My foremost objectives as an instructor are (i) to enable students to see the bearing and applicability of philosophy to their everyday lives and (ii) to foster students' confidence in their ability to succeed while (iii) helping to improve their abilities to read, write, speak, and think clearly and critically about philosophical ideas. To achieve these objectives, I use a goal-based approach that focuses on maximizing student motivation via environment, expectancy, and value. This approach derives from contemporary empirical research, which suggests that motivation is essential for learning.[1]

In practice, this hinges on several things; for example, the class size and level, the course content, and the students' backgrounds. For instance, graduate students in a special-topics seminar are likely more self-motivated than undergraduates in a survey course; teaching techniques vary in efficacy when teaching 10 students versus 300 students. Hence, I focus on a set of core principles that apply widely, though the application itself may vary from course to course. These principles include the class environment, as well as students' expectations for success and the value they place on the material.

Environment. An open, safe, and supportive learning environment is essential in any classroom. This is especially true in philosophy, where the content might challenge the long-held beliefs of individual students. Empowering students also requires an awareness of potential systemic barriers to success. Students from a wide range of backgrounds may experience stereotype threat or face other obstacles to performing their best. So, maintaining an inclusive classroom is paramount.

One of the ways I do so is to use the first day of class as an opportunity to collaboratively decide upon a set of expectations of how we will conduct ourselves. This gives the students agency in contributing to the tone of the class and an opportunity to build trust and set guidelines for respecting diverse points of view. I also make it a matter of policy to provide the students with a thorough syllabus—which I update to include the agreed-upon expectations of conduct. By emphasizing that these ground rules are available in the syllabus, I ensure that they are common knowledge so that everyone (including myself) can be held accountable for their behavior in discussions without becoming defensive.

I go through the material in the syllabus in detail during the first meeting. This helps to establish the tone and expectations for the course and to set a positive and lasting first impression. In addition, I routinely encourage students to attend office hours, and, when they do choose to attend, I engage with them in a welcoming and respectful manner. This is important for helping students gain confidence in discussing the course material, but it also provides space for me to get to know my students individually. Being respected as an individual is crucial for students to know that they are in an inclusive, empowering space.

In large, lecture-based classes, I focus on maximizing accessibility and minimizing anxiety. For example, I make every effort to ensure that the required readings are accessible to all the students. I

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[1] e.g., Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Kruglanski, A., Chernikova, M., and Kopetz, C. (2015). Motivation science. In R. Scott & S. Kosslyn (Eds.), *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. New York: Wiley; Murayama, K., & Elliot, A.J. (2009). The joint influence of personal achievement goals and classroom goal structures on achievement-relevant outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(2), 432-447.; among others.

would also utilize course notes or lecture slides, where appropriate, and make these available in advance to avoid having students split their attention between listening and note-taking. In a further effort to empower my students, I set clear expectations for assignments by providing concrete examples. In introductory classes, many students struggle to understand precisely what is being asked of them in writing a philosophy paper. Being given a concrete example helps students to see how this type of writing differs from the kind of writing that they had practiced in other classes, and what expectations I have for a successful paper.

Since the classroom is dynamic, I employ technology to gauge the efficacy of my teaching throughout the semester. This allows me to tailor my presentation to the particular needs of the students. At UC Irvine, I used an online system for soliciting unofficial mid-term evaluations. This enabled me to receive feedback on what components of the course students found most and least valuable and to shift my strategies for teaching accordingly, based on the actual needs of the students in that class.

Expectancy. There are several ways that I would design a course to foster positive expectancy in students. For example, by aligning and communicating the objectives, assessments, and my instructional strategies for the course, students know my expectations and are given opportunities to practice content, showcase their level of understanding, and receive feedback.

Perceived fairness can affect expectancy. As a rule, I grade essays and exams anonymously to avoid implicit bias. For written assignments, I provide detailed rubrics and targeted feedback that is proportional to the level of the course. Rubrics and detailed feedback help justify the grade (reducing one's perception of unfairness) and additionally provide the students with the tools required to achieve success in their subsequent work.

Past experiences influence expectations for future performance; so, early opportunities for success—e.g., short, low-stakes assignments—helps to reinforce students' beliefs that they can do philosophy in the first place. For example, in a logic class, where students might have significant performance anxiety or low expectancy for success due to an aversion to formalism, I would allow them a set time frame to correct mistakes on graded assignments for a higher grade. The possibility for resubmission can help reduce anxiety about grades, but it also gives students an incentive to practice the material before an exam.

Having assessments early and frequently aids to disperse the weight of grading; this helps reduce anxiety and further allows me to calibrate the level of difficulty of the course, so students are appropriately challenged—if an assignment is too difficult, it will negatively affect expectancy, but if it is too easy, it will negatively impact the value students place on it.

Value. The value I place on philosophy is intrinsic. However, I am sensitive to the fact that not every student holds this view; one cannot force students to value philosophy in itself. Still, I can affect the instrumental value they place on philosophy by illustrating how philosophical methods are widely applicable, and that philosophical content can be relevant to everyday life. I emphasise the instrumental value of philosophical skills—e.g., critical reasoning, facility with arguments, proficiency with communication—by showing their relevance to most any academic, professional, or personal pursuit.

I highlight the necessity of these skills by incorporating real-world examples and tasks into lectures and assignments. Though thought experiments can be perceived as abstract and esoteric, many of these—and the problems they highlight—can be explicitly related to real-world application. For example, trolley problems can be couched in terms of self-driving cars. Some of my research has taken place at an institute where these considerations are pressing matters of immediate concern.

When I first learned logic, I valued it as a puzzle. I later learned that all modern computation is elucidated in terms of formal logic. When I teach introductory logic, I bring these facts to bear on my lectures so that students can see the value in formal logic in a more comprehensive way, outside of memorising a set of derivation rules and applying them to formulae. This framing highlights the applicability of philosophical content.

The values that students place on goals can be mutually reinforcing. By affecting the instrumental value that students put in philosophy, they can be motivated to partake actively in philosophical discourse in the first place. Being shown that they can succeed may positively affect *attainment value*, which may, in turn, culminate in *intrinsic value*.

In sum, my approach to teaching is grounded in empirical research which suggests that learning and performance are supported by goal-directed behaviour, which in turn is guided by motivation, which itself is affected by *value, expectancy*, and *environment*. By relating philosophy to my students' lives—both in terms of content and as a skill—I can affect the value they place on succeeding in philosophy; I can help students see that they are capable of mastering philosophical concepts to provide positive expectancy; and I can ensure an environment that is accessible and supportive. I consider it my responsibility to foster an inclusive, empowering learning environment which supports and challenges my students as they develop their skills. I look forward to continuing to hone my skills as a teacher and to developing additional strategies to be responsive to my future students.