

Great Teaching at CQUniversity

1. Teach with enthusiasm

None of us need to review our enthusiasm – right? But enthusiasm is contagious; your job is to communicate more than course content. Your obvious interest and enthusiasm can have a very positive effect on learning. A dull and unenthusiastic delivery style can switch students off in seconds.

2. Maximise Clarity and simplicity

How does a concept sound to the student or someone who knows nothing about the material? Extremely complex material can be taught when the concepts are clear and less relevant material is removed. This idea also applies to communications with students.

3. Structure is important

Develop a logical structure to your course. This point follows on from point 2 above. If any communication or lesson is logically sequenced it will improve students' ability to mentally "process" the material. Keep in mind that our students are from a highly diverse demographic and background. Logical structure will help everyone involved, particularly international students. Research shows that students prefer structure and it increases their engagement.

4. Organisation and Communication

You need to do things on or before the time promised and you're in control of these times, so over-state times and deliver early! Couple this with clear communication surrounding what students can expect from you and how things are going. Stick to the timetable. Doing so will circumvent most problems and additionally increase student satisfaction. Increased communication drastically reduces the physical distance and sense of isolation students can "feel" when studying at a distance.

5. Know what you are teaching

Know your topic. Prepare for questions but don't be afraid of, or get flustered by, questions you can't answer. Be honest - if you don't know something don't dodge it by changing the subject – students can tell. Tell them you will find out and get back to them, or throw the question open for class discussion. Students will quickly disengage if they suspect you are a phony. This will affect their desire to learn, their quality of learning as well as feedback in your course.

6. Give a bit of yourself

Inject some of your personality into the course – but remain professional. Let students see you as a person, be open and honest. This works either online or face-to-face. Students engage more if they know a bit about their mentor's background. Some spontaneous humor can be very effective, but beware the ponderous jokes and dated stories.

7. Relate concepts to the real world

You need to show students how their learning links to the real world. These links can be "big" world-changing examples, simple links to everyday events or anything between. Students need to see the practicalities and applications of what they are learning.

8. Know your support systems

There are many different systems used in teaching and learning, theatres, video links, Moodle, exams, academic support services to name a few. Know who to ask and where to go for help in the daily operations of the university.

9. Vary strategies and technologies

It's quite likely that you'll identify and regularly use your favourite strategies and technologies, but mix it up and throw in something new occasionally. Don't just read off PowerPoint's or handouts all the time. Explore ways to actively engage the students rather than have them just be passive observers to the learning whether online or face-to-face.

10. Professional Development

Get involved in regular, at least yearly professional development both with your discipline and also teaching and learning. Learning environments at university are constantly evolving it pays off for both you and the students when your skills are up to date. Don't assume that the 3 day seminar you attended 8 years ago is sufficient to span a whole career of teaching practice.