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**To:** [TEACHING-TOOLBOX@LISTSERV.JMU.EDU](mailto:TEACHING-TOOLBOX@LISTSERV.JMU.EDU)  
**Subject:** Teaching Toolbox: Students' Perceptions of Good Teaching  
**Date:** Thursday, December 13, 2018 10:19:00 AM

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## Students' Perceptions of Good Teaching

By Kristi Lewis

As I finalize grades and as course evaluations start trickling in, I started to ponder how students might define "good teaching."

Based on a review of the literature, students' perceptions of good teaching can be categorized into cognitive aspects of instruction and personal traits of the course instructor ([Miron and Segal 1978](#); [Gibson and Slate 2007](#)). Examples of cognitive aspects of instruction include being organized and having good communication skills. Examples of personal traits include being accessible and empathic to student needs.

In a study on students' perceptions of good teaching, [Witcher et al. \(2003\)](#) identified instructor traits that included being...

- Student-centered
- Knowledgeable on subject matter/content area
- Professional
- Enthusiastic
- An effective communicator
- Accessible
- Competent
- Fair and respectful
- Provide quick and detailed feedback

The findings of the Witcher et al. were supported by a number of other studies ([Acker 2003](#); [Aulls 2010](#); [Greimel-Fuhrmann and Geyer 2003](#); [Guskey and Easton 1983](#); [Onwuegbuzie et al. 2007](#)).

After reviewing this literature, I started to research tips that might increase students' perceptions of good teaching that align with some of the traits listed above. A study by [Freeman and Wash \(2013\)](#) suggested the following strategies:

- Create lectures and materials that reach all learners
- Offer opportunities for cooperative learning
- Develop activities and assignments that encourage critical thinking

- Ensure that course work is relevant to course content
- Integrate technology when possible
- Provide humor when appropriate

Identifying and articulating good teaching is no easy task. Seasoned faculty often struggle to define good teaching. Students, however, seem to be clear ([Korte et al. 2013](#)).

The CFI teaching team wishes you a well deserved and restful winter break.

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