

Excellence in Teaching

David Shaw

Business/Economics



About me

I grew up in the Midwest and received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Northwestern University. I earned my Masters in Business Administration from the University of California at Berkeley. A solid understanding of the psychology is helpful in business. I combined both of these areas of interest in my professional work in Market Research, Market Intelligence, and Information Technology during my 19 years of working with Hewlett Packard. I also taught courses in Consumer Behavior at Golden Gate University before coming to Western.

What I like about teaching at Western Oregon University

I joined the faculty in Winter 2005, so this is my fourth quarter here. Friends of mine suggested I look into Western when I expressed my interest in teaching. What I enjoy most about teaching at Western is the mix of students here. The students at Western come from diverse backgrounds. Many of the students in my classes are putting themselves through school. These students are, in many ways, more connected with their education, since they are earning it themselves. I enjoy teaching students with this kind of determination.

My approach to teaching

I view my teaching as a work in progress. Achieving excellence in teaching is a life long process. One of the joys of teaching is discovering what works well, what methods engage students, and which instructional strategies are the most effective at promoting student learning.

As I've continued to reflect on what worked and what didn't last quarter, I truly think that much of the credit for what worked goes to the students I had. We had an excellent group of students. Like most teachers, I suspect, I find that the engaged students tend to like my class, and the disengaged ones tend to dislike it. (Obviously, I try to engage as many as possible, but it doesn't work for all.) However, I have found that some things I do seem to help, and I'm happy to share those in any way that helps out other teachers at WOU.

Showing students how the course materials affect them helps students learn the material. For example, one of the things I've done with the course I teach (BA345W, Internet & E-Commerce) is to try to highlight how the Internet may directly impact the students. To do this, I've included Thomas L. Friedman's *The World is Flat* on the reading list. This book came out only a year ago, and one of the major issues Friedman addresses is how the Internet has dramatically facilitated the offshoring of service jobs. As a class, we talk about how the U.S. should respond to this. Friedman traces the offshoring movement to the Y2K threat at the turn of the millennium. Students graduating today will be entering a different "work world" than their parents did. This can be a hard concept for students to fully grasp. Many of the students in my classes are majoring in Computer Science and Information Technology. When they graduate they may well be competing for jobs with graduates in India. To help them make sense of the abstract ideas, I use a layering approach. First, students read Friedman's book. Next, the class watches Friedman discuss the topic from the book in an interview, and finally, students engage the ideas from a specific point of view in a role playing writing assignment. This innovative pedagogy offers students a context and frame from which to analyze the issue. Students have responded positively to this assignment, which stimulates meaningful discussion and dialogue in class.

When you teach a course on E-Commerce and the Internet, you need to stay on top of current events. I incorporate recent examples and use multimedia as much as possible. Video segments can augment lectures and discussions. I regularly use video segments in class. Some of these address controversial issues related to the Internet, such as a PBS show on whether municipal governments should be involved in providing broadband Internet access to citizens. Others include interviews with individuals who are having a major impact on the Internet and E-Commerce, such as Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the two co-founders of Google, or John Chambers, the CEO of Cisco.

The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile. . . . For each person there are thousands of opportunities, challenges to expand ourselves.

M. Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*, p. 3

Acquire new knowledge whilst thinking of over the old, and you may become a teacher of others.

Confucius

Integration, exploration, and synthesis

In my spare time you will find me with my nose in a book. I enjoy reading about current events and political science. Authors who attempt to synthesize different areas of knowledge such as the new physics, fascinate me. I am also interested in dream interpretation. I enjoy teaching and I enjoy learning new things. Working at Western is satisfying because it allows me to do both.



The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.

Mark VanDoren

To waken interest and kindle enthusiasm is the sure way to teach easily and successfully.

Tyron Edwards

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for
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&
Learning

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