

Ten Suggestions to Improve a Lecture*

Lecturing is one of the most time-honored teaching methods, but does it have a place in an active leaning environment? It does if an instructor builds interest first, maximizes understanding and retention, involves students during the lecture, and reinforces what's been presented. There are several options to do just that.

Build Interest

1. **Lead-Off Story or Interesting Visual.** Provide a relevant anecdote, fictional story, cartoon, or graphic that captures the student's attention to what you are about to teach.
2. **Initial Case Problem.** Present a problem around which the lecture will be structured.
3. **Test Question.** Ask students a question (even if they have little prior knowledge) so that they will be motivated to listen to your lecture for the answer.

Maximize Understanding and Retention

4. **Headlines.** Reduce the major points in the lecture to keywords that act as verbal subheadings or memory aids.
5. **Examples and Analogies.** Provide real life illustrations of the ideas in the lecture and if possible, create a comparison between your material and the knowledge/experience the students already have.
6. **Visual Backup.** Use flip charts, transparencies, brief handouts, and demonstrations that enable students to see as well as hear what you are saying.

Involve Students During the Lecture

7. **Spot Challenges.** Interrupt the lecture periodically and challenge students to give examples of the concepts presented thus far or answer spot quiz questions.
8. **Illuminating Exercises.** Throughout the presentation, intersperse brief activities that illuminate the points you are making.

Reinforce the Lecture

9. **Application Problem.** Pose a problem or question for students to solve based on the information given in the lecture.

* Silberman, Melvin L. *Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Any Subject*. Allyn and Bacon, Boston. 1996.

10. Student Review: Ask students to review the contents of the lecture with each other or give them a self-scoring review test.