

# Quick Teaching Tips to help ensure that your lessons are...

## Engaging, Interactive, Varied

- Convey your passion – you study & teach the subject because you love it; communicate this to the students!
- It's best to keep to a 20-minute-at-a-time “teacher talk” maximum – break up periods of “teacher talk” with interactive activities, even if just 10-min question & answer sessions.
- VARIETY is key – think about what your students are seeing, hearing & doing through the lesson, and try to ensure they all vary as much as possible throughout the lesson.
- Include diverse activities, so that students do a mixture of watching, listening, reading, analysing, thinking, discussing, doing group work, doing individual written task, doing creative tasks
- Mix the question types you use – some quick knowledge-checkers, some open, some inviting debate, some to help them look at their knew knowledge from a different angle
- Make abstract concepts and problems more concrete through examples, case studies, models, practical applications
- Detailed analysis of fascinating high-res pictures or photos can be a great way of involving everyone in an accessible but rigorous activity
- Change of setting, where possible (e.g. onto college lawn), can be great for engagement

## Tailored to Students & Relevant

- Learning names is essential (get the students to make name cards if needed), and doing quick ice-breaker activities can work well to help set a good atmosphere in the class and ensure all feel welcome & valued.
- Doing a quiz/questionnaire on the first day can be great for getting an idea of students' prior knowledge, specific interests etc.
- The goal is to achieve “access & challenge” – all students should be able to access the material, and all students should be able to find challenge in it
- Give plenty of opportunities for students to ask questions, and ask them knowledge-checking questions frequently (picking on individuals is fine if the class atmosphere is right)
- Giving them insight into your personal research & academic background can be a good way of inspiring the students and showing them what they can do in the subject
- Good to include in the course a ‘what next?’ type session, covering which uni courses are available in the subject, which careers it can lead to, etc. This can incorporate advice & activities to help the students with their pursuit of the subject.



## Clear & Purpose-Driven

- Having a *clear* (both to you and the students) overall purpose for each session is essential. Having an explicit session title is vital, and it can work well to frame it as a question, e.g. “What caused the first world war?”, “How does heat transfer from material to material?”
- Having an engaging, intriguing starter activity can be great for clarity of purpose – introduce the students to the fascinating puzzle that they'll be investigating throughout the lesson
- In most cases (except those where you have surprises planned!), briefly explaining the structure of the session can help students to feel they know where everything is going
- Progress-checks through the course of a session can help keep up momentum and reinforce continued purpose to students. (“Okay, so now we've done x, and so we need to move on to y if we're going to understand fully/answer our lesson question.”)
- Think: Do you want them to take notes? Or will you send them slides? If you do want them taking notes, what can you do to help them do so efficiently & effectively?
- It works well to finish with an activity that consolidates the content they've learnt in the session.

## Different to School!

- Try to achieve an atmosphere which is more relaxed & open than school, but not so relaxed that students don't take it seriously!
- Be flexible & adaptable to students' interests – make the most of the fact that there isn't a set syllabus to get through.
- Having a good number of relevant local visits/trips is great, e.g. labs, research facilities, museums
- Cambridge is a small, safe town, generally full of friendly & intelligent people – make the most of this! Students designing surveys and interviewing locals tends to work well.
- “If in doubt, check it out” – if you have a bold idea for a lesson which may be logistically complicated or tricky in another way, just ask
- Supervisors are available to help you in class – make use of them for great activities!

For further help & advice, please see the more detailed ‘Planning & Teaching Advice’ document, which includes pointers on student discipline, or contact [luke@reachcambridge.com](mailto:luke@reachcambridge.com)