

# Food for Thought

## ACTIVE LECTURING



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# MENU

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# WELCOME TO THE FEAST

## *Who's Coming to Dinner? An Overview*

*From Grossman (1996)*

". . . As you already know, it's the stuff that you're presenting that counts. The point is to make your message clear and accessible in a style that suits the content and reaches out to your audience. And that means that the style of presentation should sometimes be very plain, sometimes elegant, sometimes completely over-the-top.

"As with the thorny issue of food presentation, your first job is to figure out who's coming to dinner. Then focus on what's important to them. Do you need to wow your guests with wild hors d'oeuvres, or can you plunge right into a pot roast? Give them what they want or something slightly better and they'll keep coming back for more."

## APPETIZERS



### *Strengths of Lectures:*

1. "communicate the intrinsic interest of the subject matter. The enthusiasm of the presenter may be catching."
2. "cover material not otherwise available."
3. "organize material in a special way."
4. "convey large amounts of information."
5. "communicate to many listeners at the same time."
6. "model how professionals in a particular discipline approach a question or problem."
7. "permit maximum teacher control."
8. "present minimum threat to the student."
9. "emphasize learning by listening. This is an advantage for students who learn well this way . . ."

### *Weaknesses of Lectures:*

*from Cashin (1985)*

1. "lacks feedback to the instructor about the students' learning."
2. "the students are passive, at least they are more passive than the lecturer."
3. "Students' attention wanes quickly, in 15 or 25 minutes..."
4. "Information learned in lectures tends to be forgotten quickly."
5. "presume that all students are learning at the same pace and level of understanding."
6. "are not well suited to higher levels of learning: application, analysis, synthesis, influencing attitudes or values, developing motor skills."
7. "are not well suited to complex, detailed, or abstract material."
8. "require an effective speaker."
9. "emphasize learning by listening, which is a disadvantage for students who prefer to learn by reading, or by doing, or some other mode."

### ***Overcoming the Weakness of Lecturing***

*by Mary A. Hildreth, Commonwealth School, 1997*

1. I get feedback each class period. The students turn in their notes in folders each day.
2. They take notes every day. They give written feedback on what we do each day, how they are applying study skills, [and] review trips.
3. I change activities approximately four times a class period.
4. We review a lot, using different approaches -- film, lecture, previous students, case studies, etc.
5. (No suggestion from Mary Alice.)
6. I do a lot of "know thyself" questionnaires and value clarification kinds of things taken from a psychology text--from a class I had with Joe Cangemi (A video of Dr. Cangemi's class is available for checkout).
7. I break material down. Take baby steps. I don't like the term "spoon feed," but maybe sometimes it's necessary.
8. True. That's why I incorporate as many techniques as I can. I do not want/aim to be an entertainer.
9. I outline on the board each day and encourage the use of colored pens, doodling on notes, and mnemonics.

## **SOUPS AND SALADS**



### ***Research on Lecturing***

*Abstracted from Chilcoat (1989)*

Chilcoat did a meta-analysis of ninety-five articles, thirty-five of which presented research at the college/university level. [Nine behaviors were recommended.] Each study showed that the behavior suggested had a significant effect [at the  $p < .05$  level] either on student achievement (learning) or perception.

It is imperative that teachers provide lectures that are as clear as possible so that students can make sense of what is being presented. Understanding allows students to retain, recall and apply material in other circumstances. Failure to understand often leads students to incorrectly interpret material or, in frustration, to ignore what has been said. In the past, many instructors believed that comprehension was entirely the student's responsibility. As we become more knowledgeable about cognitive research, however, it is apparent that much of that burden is the responsibility of the instructor as well. The question, of course, is how do we explicitly make our lectures clearer to students? Chilcoat's synthesis of the research suggests the following.

1. Provide a preview of information prior to an explanation.
2. Organize information within a step-by-step lesson sequence.
3. Assess student learning when information is being given.
4. Signal transitions between information.
5. Use multiple examples to illustrate information points.
6. Stress important points during explanations.
7. Provide for brief pauses at appropriate times during the lecture.
8. Eliminate additional unexplained content nonessential to current explanation.
9. Review information frequently.

## ***Eight Steps\* to Better Organization of Lectures***

*From Mandel (1993)*

1. Brainstorm Main Ideas
2. State the Subpoints
3. State the Benefits
4. Develop Handouts
5. Develop Visual Aids
6. Main Idea Preview/Review Sentence
7. Develop the Introduction
8. Develop the Conclusion



***Any questions? (Silence . . .)***



### **Some things to do:**

- Wait quietly at least 30 seconds (time yourself)
- Teach question asking. Mention a question that has been asked in the past and answer it.
- At the beginning of class, collect written questions over the material.
- Survey class opinion on a topic by a show of hands; then encourage discussion on the topic.
- Prepare questions for a few students to ask of you during class. Having students ask preplanned questions may stimulate other comments, teach question asking, and provide an alternative way of exposing material.
- Remind them you are available for questions after class. Encourage them to use email.

## **THE MAIN COURSE: FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS**



### ***Student Motivation and Lecturing***

*by Bart White, Journalism & Broadcasting, 1997*

Frequently, the manner of a presentation is as important as its content. In the classroom, a direct correlation exists between student motivation and enthusiasm for content and the motivation and enthusiasm that the teacher exhibits for that same content. How can the students become excited if the teacher is not still energized by the material? The task for teachers, then, is to remember what initially

excited them about their content and to demonstrate and transmit that excitement to the students. Sometimes the flow or momentum of the lecture(s) may transcend the obligatory one class period and reach throughout the semester building toward a crescendo at the end. This building flow of momentum, whether it is contained within one class period or sustained throughout the semester, can grab the students. Showing excitement for content and creating momentum are essential elements of lectures especially when teaching a freshman class. Don't present a lifeless, pedestrian lecture and expect converts to your discipline.

### ***Some Pointers***

*by Darleen Pigford, Computer Science, 1997*

1. Keyword on the board/leave up, don't erase.
2. Have students restate or repeat a key idea in their own words.
3. Move from one side of the room to the other.
4. Place a short outline/description of class activities on the board at the start.



### ***The 80/20 Rule***

*by Scott Kiefer, Military Science, 1997*

Learning best takes place when you actively apply the material. I try to develop an activity for every learning objective I teach. Eighty percent of the time the class will demonstrate the concepts in action... Twenty percent of the time is spent in lecture, introducing, and concluding. I feel [that it] is very important to vary the method of instruction and provide the students with the opportunity "to put the lecture into action," instead of being in receive mode for the duration of the class.

### ***Post-It Exercise***

*by Scott Kiefer, Military Science, 1997*

Captain Kiefer relates a recent activity in which the concept of leadership was under discussion. He placed a number of post-it notes with information written on them around Diddle Arena in specific locations. He arbitrarily chose a leader and asked the leader to retrieve the information. The leader's goal was to develop a plan to retrieve the information in a very limited time using whatever was at hand as far as personnel and resources were concerned. This activity served as a springboard for discussion later in class. Such things as developing a plan of action, delegation of duties, and communicating exact expectations were much easier to discuss with the exercise fresh in the minds of the students.



### ***Using Films to Supplement Lectures and Encourage Discussion***

*by Wren Mills, FaCET, 2010*

Sometimes using just a scene or two from a film or television show can help you to demonstrate a concept introduced via lecture. Some faculty require a subscription to Netflix as part of their courses, while others find what they need on YouTube and similar Web sites. Some networks, such as PBS, carry portions of or entire documentaries online, as well. Careful planning and proper permissions are “musts” if this path is chosen, but it is an easy and interesting way to bring an idea to life and to get students paying attention to, thinking about, and discussing topics that lectures introduce.

### ***Mini-Lectures . . . and some suggested uses***

*by Carol R. Graham, Department of Management, 1997*

Both lectures and bureaucracies are often viewed with disdain. However, students in my classes learn that bureaucracy is neither good nor bad in itself; what is important is that there is a good fit between the structure of an organization and what it wants to accomplish. The same is true with the lecture. Although most lectures involve only one-way communication to passive learners, they can be useful and are essential in some situations.

I find mini-lectures to be useful. A mini-lecture is, of course, short, only 5 to 15 minutes, and very effective. I use mini-lectures in the following ways:

- a. to preview "coming attractions" in the text
- b. to restate and/or emphasize ideas
- c. to introduce application exercises
- d. to introduce theories not covered but related to those in the text
- e. to summarize and/or synthesize ideas.

I give many quizzes to ensure that students read the assigned material before class. Occasionally, when there is no quiz over the readings and few students have read the text, I lecture for the entire class period to show how bad things could be. Unless one stops to engage students during a lecture, they are unlikely to retain much information. One time I gave a short quiz immediately after a long lecture and found that many students could not recall simple facts they had just heard. I suggest you try this yourself to see how ineffective pure lectures can be.

### ***End of Class Activities***

*by Mary Alice Hildreth, Commonwealth School, 1997*

Sometimes, toward the end of [my study skills] class, I have students write an intention statement to apply the study skill we have just examined. For example: By Friday, from my biology notes I will write facts on ten 3x5 cards to study at 10-15 minute intervals while I wait in line, wait for someone/something.

Also, toward the end of the class I have them write for about 10-15 minutes on what they did (or did not) hear, learn, or get out of the last hour.

## DESSERTS



### ***Two Suggestions for Improving Student Retention:***

*From Bonwell (1996)*

Incorporate the "Pause Procedure" in your lecture presentation. Pause at least three times during the class presentation to accommodate student discussion. This ensures that presentation points are being understood and absorbed by the students.

Or try a "Guided Lecture." This technique will encourage better integration of concepts and better note taking procedures. First, discuss the objectives for the day's lecture; then, ask that the students listen rather than take extensive notes. Spend the first half of the period lecturing. After your presentation, ask the students to write down what they recall from your lecture. Then divide the class into small groups to generate a set of notes for the lecture using each individual's notes. Discussion will help them make the information their own. Students should have a set of notes over the lecture that would be superior to what they individually would have generated and they are likely to enjoy the group effort.

## VITAMINS



### ***Is it Legal?***

Intellectual Property (videos, audiotapes, reproduction of materials) is a challenging but important topic. These links will provide some basic information for you as you use others materials in the classroom and on-line. They can also be a guide to protecting your own intellectual property.

**Copyright Myths:** <http://www.templetons.com/brad//copymyths.html>

**KYVL:** <http://www.kyvl.org/html/tutorial/research/copyright.shtml>

### ***WKU Policies***

#### **WKU Intellectual Property Policy:**

<http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/SponsPrg/grants/index.php?page=intellectual-property>

**WKU Copyright Policy:** <http://www.wku.edu/Library/dlps/rsrchguides/subject/intprop.htm>

FaCET videos available for checkout on Intellectual Property include:

- Intellectual Property by Bryan Carson, Library Public Services
- Legal Issues in Teaching by Scott Laufenberg, Management
- Legal/Ethical Clinical Teaching Concerns by Becky Tabor, Allied Health

### ***Watch Another Teacher***

FaCET has video-taped a variety of classes. Among the tapes available for viewing or checkout are:

- Joe Cangemi - The Psychology of Sales Behavior (371)
- Barbara Kacer - Teaching Skills in Secondary School (372) - Concept Teaching & Cooperative Groups
- Sally Kuhlenschmidt - Behavior Modification (443) - Cognitive Therapies
- Linda Pulsinelli - Intermediate Algebra (100) - Using Sign Charts to Solve Polynomial and Rational Inequalities
- John Reasoner-Organic Chemistry (340) - Reaction Theory & The Chemistry of Alkanes



### **SNACKS**



### ***Hostile Questions...***

*Adapted from Kushner (1996)*

Sometimes student anxiety and frustration with self appears to be hostility towards you; don't assume that is the case. If possible, deal with the student as if the question were merely a request for information.

1. Prevention:
  - a. Evaluate your classroom procedures. Have you trapped students or reduced their options? No one likes being powerless. For example, you can give options in regard to paper topics or nature of paper without lowering your standards.
  - b. Develop an atmosphere of everyone in the class being a learner - including the instructor. This will help when you don't know an answer and have to research the question.
2. Responses to actual hostile questions:
  - a. Try to empathize/acknowledge that the person is upset and focus the attention of the debate on the question not on personalities.
  - b. Try to establish a common base which you may both agree upon. At this point you may develop your answer to the question.
  - c. Try to neutralize emotionally loaded questions. Sometimes by restating the question in neutral terms, you relieve some of the potential conflict.
  - d. Try to see the issue from the student's point of view. Have you left out a critical step from your explanation that seems obvious to you but which the student isn't seeing?



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