Eric Gouvin’s Top Ten List of Teaching Tips

1. **Be prepared.**
   - Know what you want to accomplish. Make a list of your goals for the class
   - Be organized – develop themes in your course
   - Start on time
   - Manage your time. Be ready to add or subtract material as necessary
   - Master the material
   - Stay current in the scholarship in your area of expertise and find ways to bring your own scholarship into the mix
   - Keep on top of your field, including what’s going on in practice

2. **Respect your students.**
   - Support the students as individuals, be careful of their self-esteem and ego
   - Learn your students’ names
   - Show concern for them
   - Allow people to admit confusion, ignorance, fears, biases, and different opinions
   - Acknowledge or thank students for their responses and questions
   - Respect their intelligence by engaging them in a process of mutual inquiry
   - Insist on proper preparation
   - Be accessible

3. **Demand respect for everyone in the classroom.**
   - Disrespect is treatable if caught early, otherwise its deadly

4. **Unlearn your own knowledge.**
   - Keep your audience in mind. Try to remember or imagine what it was like to be exposed to this topic the first time you ever heard about it.
– Assume nothing and explain everything. Do not assume the students understand what you just said because no one asked a question.

– Define terms. Explain, then ask. Keep the conversation interactive.

– Remember that our students have years of experience and a wealth of information, just not necessarily in connection with legal subjects.

– Focus on the strengths that learners bring to the classroom, not just gaps in their knowledge.

5. **Keep things in perspective.**

– Students do not wish to learn what they will never use.

– Provide context for topics.

– Relate new material to previously learned information and experiences.

– Use Real World examples

– Remember to review

6. **Mix it up.**

– Use multiple methods of teaching/learning—e.g., mini-lectures, problem solving, whole-class discussions, role plays, case studies, guest speakers etc.

– Use multimedia—e.g., overhead transparencies, power point, videos, relevant TV or movie segments, artifacts, audiotapes or CDs.

– Use images on blackboard or PPT

7. **Keep the exam in mind.**

– The examination can be an important component of the learning experience.

– Think about your exam from the very beginning of the course

– At least know what you are going to test before holding a review session

– Make sure you cover the material you plan to test

– Use multiple methods of student evaluation and grading—e.g., exams involving different test-question formats (multiple-choice, essays, etc.)
8. **Listen to questions.**
   - This is one of the most difficult things to do
   - Monitor class comprehension by listening to questions
   - Good teaching is about listening, questioning, being responsive, and asking the next question
   - Praise students who ask questions that show they’ve made a good mistake

9. **Be realistic about your syllabus.**
   - You’ll never cover as much as you do in your first semester of teaching
   - Reach peace with yourself about course coverage versus depth of comprehension.
   - Good teaching is about not always having a fixed agenda and being rigid, but being flexible, fluid, and responsive.
   - Have the confidence to react and adjust to changing circumstances.

10. **Keep it fun.**
    - Don’t take yourself too seriously.
    - Use war stories primarily to show how you screwed something up
    - Good teaching should be entertaining, which is not to say it should lack substance
    - Good teachers work the room and every student in it.
    - Visual aids may provide comic relief
    - Be enthusiastic