As a teacher, my goals are not just to convey information, but to impart knowledge and skills that will allow my students to become competent contributors to society. These goals extend beyond the semester, and must follow them throughout their lives. Hence, the involvement students have in their class may influence their involvement in other aspects of their life. One of the most important lifelong skills one can have is the desire to continue learning. In order to develop this desire, I incorporate such strategies as (a) exposing the class to novel concepts and ideas, (b) making assignments relevant to the individual, and (c) instilling personal responsibility for attainment of knowledge. As a whole, these are the three primary tactics I use to create a learning environment conducive to student engagement and curiosity to learn within and outside the class.

Novel experiences can immediately invoke a curiosity in students. The class *The Healthy Lifestyle* involves 50 minutes of lecture and 50 minutes of physical activity. Rather than repeating the same structure for the activity session, I consistently exposed my students to creative ways to get active, such as Zumba, TV workouts, and adaptive sports (e.g., wheelchair basketball or wheelchair tennis). For many students, this class was the first time experiencing these activities, and many went on to take Zumba classes or volunteer with the adaptive sports program after the class.

In addition, technological advances make it easy to incorporate novelty into classes. When I teach *The Healthy Lifestyle*, there is an assignment where the students must all use a fitness or health-related smartphone application. After noticing many students completing the assignment with an app they had already been using, I decided to implement the assignment a second time later in the semester. Students now had to expand their search to apps they had not used before. Many students continued to use the new app after the semester, and now all sections of the class include two of this assignment. I have also started to include links to relevant podcast episodes at the end of lectures, as these are easily digestible media and can be filled with science-based information to complement the class.

Students have differing levels of initial involvement in class. However, an individual will put more effort into processing a message if it is directly relevant to them. For this reason, I incorporate assignments that allow students to pursue their own interests as they align with the curriculum. When assigning a research paper, I provide optional topics that may be of interest to the class. However, I urge the students to pursue a topic they find interesting, as it may increase their motivation to dive deep into their research and have a positive academic experience. I also do this during the goal-setting assignment of the class, but do not stop after the initial assignment. I return to the goal throughout the semester and suggest it be implemented when the students search for a smartphone app, or relate it to their research project. By doing so, all the material in the class relates back to something personal to them, and allows for a more memorable application of the curriculum.

Not only should the class feel personally relevant, but the individual must feel personally responsible for their education. In a class of 40-50 people, or even in a small group of four, it can be easy to blend in to the crowd. I pride myself on the ability to learn each student’s name within the first month of class, making each student feel welcomed and like they are an important contributor to the class. Greater interaction with the instructor facilitates classroom involvement. Learning each student’s name can establish a rapport that is often necessary for them to feel comfortable interacting with me or with other members of the class.

By knowing everyone’s name, I also hold each student accountable for their presence and engagement in the class. In turn, they will recognize that they play as much a part of their education as any instructor. I reiterate this idea whenever a student asks a question relevant to the lecture that I do not know the answer to. When this happens, I offer extra credit points if the individual who asked the question can look up the answer and send me a document with the answer. This stimulates class engagement and provides the opportunity to pursue information beyond the content of the class. This strategy applies to any class I teach, from *The Healthy Lifestyle* to bowling to introductory sport psychology.

Building an engaging learning environment requires strategies at varying levels of the class, from something as simple as learning each student’s name to something as complicated as structuring the syllabus and assignments to all be connected through an overarching theme. Altogether, these strategies foster an environment conducive to the students gaining skills and knowledge to stay with them after the end of the class. On the last day of class, I finished with the same quote I used on the first day: “This class is not called *The Healthy Semester*, it is called *The Healthy Lifestyle*. I want what you learn in this class to stay with you for the rest of your life.” I stick by this philosophy not only in The Healthy Lifestyle, but in all classes, and the evidence of this is in the outcomes of my students’ experiences.

*“Tyler Harris is a wonderful professor who truly cares about his students learning. Throughly enjoyed the class due to his teaching and passion.”*

-Student in *The Healthy Lifestyle*, Fall 2017

*“Tyler is a outstanding professor who is always available for questions from his students. He really cares about the success of each individual student.”*

-Student in *The Healthy Lifestyle*, Fall 2017

*“Tyler is a great instructor!! I appreciate when he participates in the physical activity portion. He is also very kind, understanding, and reasonable as an instructor. His effort (and success) to learn his students' names creates a more personalized and meaningful learning environment.”*

-Student in *The Healthy Lifestyle*, Fall 2018

My own experiences and preferences also follow from this philosophy. Although I enjoy all forms of teaching, I tend to gravitate toward classes where the students physically and actively engage with the subject matter, such as The Healthy Lifestyle, or lab-based athletic training classes (where I may teach taping techniques, injury evaluation, or first-aid). These classes allow me to instill practical skills for the students to take away and apply in their lives. When teaching lecture-based classes, I still apply the same principles, and often reach the same positive outcomes.