


# URI TEACH SHEET


Create an Environment Where You **MOTIVATE, ENGAGE, and RESPOND**<sup>1</sup>

### MOTIVATE

*Motivation is critical for learning and essential for effective teaching*<sup>2</sup>

 SHOW

- Present the subject as interesting, relevant, valuable to learn, and fun
- Although the subject is challenging, all students can master it with effort
- Let students know you care about them successfully learning the material

 REMEMBER

- Most students do not have the benefit of your experience and perspective, so be sure to convey why you are drawn to this subject
- Recognize that students think differently than do you
- Scare tactics, such as saying the subject is really difficult or that many students will fail, are demotivating to many students<sup>3</sup>


**Approach Teaching as a Challenging Subject That Can Be Mastered**<sup>2, 4, 5, 6</sup>

- Understand how people learn and what processes facilitate learning
- Use teaching practices that have been proven to be effective<sup>7</sup>
- Don't be afraid to request support and to use what works<sup>2, 6</sup>


### ENGAGE

*Think of yourself as a “coach of thinking” rather than a “dispenser of information”*

**Lay out the Framework for What You Want Students to Learn**

 SHOW

- Rather than present just the facts, show how to apply the knowledge
- Teach students how to study effectively—these are skills that can be learned but are rarely taught
- Demonstrate what is required for conceptual mastery and retention<sup>4, 5</sup>

 REMEMBER

- Understanding how to apply knowledge is critical to mastering the subject
- Make time for student practice with relevant, real-world problems<sup>7</sup>

**Discover What Your Students Are Thinking**


- Connect to and build on students’ prior knowledge
- Examine students’ preconceptions<sup>2, 4</sup>
- Probe students’ understanding and adjust teaching when you find many are not getting it

**Teach Students How to Learn**


- Model expert thinking
- Be careful not to skip steps that may be automatic for you
- Show how to best understand the material

### RESPOND

*Timely and specific feedback is critical for learning*

 SHOW

- Use detailed, constructive feedback (“formative assessment”) to help students improve
- Show students where or why they have made a mistake

 REMEMBER

- For most students, grades define the expectations and what is important in a course<sup>3</sup>
- Give points for what you value (e.g. homework, reading, in-class participation, quizzes, and pre-tests)



### GETTING STARTED

**Establish a Desired Class Culture**

- Use the first week to set expectations and the tone for the rest of the term
- Explain your teaching style
- Share course goals and show why the course is worthwhile
- Be confident in how you will teach, don't apologize for using evidence-based methods

**CONTACT:**  
**Joshua Caulkins at URI, Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation (SLOAA) at: caulkins@uri.edu**

Layout Design and Editing by:  
 The College & University  
 Research Collaborative

“The ability to teach effectively is not innate – it can be learned much like a scholarly discipline.”

1. Adapted from “Course Transformation Guide” developed by the CWSEI (www.cwsei.ubc.ca); 2. The Wisdom of Practice: Lessons Learned from the Study of Highly Effective Tutors, in Improving Academic Achievement, ed. J. Aronson (2002) Academic Press.; 3. Student interviews and focus groups at Univ. of British Columbia and CU Boulder, as well as other studies.; 4. How People Learn; brain, mind, experience, and school, Bransford et al. eds, (2000) NAS Press; S. Ambrose et. al., How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, J. Wiley and Sons, 2010; 5. CWSEI guidance for students (www.cwsei.ubc.ca/resources/student\_guidance.htm); 6. Bain, What the best college teacher do, (2004) Harvard Univ. Press; 7. refs. 1, 2, 3, and 5, many other studies and the “Course Transformation Guide” (http://tinyurl.com/pzya2xz)