Enhance Your Lectures: Make them More Active

There are ways to make lectures more participatory, more engaging for your students. This tip describes 4 ways to increase active-learning in a basic lecture-format class.

Taking "Periodic Pauses" Lecture Format

First 12-15 Minutes: Lecture.

Pause for 2 Minutes: Students work in pairs to review, discuss and revise their notes.

Repeat the Pattern: Do 2 or 3 times.

Last 3 Minutes: Have students write down everything they can recall from the lecture.

Results: On a 65-item multiple-choice quiz given 12 days after the last lecture, comprehension and retention of lecture material was consistently higher; in some cases up to 2 letter grades better.

Note: "Treatment" and "control" groups were measured in two different courses over two semesters.

"Immediate Test" Following Lecture Format

Format: Give a test at the end of each lecture on the material covered each day.

Results: Doubled the retention rate of lecture material on a test given 8 weeks after the last lecture.

Note: This format based on empirical observations that people comprehend and retain material better when tested quickly and frequently.

"Feedback" Lecture Format

Before Class: students do "study questions."

First 20 Minutes: Lecture.

Next 10 Minutes: Small groups discuss teacher-provided, lecture-related question(s).

Next 20 Minutes: More lecture.
After Class: Students do more "study questions."

Results: 99% of students liked the method and 93% said they in fact did do the study questions both before and after class.

"Guided" Lecture Format

First 30 Minutes: Lecture (students take NO notes).

Next 5 Minutes: Students take notes on what they remember.

Last 15 Minutes: Small groups discuss teacher-provided question related to lecture.

Sources:


Contributors: Peter Connor – TILT Content Editor

Copyright and Permissions: This Teaching Tip was adapted from material developed by the Program for Instructional Innovation at the University of Oklahoma.