Interactive Lecturing

Recent pieces in the *New York Times*, such as “Are College Lectures Unfair?” (September 12, 2015) and "Lecture Me. Really." (October 17, 2015), have prompted college instructors across the country to revisit what the research says about lecturing as a teaching strategy. In his classic book *What’s the Use of Lectures?* (2000), Donald Bligh concluded, based on the available evidence, that:

- The lecture is as effective as other methods for transmitting information.
- Most lectures are not as effective as discussion for promoting thought.
- Changing attitudes should not normally be the major objective of a lecture.
  - Lectures are relatively ineffective for teaching values associated with subject matter.
  - Lectures are relatively ineffective for inspiring interest in a subject.
  - Lectures are relatively ineffective for personal and social adjustment.
- Lectures are relatively ineffectively for teaching behavioral skills.

In “Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research” (2004), Michael Prince found that “introducing activity into lectures can significantly improve recall of information while extensive evidence supports the benefits of student engagement” (226). More current meta-analyses, such as Freeman et al. (2014), confirm the benefits of integrating active learning into the classroom.

Bligh’s own book contains many suggestions for mixing lectures and other teaching methods within the same class period (see, for instance, chapter 18) and other scholars, such as Cooper, Robinson, and Ball (2006), have proposed specific activities such as "quick-thinks" to make lectures more interactive.

Along these lines, our friends at the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning at Saint Louis University have prepared a helpful chart (attached) of “Interactive Lecturing Strategies.” These include:

- The feedback lecture
- The guided lecture
- The responsive lecture
- The one-minute paper
- The pause procedure
- The lecture quiz
- Note review/comparison
- Think/pair/share

Please see the attachment for a brief description of each of these activities, along with their sources. As always, I’d be happy to brainstorm with you about implementing or fine-tuning these strategies.

-Emily

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# Interactive Lecturing Strategies

This chart provides just a few strategies for making lectures more interactive. There are numerous others, but these should get you started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Where Found</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Feedback Lecture</strong></td>
<td>Give 2 mini-lectures, separated by small group “study sessions” built around a study guide and/or problem-solving sessions, in which students work together to apply concepts from the lecture. (Gives students time to process the mini-lecture, to make connections, to raise questions, to teach one another, etc.)</td>
<td>Bonwell &amp; Eison</td>
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<td><strong>The Guided Lecture</strong></td>
<td>Ask students to listen to short lectures (20-30 minutes) without taking notes. Then, have them write down everything they remember (5 minutes), focusing on major concepts. Then, put students into small groups/pairs and have them clarify / elaborate and flesh out notes and reconstruct the lecture.</td>
<td>Bonwell &amp; Eison</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Responsive Lecture</strong></td>
<td>Ask students to generate questions for the day; then, use the class period to respond to those questions. Set aside one lecture every week or two for this kind of session.</td>
<td>McGlynn</td>
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<td><strong>The One-Minute Paper</strong></td>
<td>At the end of class, ask students to write a one-minute response to a question you pose. The question can ask them to process some specific aspect of class content already presented or ask them to write about the main point of the lesson. (Variations include: the Muddiest Point, in which they write about the least clear point of the lesson; the Affective Response, in which they react to some aspect of the material presented.)</td>
<td>Angelo &amp; Cross</td>
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<td><strong>The Pause Procedure</strong></td>
<td>Every 13-18 minutes during the lecture, pause and ask students to think about the lecture for 1-2 minutes, jotting down notes, and/or asking clarifying questions. You can use pauses for review, discussion, and/or as classroom assessment opportunities (clickers can be handy tools here).</td>
<td>Bonwell</td>
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<td><strong>The Lecture Quiz</strong></td>
<td>Devise a short quiz that asks students to process information from the lecture, perhaps applying it in some way. Use the quiz as fodder for discussion and review.</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<td><strong>Note Review / Comparison</strong></td>
<td>After lecturing for 20 minutes or so, stop and ask students to compare the notes they’ve been taking with a peer’s notes. Then, have them work together for a few minutes to flesh out / add to their own notes.</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Think/Pair/Share</strong></td>
<td>Stop periodically during the lecture and ask students to think about the content just delivered, then to pair up with a peer and discuss briefly (maybe answering a question, maybe applying the content), then finally, to share with the class.</td>
<td>Angelo, Thomas A. &amp; K. Patricia Cross, Bonwell, Charles C., Bonwell, Charles C. &amp; James A. Eison, McGlynn, Angela Provitera, Paulson, Donald R. &amp; Jennifer L. Faust</td>
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