

Maddi Fleming is a student who was very inspired by opportunities for international development she experienced in the appropriate technology classes. She attended both classes in 2015-2016 and was the lead student on the month-long trip to Uganda with AidAfrica. She presented to the appropriate technology class Fall 2016 about her experience. I include an Email from our discussions:

Madison Fleming

📧 Appropriate Technology-2 September 16, 2016 at 11:28 AM



Re: Speaking to my class?

To: Peter Schwartz

Yes! I completely agree. I look forward to sharing my experience regarding appropriate technology with your class. It is funny because I remember being in that class when speakers came and thinking how amazing it would be to get real experience in that field and who would have thunk I'd be a speaker the next year! Funny how things work. I only hope it was the first experience of many to come for me.

As for fundraising, I hope we can get a lot of coverage from different outlets and always link to our GoFundMe page. The goal I have set is 10,000. That can hopefully serve as a rolling fundraising as we focus more specified efforts on grant applications and other funding opps.

#1 Student

📧 Students September 14, 2016 at 10:50 PM

15

Physics Class Learning

To: Peter Schwartz

Dear Pete,

How are you doing? How was your summer?

I am writing to you because I wanted to say again that I really appreciated your physics class last spring. It helped me think about physics in a new way. I have been so excited about it that I used the idea of momentum to help me model balls hitting each other in an android application I am writing.

Thank you for being such an inspiration.

Sincerely,

#1 Student

p.s. How would I go about volunteering at the experimental farms this year?

To: Peter Schwartz

[Details](#)

Hi Pete,

In your office we touched on some things that helped me overcome test anxiety.

Besides the faculty at the health center, the way you approached the learning and testing process really did help me learn how to test better.

I think the most important thing that you did was approach the idea of test anxiety with a very open mind. In class, the question was never "are you good enough" but rather "can you learn how to take tests and figure out what works best for you as the individual?" Addressing the issue as something very real, normal, and human created an environment in which the student shifts the focus on to learning and understanding the material, and away from cramming material to pass a test.

I also really enjoyed discussing things in groups for several reasons. Most importantly, I feel that it is very common for students to think "I'm not understanding so I must not be good enough" or "everyone else gets it so why can't I." However, when you struggle in a group with other peers, you realize you're not alone. Everyone is in the same boat trying to learn. That realization was very calming and comforting. I also enjoyed group work because when it came time for exams, I felt like I had a small support group with me, even though we couldn't communicate. We had all prepared together, and we were taking the same test together. The fear of tests and of failing (being not as good as everyone else) was greatly diminished. Groups were also a great way to bounce ideas and form a deeper grasp on concepts.

The informal labs also created a more relaxed and open environment for exploration without that fear of not being strong or talented enough to succeed.

As of right now, I can't think of anything you should be doing differently. I really enjoyed every minute I spent in the class and I think it is conducted in a way to set students up for success.

If there is anything else I missed, or if you have any questions I can answer, I would love to help.

Thanks,

#2 Student

#3 Student

May 12, 2014 7:00 AM

3S

To: pschwart <pschwart@calpoly.edu>

Re: hi from Cal Poly

Hi Pete,

Good to hear from you. I am working at an international school. The official language is English. All but one of my coworkers was born outside of Japan and my PI is Chinese. My group's topic is now focused on perovskite solar cells. I still appreciate the unintentional irony of the white elephant. I remember picking white because it seemed like a neutral color for a gift.

I like it where I am now but I am over half way through my contract and am looking for the next step.

In retrospect I can say you were the best physics teacher I ever had and had the most direct influence on me choosing a career in physics. Also as a boss the most concerned about me as a human being. I understand that being the boss is hard. I am sorry I was not a better student near the end.

Hope to hear from you again

#3 Student

I remember when I worked for you I didn't want to buy a cell phone.

Sent from my iPhone

#4 Student

March 2, 2014 9:48 PM

4S

To: Peter Schwartz <pschwart@calpoly.edu>

Efficiency Update

Professor Schwartz,

After I had turned in the final exam for your Physics of Energy class, you told me to let you know what I will have been doing to improve my energy efficiency use in the future. I realize it has been a long time since that day, but I thought I'd let you know what I've been up to since taking your class.

I have always been mindful to save energy in basic ways, but I've taken it up a few notches. I've installed LED lights throughout our house, I bike everywhere within a 5 mile radius (I'll go farther if I'm not carrying too much), I avoid all purchases unless necessary or otherwise awesome, I buy locally, and I have used basic power calcs to predict monthly energy costs. Although these are not the most technically advanced sustainability practices, what's been most rewarding is extending these principles to my roommates.

Anyhoo, in the end I just wanted to extend my thanks. I really enjoyed your teaching style and the class structure, and I think I learned a lot more than I would have in an ordinary lecture setting.

On a separate note, I live off Johnson Avenue, and whenever I pass by your house while biking to school I am reminded of the time we went to your house to see your energy saving practices. I eagerly await of the day when I am able to make a lab-of-sorts out of my own house too.

I hope all is well, and wish you well as this quarter finishes up.

#4 Student