

**ADRIAN CHAN:** Hi there. Welcome to my classroom, Great Expectations. My name is Adrian Chan, and I'm a professor in the Department of Systems and Computer Engineering.

I want to talk about the relationship between expectations and reality as it pertains to teaching and learning. And that when we have a mismatch between expectations and reality, this can result in negative outcomes such as disengagement, frustration, anger, and conflict. In addition, I will provide some examples how to better align expectations and reality to improve the teaching and learning experience.

We set expectations to our students by how we introduce or frame information to them. As an example I have seen, and I have done myself, an introduction to the course that starts like this. Hi, class. Today we're going to start off by going through the course outline. This is going to be boring, but we have to get through this. And you can imagine the effect of setting that expectation to the students will have for discussing the course outline as well as for the rest of the course.

Instead of introducing or framing information in a negative light such as, this course has a lot of mathematical concepts. Therefore it's very difficult. Try to think of how to frame things more positively. This course has a lot of mathematical concepts, but I am very confident in your abilities and that you will learn this material. And I will be there to support you along the way.

Students also come with expectations. These expectations are informed by the organizational structure. For example, as the instructor or professor, you have a power dynamic difference with your students. Students therefore can be afraid or intimidated by you.

Instructors may have a reputation, as well as the course may also have a reputation. And whether it is good or bad, whether it is warranted or not, we have to understand that those expectations and reputations do exist. One of the things I tried to do at the beginning of my courses is to reset expectations.

One of my approaches is to organize one-on-one meetings with all of my students that I teach. These are short meetings, about 10 minutes long, where we get to

know one another. This helps to humanize each other. Students are less afraid to approach me if they have questions, if they have feedback, concerns, if they're struggling.

In addition, it allows us to set expectations from one another. I understand better that my students have more than the course that I'm teaching, as well as students also understand that I have more in my life than just the course that I am teaching.

We can also have the lack of expectations. The uncertainties and expectations can lead to fear and anxiety in our students. Transparency can help reduce these uncertainties.

We can tell students through our course outlines, through our marking rubrics, why we are making certain decisions and how we are going to execute parts of these courses. For example, in my course outline, I talk about my educational philosophies and the criteria that I am thinking when I design and deliver this upcoming course. In addition, I provide concrete examples of what the exam is going to be like-- not only to the length, but the type of questions that I will ask. And this hopefully will help reduce the uncertainties for my students and put them more at ease.

Here is part of the course outline that I'm using for this upcoming fall. And you'll see that I have parts that talk about my educational philosophy, about why I am making certain decisions in the design delivery of this course. You'll see a section on trust and respect, and trying to build that rapport with the students very quickly. You'll also see I talk about the different elements of the course, how it is designed, and how is it formatted, and the different elements of the course, and how students will interact with it. And all of this is to try to provide students a way of anticipating how this course is going to be for them.

It's also good to have that expectation of failures and mistakes. This is true for both our students as well as ourselves. Kathryn Schulz has this book called *Being Wrong*. She asked people, how does it feel like to be wrong? People would often reply saying, that they felt sad, they felt ashamed, they felt angry. And she would respond that this is actually the feeling that you get when you realize that you are wrong, in which case you are no longer wrong.

The feeling of being wrong is actually the same feeling that you have as being right. This is an important consideration when we talk about delivering our courses and making mistakes and failures. We're not going to know when we're having problems in our delivery unless we hear from the students.

One of the things I'm going to do in this course, because I can't see my students and see looks of confusion or frustration or anger or boredom, is I have to be more explicit about that. To get regular feedback, perhaps on a weekly basis, asking them one or two things that are working for them or one of two things that can be improved. The other important part is to complete the feedback. And what I mean by this is to tell students, this is the feedback that I'm hearing and this is how I am going to action them.

There are, of course, certain things that we can't adjust in real time with our courses. But still, to tell them, I've heard this. It will help me inform my future offerings of the course, so that they know and trust that you are using the feedback that they are giving.

It is also good to keep high but reasonable expectations for students as well as for yourself. This could be particularly true as you move to an online environment where we can feel connected 24/7. Telling students what your expectations are for their engagement in the course, how many hours a week do you expect them to be engaging in addition to scheduled lectures and labs. At the same time, keeping clear boundaries for yourself, and how students will contact you and raise questions and concerns, is also good. Brene Brown says, "Those with the most compassion often have the clearest boundaries."

Thank you so much for watching this video. If you have any questions or would like to see my course outline, feel free to reach out to me. My contact information is right there below.