Teaching Technology Topics to Seniors

APCUG VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2018 – RAY BAXTER, TREASURER APCUG

Virtual Technology Conference
Saturday, 05/05/18
@ 1 PM ET

Conference Description
& Registration Links go to

apcug2.org/category/virtual-tech-conference

By Way of Background

▶ Each year I teach four classes at Gila Community College in Payson, AZ

1. "Introduction to Computer Based Systems" is geared to typical college age students where they often know more about technology than I do.

2. An MS Office class focusing on Word, Excel, and Power Point where the students tend to be either typical college age or Seniors who are computer literate.

3. A short-term Windows 10 class that has all ages attending.

4. Computers for Beginners where the title says it all and the students are almost always 100% seniors.

   ▶ This is the class that my experiences for this presentation will be based on

Sooner or Later We Are All Teachers

- Pretty much all the APCUG member clubs hold periodic meetings and more often than not, a teaching segment is provided with a club officer or member conducting the presentation.
  - If the presentation is too technical it will most likely be over the head of those in attendance.
  - If the presentation is too simple, those in attendance will be bored.
  - Finding the right balance and happy medium is the goal to achieve.

Outside of User Group Activities

- A relative who just got a new computer
  - Every family has a "computer expert" and my guess is most of you attending this session is the one that has been **_nominated_** by your family as a "Computer Expert."
- Friends (whether your own or your spouse's) call you on the phone with the opening words "I have a quick question for you" and then you know what's coming next (and its not a question that can be answered quickly).
- You've been asked to speak at the local senior center or library
  - This typically happens once your community knows you are an officer or member of a computer club user group, and that you are a willing volunteer

Contributors to this Presentation

- Some of what follows are from my own experiences while the rest are from other teachers and instructors that have shown a focus on working with seniors. They include:
  - Abby Stokes, author of "Is This Thing On?"
  - Nancy DeMarte, Rosita Herrick and Jim Cerny from the Sarasota Technology User Group in Florida
  - Judy Taylour, APCUG Board of Advisors Chair
- What impressed me is that most of these suggestions are what we all do even though most of us have never met – I guess it just comes naturally when being a teacher.

Abby Stokes: askabbystokes.com

► Long time friend to APCUG, Abby Stokes is the author of the fantastic book (written with seniors in mind) "***Is This Thing On?***" On Abby's website

www.askabbystokes.com

she lists "10 Tips for Teaching Silver Surfers" and I'll go over a few that I've also used in my 9 years of educating seniors about technology

► Abby's term Silver Surfers reminds me of the local casino in Payson that offers "Wisdom Discounts" instead of senior discounts

Abby's Tips for Teaching Silver Surfers

- "What Turns Them On" or finding out what the student is passionate about
  - once a student realizes what is available on the WWW for what truly interests them, the need to encourage using the computer dramatically decreases
- "Conquer The Mouse" is the first step for a newbie not to be intimated
  - When I see a new student that is having difficulty with the mouse, to their surprise I encourage them to play any of the various Solitaire computer games as these help develop what I like to call <u>Mouse Dexterity</u>
    - The games also help the student focus on the screen and over time locate items they are searching for more quickly
- "Give Homework" is the best method to insure the student will practice what they learned at home
  - Seniors can be like their teenage counterparts – an actual <u>assignment</u> will be done long before a <u>suggestion</u> to do the same task is followed

Issues to Consider When Teaching Seniors

▶ Issue: Many seniors no longer have the memory skills they had when younger

▶ Answer: Learn and retain by repetition; consider the way most of us learned the multiplication table (when the subject matter was called <u>arithmetic</u>). With learning how to use a computer the answer is practice over and over the "task of the day."

▶ Issue: How to foster encouragement to use the computer.

▶ Answer: Determine what the student is passionate about and then show them what type of information is available on the WWW.

▶ Issue: Many seniors use the "hunt & peck" typing system and become discouraged when they are not able to keep up with class assignments requiring typing more than a couple of lines.

▶ Answer: Encourage them to take college keyboarding (no longer called typing) classes, or use online sites like <u>www.powertyping.com</u>

Issues to Consider When Teaching Seniors

- Issue: Many seniors are tentative and afraid to just try something for fear they will "break" the computer.

- Answer: Assure them that today's computers are almost "bullet proof" and that simply using the unit in a normal manner will not cause any problems.

- Issue: Seniors (mostly the guys) are not the best at taking copious notes, and then when they arrive home have little to work with to recall what was covered in class.

- Answer: If a text book is not involved, use handouts. Seniors like something they can hold in their hand and read (the same reason why many seniors would rather read an actual book then use a device like a Kindle).

The three most important attributes for an Instructor when teaching Seniors
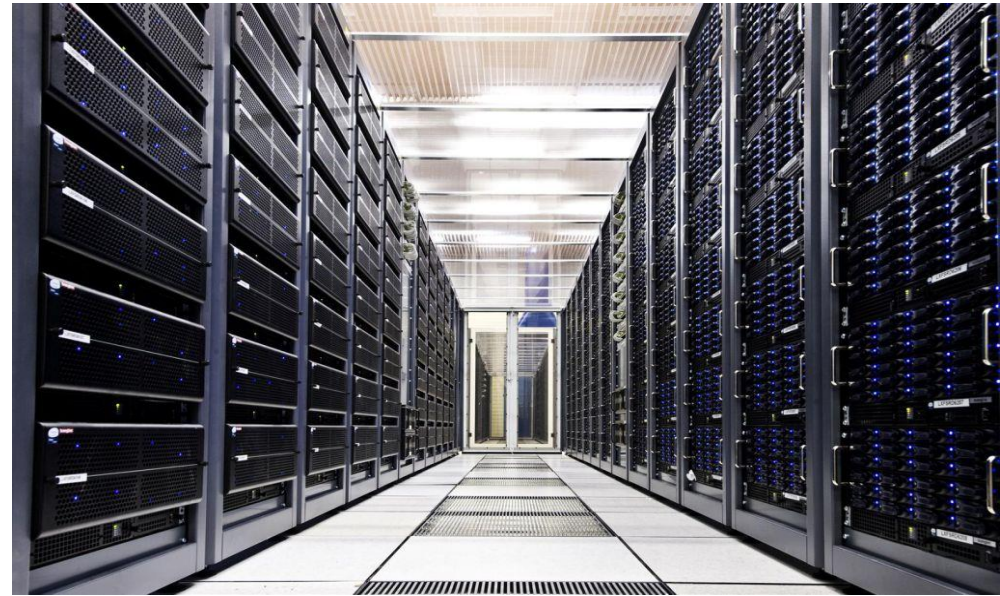
1. Patience
2. Patience
3. Patience

Other Attributes

▶ Use the KISS method or "Keep It Simple Stupid;" this was a design principle developed by the U.S. Navy in 1960.

  ▶ Talk in plain English. When using a computer term for the first time, provide an easy to understand explanation

▶ Encourage questions

  ▶ Emphasize there are no dumb questions. Point out your question is probably also on the mind of other students in the room.

Where and when possible, use Power Point or another presentation software as most students enjoy visuals.

As an example, when discussing using "The Cloud" I show pictures of an actual server building and a typical inside floor as this helps the student "visualize" what the term actually means.

Encourage Use of YouTube

▶ YouTube has become the "Go To" website for training videos, and computer learning is high on the list. Here are some aspects that I ask my students to keep in mind:

  ▶ When using YouTube's search box just type the words of what you are looking for, and almost all the time you will be brought to a video that will help.

  ▶ Always check the date the video was uploaded, particularly with computer training, as old ones for programs no longer supported seem to stay on forever.

  ▶ Understand that videos are uploaded from all over the world and sometimes they are hard to understand; when this happens time to go to the next one.

Make your Class "Fun"

This could be as simple as showing a comical computer related cartoon.

Make your Class "Fun"

Tell some corny computer jokes; remember you have a captive audience.

- Q: What did the spider do on the computer?
  A: Made a website!

- Q: What did the computer do at lunchtime?
  A: Had a byte!

- Q: What does a baby computer call his father?
  A: Data!

(courtesy of www.dusksters.com)

Questions?

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