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Subject: Teaching Toolbox: Interactive Lecturing
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Attachments: [Interactive-Lecture-Chart.pdf](#)

Teaching Toolbox: Interactive Lecturing

by Emily O. Gravett

Popular pieces over the past several years, such as [“Are College Lectures Unfair?”](#) and [“Lecture Me. Really.”](#), have prompted college instructors across the country to revisit what the research says, and what their own experiences tell them, about lecturing as a teaching strategy. In his classic book, [What’s the Use of Lectures? \(2000\)](#), Donald Bligh concluded:

- 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 the oft-cited [“Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research” \(2004\)](#), however, 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 recent meta-analyses, such as [Freeman et al. \(2014\)’s](#), confirm the benefits of integrating active learning into the traditional classroom.

Bligh’s own book contains many suggestions for interweaving lectures and other instructional strategies (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 St. Louis University](#) have prepared a helpful chart of several [“Interactive Lecturing Strategies”](#) (also attached):

- 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, members of the CFI team would be happy to brainstorm with you about implementing or fine-tuning any of these strategies.

About the author: Emily O. Gravett is Assistant Director of Teaching Programs at the Center for Faculty Innovation and a faculty member in the Philosophy & Religion department. Some of the material found in this Toolbox email has been adapted from original content she generated during her time at Trinity University. She can be reached at graveteo@jmu.edu.

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.

Activity	Description	Where Found
The Feedback Lecture	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.)	Bonwell & Eison
The Guided Lecture	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.	Bonwell & Eison
The Responsive Lecture	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.	McGlynn
The One-Minute Paper	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.)	Angelo & Cross
The Pause Procedure	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).	Bonwell
The Lecture Quiz	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.	Various
Note Review / Comparison	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.	Various
Think/Pair/Share	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.	

Angelo, Thomas A. & K. Patricia Cross
 Bonwell, Charles C.
 Bonwell, Charles C. & James A. Eison
 McGlynn, Angela Provitera
 Paulson, Donald R. & Jennifer L. Faust

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers. Jossey-Bass, 1993.
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Teaching Today’s College Students: Widening the Circle of Success. Atwood, 2007.
 Active Learning for the College Classroom. California State, Los Angeles. <http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/index.htm>