



# EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

The following characteristics appear again and again in studies on, or discussions of, effective teachers. We have classified these qualities according to the broad categories and items that Stanford uses in course evaluations, which were in part based upon the work of M. Hildebrande, R.C. Wilson, and E.R. Dienst, *Evaluating University Teaching*, Berkeley: University of California, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1971. Ken Bain's *What the Best College Teachers Do*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, provides a nice update to this classic work.

## **Instructor's Organization and Clarity**

- Sets out and meets clear objectives for the course and each class session
- Conveys thorough command of the field; knowledgeable about course material
- Explains clearly; uses examples, details, analogies, metaphors, and variety in modes of explanation
- Distinguishes between more important and less important points
- Presents material at an appropriate pace; knows whether or not the class is following the material and adjusts as needed

## **Instructor's Ability to Engage and Challenge Students**

- Emphasizes conceptual understanding and/or critical thinking; poses intriguing and significant questions; assists students to think as scholars do
- Gives students a sense of the field, its past, present, and future directions, the origins of concepts and ideas
- Relates course topics to one another, to other courses, to other disciplines or fields; helps students connect course material to their own lives
- Discusses viewpoints other than his/her own; encourages independent thought and accepts criticism; challenges students to have and defend their own ideas

## **Instructor's Interaction with Students**

- Demonstrates concern for student learning; enjoys teaching and is concerned about the quality of teaching
- Expects students to actively listen, think, and participate; stimulates, directs, and paces interactions with the class
- Is seen by students as approachable, available for consultation outside of class
- Seems genuinely interested in students; respects students as individuals
- Conveys a love of the field; is enthusiastic, inspiring, and motivating
- Is perceived as fair

## **Course Organization, Content, and Evaluation**

- Selects course content that is valuable and worth learning
- Organizes course topics in a coherent fashion
- Creates diverse learning formats
- Chooses assignments that solidify understanding; sets and conveys clear and fair expectation for success