ACTIVE LEARNING IN LECTURES

Interactive lectures

Traditional lecture formats do not include a great deal of interaction between the lecturer and the students or the students with other students. This is one of the negative aspects of the large lecture. However, there ARE ways in which a large lecture can be made more interactive.

Some purposes of interactivity
1. Some form of interaction can engage and motivate students by decreasing the chance to get bored
2. Interaction can deepen learning because it can stimulate cognitive engagement
3. Interaction can be a way of reflecting in action that you can gauge their level/s of learning and adjust your approach accordingly
4. Interaction can develop a sense of community and connection when it involves students talking to each other.

Interactivity could be constructed between the lecturer and an individual student, between students only as they co-develop responses or communicate their own with each other, and between groups of students and the lecturer. But interactivity can also take the form of the students' individual relationship with the content. In other words, there may be no human interaction, but significant engagement of the student with the content in a way that the student actively takes part in the lecture.

Some ways to get interactivity in your lectures

Questioning

There are a number of ways in which students can be questioned during a lecture in order to stimulate their engagement with the lecture topic. They may not all include students giving answers directly to the lecturer.

Some suggestions include asking students:
- what they already know about a particular topic;
- to put something into their own words;
- to consider a problem and a possible solution to that problem;
- questions about a case that you put forward for consideration;
- what they need to know or do not already know for a given situation;
- for their impressions of a picture, diagram or chart;
- for their feelings about something
Group work

It may seem impossible to do group work in a lecture situation. However, if the activity is well structured and timed, it can be an excellent way to stimulate interest and engagement. You can help students form groups quickly by instructing them to get into groups of three or four following the diagrams below:

Groups of four students

Groups of three students

Activities that can be used in lectures include:

- Buzz groups
- Syndicate groups
- Pyramids
- Debates
- Students as teachers

CTL can provide you with information about these activities and help with implementing active learning in your lectures.