

Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips

For University Executives



How to develop your management on teaching and learning

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Preface

This booklet was originally written in Japanese and compiled by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education (CSHE) at Nagoya University. This English edition aims at showing the status of Japanese practices on higher education to researchers, practitioners and trainers in the world, which would facilitate further discussion.

Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips

The *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips* is a series of booklets compiled by the Center for the Studies of Higher Education (CSHE) at Nagoya University. The series aim at improving the quality of teaching and learning at the university. Quality of education would be stepped up with tiny improvements of everyday practice by stakeholders, such as students, faculty members, academic and student affairs staff members, university executives, etc. Therefore, each booklet offers each stakeholder suggestions for daily practice categorized by purposes. Moreover, the quality would be much enriched when efforts towards it by different stakeholders are integrated. Accordingly, all the booklets use the same framework of purposes, that is, the seven suggestions for better teaching and learning at university. We named the person who gives the suggestions as Professor Tips, a fictitious character who was first featured in the book, *Learn with the Professor Tips: How to Develop Your Course Design*, authored by members of the CSHE.

For University Executives

- How to develop your management on teaching and learning

This booklet offers suggestions and specific ideas by which the executives of Nagoya University can realize quality education.

Nagoya University has long practiced various ways of good teaching. Examples of such good teaching practices, identified through surveys - mainly on campus - were compiled in a database and organized on the basis of achievements in the study of teaching methods and learning theory. This booklet presents these examples in simple expressions.

The aim of this booklet is not to provide criteria for educational evaluation, but to identify good teaching practices and knowledge at Nagoya University, and offer a framework for sharing such knowledge among all university

members. To enhance the educational benefits of good teaching, efforts by all parties of students, faculty, staff, and the executives must be integrally directed toward the same objective. Teaching cannot be effectively improved only through the efforts of faculty members and students. An integrated and organizational approach, by all parties involved with the system and the university learning environment, is crucial.

To take the Office Hour system as an example: the system has been introduced in many universities, but students do not use it to the extent expected. To increase the system's educational benefits, instructors should not only write their office hours in the syllabus, but should also welcome students by saying in class, "feel free to visit my room," or by leaving their office door open. At the same time, students should take an active attitude toward learning by visiting their instructors' offices to ask questions instead of leaving the questions unanswered in class. To support these efforts by instructors and students, efforts by the executives, such as providing lounges to facilitate friendly communication, are also very important, as is promotion of the Office Hour system.

The basic concept of this booklet comes from the *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*, developed by the American Association of Higher Education. Starting from these principles, we developed the booklet using examples gathered at Nagoya University, the results of our own research and achievements in the study of teaching and learning theory. We believe the result is a highly original work.

As mentioned above, this booklet does not aim to provide criteria for educational evaluation, and many of the ideas contained here have already been implemented at Nagoya University. We recommend that this booklet be viewed as material for providing the executives with ideas for creating a better university by promoting quality teaching, the most important activity for a university.

We hope that this booklet will prove effective for good practice in university management, as well as for reflection on their practice by other stakeholders.

How to use the *Seven Suggestions from Professor Tips*

You can use this booklet as follows:

1. The seven suggestions are written in simple and easy-to-remember sentences. You can use them as a framework to organize and systemize what you usually keep in mind and try to do.
2. The 49 ideas presented may include the ideas that you have never tried. If you are interested in any of them, why not try them in your teaching? You don't have to use them all, though. Find those that seem appropriate for your personality and the goal of the course.
3. There are some other versions published in volumes of this series. Please also take a look at the separate volumes for faculty members, students, academic and student affairs, and IT-enhanced teaching. These separate volumes all contain tips on what faculty, student and staff can each do to achieve the same goal.
4. You may have better ideas than those contained in this booklet. Please let us know at the Center for the Studies of Higher Education about what you think is important or what you find effective in your university management. Your ideas will be helpful for future revisions.

Suggestion 1

Encourage student-faculty contact

Students tend to feel a greater sense of belonging and of responsibility toward their classes when they are treated as individuals, rather than as members of a group. To encourage their participation in class, student-faculty contact should be emphasized. The executives is advised to facilitate a system or environment that encourages such contact.

- Lounges or other facilities where students and faculty members can have talk are provided on campus.
- Instructors are required to state their office hours in syllabuses.
- There are recreational events in which students, instructors and faculty staff can participate.
- Resources are provided by which to browse the disciplines, researches and classes of faculty members.
- Books written by faculty members are organized and made available in a library or other facility.
- President, directors and deans have opportunities to listen to students' opinions.
- Instructors who are enthusiastic about teaching are highly evaluated.

Suggestion 2

Encourage cooperative learning among students

Cooperative relations with classmates in regard to learning promote student participation in class. By mutually accepting and complementing differences in learning styles and ways of thinking, students' understanding of course content can be deepened. The university should foster an environment in which students are encouraged to cooperate with other students both on and off campus, so as to create an atmosphere that encourages cooperative learning.

- There are facilities available for group learning.
- Libraries and cafeterias are open on weekends and at night during the semester.
- There are many classrooms with movable desks and chairs.
- There is a system by which students can serve as advisors for other students.
- There are mailing lists and electronic bulletin boards that are freely useable by students.
- Streetlights and security guards are provided to ensure student safety at night.
- Opportunities are provided for student voluntary study groups to present their achievements.

Suggestion 3

Encourage active student learning

In undergraduate education, it is important to encourage active learning. Good study results cannot be expected from passive learning. However, some students are not used to active learning. There are also some instructors who are not used to teaching methods that promote active learning. The executives is expected to support such students and faculty members.

- Importance of promoting active learning is included in the university educational goals.
- Faculty member training programs are offered in teaching methods that encourage active student learning.
- Seminars are held on how to find reference literature, how to read literature, how to take notes, how to write papers and theses etc.
- Instructors are encouraged to make syllabus that foster student learning activities outside class hours.
- Sufficient numbers of computers are provided for student use.
- Questionnaire surveys are conducted among students to gather suggestions and ideas for better teaching.
- Students are encouraged to participate in study groups and internship programs.

Suggestion 4

Encourage students to review their study progress

For students, confirming how far they have progressed toward the goals of the course provides them with important information regarding their subsequent progress. It also provides instructors with a good opportunity to check their teaching pace. The executives should provide students with opportunities to review the progress of their studies, and facilitate a system that ensures the results are be fed back.

- Sufficient information is available whereby students can review their learning records.
- Study support or counseling is provided for poorly performing students.
- Classes are formed according to the level of proficiency.
- Instructors are encouraged to evaluate students on the basis of several tests and assignments.
- Instructors are required to give students the results of exams and papers.
- A set of paper is prepared so that questionnaire surveys for students on teaching can be conducted at any time.
- Teaching assistants are provided for classes that require individual feedback to each student.

Suggestion 5

Emphasize time on task

While the importance of study outside of class is widely acknowledged, many students find it difficult to arrange their time with regard to study. Effective use of time is an extremely important factor, affecting students' achievements. The university is encouraged to help students learn how to manage their time for study in the early stage after entering the university.

- Curriculums are designed in consideration of the time required for the study tasks.
- Time management seminars are held for students.
- Attendance cards or other materials are prepared for instructors who wish to monitor student attendance.
- The maximum number of classes a student can register for per semester is fixed.
- The administration office is aware of long-absent students.
- There are opportunities for instructors to discuss the students' necessary amount of study outside of class.
- Students are provided with a classroom environment in which they can concentrate on their studies.

Suggestion 6

Communicate your high expectations to students

Students are sensitive to expectations from their instructors and others. When they sense no expectations, they lose their motivation for learning, which results in diminished study benefits. Try to stimulate students' motivation for learning by taking every opportunity on campus to communicate your expectations to students or by employing a system to reward students' motivation.

- High expectations toward students are included in the educational goals.
- There is an organization to provide counseling for students on study and career development.
- There is an organization to support students who are interested in study abroad or internship programs.
- Financial assistance is offered to motivated students for study and research.
- Undergraduate students are allowed to observe graduate school classes.
- Well-performing students are rewarded with opportunities for honors from the president, scholarships, grade-skipping etc.
- Students have easy access to the content of their instructors' studies.

Suggestion 7

Respect student diversity

A university can be invigorated by accepting students with various learning styles and characteristics. The university must respect such diversity, and demonstrate that respect not only to the students, but also to all members of the university. The university is encouraged to view student diversity as a means of broadening student views and enhancing the benefits of study, rather than as a hindrance to teaching.

- Approaches to promoting respect for diversity are included in the goals and plans of the university.
- Seminars are held so as to help the administration, faculty, staff and students better understand diversity.
- Admission policy is discussed with regard to attracting a variety of students suitable for the university.
- Supplementary courses are provided for students having any uncompleted subjects.
- Instructors are encouraged to evaluate students several times, in various ways.
- Learning support is provided for disabled and socially vulnerable students.
- Some classes are taught in languages other than Japanese..

Notes

The original Japanese edition had notes as shown below;

1. Your feedback regarding impressions of this booklet, suggestions for improvements, or important ideas not included in this booklet, is always welcome.

E-mail info@cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp

2. A website (in Japanese) is available for those who are interested in ideas that could not be included in this booklet and the contents of the other booklets.

URL <http://www.cshe.nagoya-u.ac.jp/seven/>

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