50 Nifty Faculty Favorites*

1. Use relevant ‘pop’ cultural references in class.
2. Use popular press/TV as an aid in relaying a concept. Example: a family sitcom—what is it “teaching” about family life.
3. Use a sentence completion exercise to help students learn important terminology. Put incomplete sentences in a hat and ask students to take one. Students can answer independently or with their group.
4. Sit in on the classes of your colleagues to learn about different teaching styles and new teaching and learning strategies.
5. Talk with colleagues about their favorite teaching moment.
6. Talk with colleagues about the teaching and learning strategy that works best for them.
7. At the end of class, ask students to share “The One Thing I Learned Today” with another student. This strategy helps students engage with each other and review the content of the class and focus their learning.
8. Create Traveling Files using common file folders and the questions from the end of textbook chapters. Put one question in each folder. Organize students on problem solving teams. Give each team a Traveling File, ask them to discuss and respond in writing to the question, and then pass the file onto the next team for continued discussion, elaboration, correction.
9. Organize students into four teams. Using the four corners of the classroom, ask students to work together on a topic. Check in with each team to make sure they are on track with the material they are discussing. After about 10 minutes, ask each Corner team to share with the entire class.
10. Use Corners for test review. Divide the content of a test into four sections. Assign students to four teams. Make each corner of the room one of the four test sections. Ask students to go to corners and prepare a study guide to share with the rest of the class. Allow 10 minutes. Have Corner teams share.

“Telling is not Teaching. Listening is not Learning.”
11. Jigsaw the content of the lesson into four parts. Place resources on each of the four parts in the corners of the classroom. Assign students to four groups and have them go to Corners to learn about the topic, prepare a visual aid for teaching the content to the rest of the class, and to teach the class the content from their Corner. Check in with groups to make sure the content is correct.

12. Use sign in sheet for attendance. Students seem to be more committed to participating.

13. Start class with 5 minutes of talk about their lives outside class.

14. Break up the lecture every 8-10 minutes with an intervention to re-energize and keep students engaged in the class. The “intervention” can be a simple strategy like a partner sharing, buddy check, or group activity.

15. Include participation points as a part of the assessment for class. Partner, team, group, and other classroom activities will be taken more seriously by students if they know that participation points require real participation.

16. Start class with a discussion of current events especially related to class content or subject.

17. Begin class with a First Day Discussion so that students understand your teaching philosophy and practices. Include opportunities for students to share what they expect to get from class. Discuss the following: (a) Teaching Philosophy and Practices, (b) Student rights and responsibilities (including individual responsibility), and (c) Our class and class community responsibilities and practices (collective group membership).

18. Play music at the start of class.

19. Use hand signals to promote quiet in class when using small group discussion or team activities.

20. Use M&M candies to stimulate discussion. Pass out candies, or have a large bowl and ask students to take “as many as they need.” Each color can represent a question/theme.

21. A great introductory activity is to ask students “What's your favorite number and why?”
22. Prepare cards with questions about the reading or lecture. Pass out the cards as students arrive for class. Use as an engagement strategy by asking students to turn to a partner and share the question and their answer. Use this strategy as a check for comprehension by asking students to help each other make sure that every one can successfully answer their Question Card.

23. Provide quiet time during class for students with a more imaginative learning style. Reflection provides time to think, catch up, and apply content.

24. Give a Paper Bag Test—put 50 questions in a bag and have students pick a question and answer it. This strategy is great for a quick check for understanding, pop quiz, or informal assessment.

25. Write a question or problem/issue on outside of envelope. Have students join a partner or small group. Pass around the Question Envelopes and ask students to write answers to the questions on Post-It Notes and put them in the envelope. Each group then passes the Question Envelop to next group. End by reading all questions and answers out in class.

26. Have a quiz at the beginning of class to ensure attendance.

27. Prepare a content-based Trivial Pursuit game with “question stealing” allowed.

28. Incorporate student's names into the questions of the test. Students are laughing throughout the test.

29. Include positive statements and affirmations at the beginning of tests. “Have fun writing this test. “Good luck on the test. I look forward to reading your answers.” These become “self-fulfilling prophecies” for students and turn negatives into positives.

30. Provide options in completing a project. Allow students to choose project format: paper, pamphlet/booklet, movie, song, artwork, or presentation.

31. Use a Turn-to-Your-Partner strategy to break up the lecture. Ask students to tell the person sitting next to them something they learned or one thing they need to clarify from the lesson.

32. Offer Mission Impossible challenges for additional assignments.
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33. Offer reading bonuses to keep students abreast of readings.
34. Pop quizzes at beginning of class can have a 2 point value. Give 1 point for just being there and trying.
35. Help students develop a professional appearance. Ask students to create collages using old magazines. Share the posters. Vote on the most professional appearance.
36. Collect cartoons and use them make a point during the lesson or to lighten the class during a stressful time.
37. Ask students to write a scenario to illustrate a specific concept from the lesson.
38. Begin writing key points on the board before students get to class. This encourages students to get to class on time.
39. Give each student a One Day Late Coupon to relieve the pressure of late papers. Students will save their coupon until they really need it.
40. After a specific lesson or task, ask students to identify one idea, thought, or reaction that is especially meaningful to them.
41. Close class by asking students to create a Top 10 List, Top 5 List, or Take Home Message of main points to remember from class.
42. Invite students to teach someone else what they learned in class within 48 hours. This strategy helps students “own” their learning.
43. Ask students to verbalize, rehearse, and talk through concepts during class. This oral practice helps students learn key concepts and terminology.
44. Use Team Review to summarize a unit of instruction. Provide about 10 minutes for students to review and study content on teams. Ask students to

Favorite Fact:
Students retain 5% of lecture material, but 90% if they do something with the material, teach someone else, or have immediate use. Teach for 90%!
number off on teams. Call out a number and ask students with that number to stand and answer for the team. Move quickly from one number and question to the next to build momentum.

45. Get together with students regularly and encourage regularly for discussion and encouragement.

46. Encourage students to form study groups. They will be your strongest ally in college success.

47. Create an issue bin on a flip chart or chalkboard. As issues arise that are outside the direct lesson, write them on the issue bin. Assign students to answer issue bin questions before the next class session.

48. Bookend classroom films by asking students to post their questions before the video and then answer them after the video.

49. Invite guests to the classroom.

50. Provide service learning opportunities through internships, clinical settings, and visits to business and industry.

*Fifty Nifty Faculty Favorites is a collection of strategies from teaching and learning workshops facilitated by Dr. Idahlynn Karre. These 50 Faculty Favorites are the from Sault Ste Marie College in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, Canada. All Rights Reserved.*