

Top Tips for Stretching and Challenging Students

- 1. Use concept maps** to get students to recognise the ideas and the connections in the topic, identifying where they can go to extend their current knowledge. Using visual representations can help students identify limitations in their understanding and where they might need to do more.
- 2. Use appropriate material** to encourage your students to move beyond populist sources, reinforcing the responsible use of technology and developing digital literacy using information databases and journals.
- 3. Pose difficult questions** in discussions where defining the answer covers and consolidates the content of the session, demonstrating that there needs to be complexity in understanding of a topic.
- 4. Get students to write a coursework or exam question** based on the topic. They could also draft a model answer or mark scheme, to become familiar with what is needed to achieve high marks.
- 5. Signpost the content of the next class** and get students to write the questions they think the session will answer or that they will want to be answered. This helps to scaffold learning from one session to the next.
- 6. Have purposeful activities** and show how all the teaching, directed learning and independent study leads to the achievement of the module learning outcomes, and if it doesn't, consider whether it should be there.
- 7. Discuss and debate criteria**, a lot. Don't make assumptions that students understand assignment briefs, exam questions, mark schemes or grading criteria. Explore together what a 40%, 50%, 80% looks like.
- 8. Set targets and give formative feedback**, including trying to set good habits in level 4 students, particularly around independent study. Do your students know what to do in their independent study hours, every week?
- 9. When a student gives you an opinion, challenge it fairly** by asking them why or what have you read / listened to / seen that makes you think that. It is not about disagreement; it is about helping them to understand that academic opinions need evidence from data or literature to support them.
- 10. Vary the type of questions you ask students in class** to help them build their understanding. Investigate Socratic questioning such as: questions that clarify concepts, probe assumptions / rationale / evidence / implications / consequences.

