



University Center for Teaching and Learning

Ten Suggestions to Improve a Lecture

Lecturing is one of the most time-honored yet ineffective ways to teach. By itself it will never lead to active learning. For a lecture to be effective, the trainer should build interest first, then maximize understanding and retention, involve participants during the lecture, and reinforce what has been presented. Here are some ways 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 audience's attention.
- 2. Initial case problem.** Present a problem around which the lecture will be structured.
- 3. Test question(s).** Ask participants 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 key words 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 and experience that the participants already have.
- 6. Visual backup.** Use flip charts, transparencies, brief handouts, and demonstrations that enable participants to see as well as hear what you are saying.

Involve Participants During the Lecture

- 7. Spot challenges.** Interrupt the lecture periodically and challenge participants to give examples of the concepts presented thus far or to answer spot quiz questions.
- 8. Illuminating activities.** Throughout the presentation, intersperse brief activities that give participants the opportunity to reflect about the points you are making

Reinforce the Lecture

- 9. Application problem.** Pose a problem or question for participants to solve based on the information given in the lecture.
- 10. Participant review.** Ask participants to review the contents of the lecture with one another or give a self-scoring review test