precise sentences and words.
  - Sentences - clear, efficient, not muddled - Get to the point.
    - A great Albert Einstein quote: "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough."
  - Interrupters: “You know, . . .” “er, . . .” “we'll do that, okay?”
  - Pronouns – reduce usage; watch out for antecedents:
    - He: Method A is a good solution. She: I like Method B. He: I think we should do that. (which?)
    - They said . . . (who said?)
    - This is useful/This procedure is useful. (Inserting noun is stronger - a reminder of the subject.)
    - “It is something you need to do.” (vague) My advice: get rid of it.
  - Orderly sequence of content.
    - What need to know 1st to understand next? Structure of subject - hierarchical; sequential; discovery?
  - Voice – do you know what you sound like?
    - Too loud/too soft? Too shrill? Too slow/too fast? (Give chance to write notes; give chance to sink in.)
    - Listen to yourself speak:
      - Cerebral dif: talk – you are playing notes; listen to yourself talking – you are playing music.

2. Variability –

- What’s wrong w/this picture? - night class, 6-9pm, straight PowerPoint, dimmed room, no questions.
  - How fix? Discussion, group exercises, dyads (S1 explains #1, S2 explains #2).
  - Dr. Knight: Human attention span is 15 minutes – after that, you have to be good.
- Cross modalities:
  - Learning Modalities: Auditory, Visual, Kinesthetic/Motor, Tactile, Taste, Smell
    - Lecture=auditory; reading/PowerPoint/demo=visual; notetaking/lab=Motor (and visual).
  - Everybody learns better when they cross modalities:
    - Rezents - Plant ID: Real plant; inspect, feel, smell, taste, discuss.
  - Some students (learning-disabled) learn little under a specified modality:
    - e.g., Some cannot learn when content is spoken – must read content; vice versa; or, must perform it.
  - Ergo, cover all bases by crossing modalities.

3. Enthusiasm –

- Why did you choose your major? What grabbed you? What fascinates you about your discipline?
  - Are you teaching this (fascination, love of subject) as well as the content?
- 2-ways Ss love course: because they find that enthusiasm in themselves; because they see it in you.
  - Dr. Knight described how so many guys & girls signed up for one Great Teacher’s courses in ABRP.
  - Pyle: Maliko Gulch – siphon brought water to central valley. (All my riders hear story every trip over the gulch.)
- Dr. Knight: They may forget what you say; but they’ll never forget how you made them feel.

4. Task oriented –

- Stay on task:
  - Start on time; end on time.
  - Stick to the subject: Personal stories w/o a relevant moral not allowed.
- Remain professional
  - How to do that? Be prepared for class; be organized; know goals for that class; get Ss to be productive.
  - Good rapport w/ Ss is different from trying to be their buddy.
  - Dr. Knight: We’re not talking about cracking the whip – develop a sense of importance.
5. Let students “in on” what’s expected of them –
   • Say in class, “I expect you will be able to . . .”
     o e.g., if tested on current workshop, note differences in these expectations - I expect you will be able to:
       a) cite 10 traits of Great Teachers; b) explain/weigh each; c) cite your best trait & cite another to work on.
     o No more grading on the normal curve. Give away the exam, w/positive attitude: “Let me help you get there.”
       ▪ Research shows directed learning is superior to indirect learning. (Dr. Larry Frase)
     o This strategy is the rationale behind Assessment – what do you expect students to do?
       ▪ Make sure objectives clear in your mind . . . and in your students’ mind.
   • Your expectation – greatest motivator in your arsenal.
     o When you say ‘I expect you will know XXX’, this sentence conveys that you believe the student can know XXX.
     o What meaning is conveyed when you ignore a student?
       ▪ Ans: You don’t matter; I don’t think you can make it, e.g., lose Ss in the middle of the room.
     o Dr. Dee Grayson (GESA): Expect each student to achieve - make “contact” with each student in every class:
       ▪ How? Eye contact, ask question to, smile at, nod to, move near, put your hand on their desk.
       ▪ After every class, assess: Who did I miss?
       ▪ It’s ok to probe Ss: (U no ask - means U no care.)
         ✓ You always come to class late – are you driving a long way?
         ✓ You seem to be struggling – how can I help?
         ✓ No time? Know: 10 min reading notes directly after class moves info from short to long term memory.

6. Appropriate praise –
   • Must be earned. Must be specific (not: you are a good student).
     o Can’t be indiscriminate. Dr. Knight, “Nothing so unfair as equal treatment of unequals.”
     o Find something positive academically to say to every student.
       ▪ “I know you are finding this class tough; and I appreciate how you never miss class.”
       ▪ Dr. Knight, “Make sure each student experiences success early, and often.

7. Positive reinforcement –
   • Show what’s right.
     o Knight: How feel if homework comes back filled w/red marks? Check what’s correct, not what’s wrong.
     o If good, say why it’s good. (What is right about it? e.g., good phrasing, correct logic, etc.)

8. Criticism
   • Do not be critical; but be instructive – show how to make correction.

9. Structuring –
   • Dr. Knight: Tell them what you will tell them; tell them; and tell them what you told them.

10. Questioning –
    • Research shows: the more teachers ask questions, the more enthusiasm seen by students.
    • Techniques of questioning (3):
      o Reciprocation: Answer a question with a question, e.g., What do you think?
      o Redirect: e.g., Who can answer his question?
      o Probing: Move beyond the superficial, what else/more?
    • What kinds of questions lead to student success? Ans: Those with a “yes” answer.

Homework: 1) Read handout by end of day (preferably before return to office).
           2) Email me: What, from this workshop, do you want most to remember always.