**Large Lectures: fostering higher levels of student participation and engagement is hard but rewarding work**

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| **Before***‘Planning and preparation prevent poor performance’* so avoid ‘dead time’. Get organised and think through the logistics e.g. how best to distribute hand-outs? Can students read your slides? What’s your ‘Plan B’ if the IT won’t work?Try distributing a pre-lecture quiz via your VLE which you can then refer to in the lecture.Make your slides available beforehand on the VLE (in your first session tell students to expect this as standard and make it clear too that not everything will be on the slides so attendance will be important).If the timetable allows it get there before your students to say hello/chat to people as they arrive. If it doesn’t, then ‘work the corridor’. | **During****The Beginning** **or ‘Telling them what you’re going to tell them’** by outlining the programme for the lecture. If it’s your first lecture make the format and expectations explicit; how is it all going to work? For example explain that you’ll be getting them to do things at various points not just sitting there taking notes. Explain why, i.e. it aids learning and plays to a variety of learning styles not just auditory. Let them know how/when they can ask questions or get in touch with you outside of lectures. Start as you mean to go on i.e. with a bang and expecting students to be active participants. You could use a quote, a question, a statistic, make reference to a recent event, pose a problem, or tell an anecdote/story to get their attention and get them thinking. Follow up on any previous homework tasks.**The Middle** **or ‘Telling them’** remembering though to break the time up every 15-20 minutes with:* tasks and exercises such as ‘turn-to-your-neighbour’; ‘take-a-minute lists’; ‘show-of-hands polling’; ‘buzz groups’; ‘spot the deliberate mistake’/’nobody knows’; ‘think-pair-share’; ‘think-pair-square-share’; ‘sub-group discussions’;
* visuals; multi-media; props; demos (invite [*confident*] students out to help); simulations.

**The End** **or ‘Telling them what you’ve told them’** by recapping the main points and checking on students’ understanding. What’s been most important /useful for them? What questions do they (still) have? Set out any tasks for completion ahead of the next lecture. Remind students of your availability in the coming week e.g. ‘office hours’, drop-ins, question boxes, discussion forums, e-mail etc. Remind students what the focus for next week’s lecture is going to be. If you can, be the last one out - if you stick around for a bit you can answer queries from students who didn’t feel able to speak in the lecture. |
| **Throughout****It’s all about the relationships really or ‘Tain’t what you do it’s the way that you do it’**: style & tone are crucial e.g. *‘Ah I’m glad you asked me that’*, *‘Good question…’*, *‘Yes excellent that leads us nicely onto….’, ‘I welcome questions, don’t be afraid to put your hand up if something’s not clear’*. Ask ‘friendly’ questions yourself. Give praise & recognition for correct / imaginative answers & find something positive & encouraging to say about students’ responses, even when they’re a bit off beam (they’ve taken quite a risk in speaking out in front of such a large group). Use students’ names whenever you can. Try name-checking student queries that you’ve received between lectures via e-mail or in tutorials *(e.g. ‘Saiqa was asking me the other day about….’*) **or** Ask students to give you their first name before they ask /answer a question & then use that name when you respond in turn **or** Give every student a name card to prop up in front of them whenever they’re in your lectures. Be open without being naive e.g. share how you felt when you first encountered the topic but don’t give out your home phone number! Observe your audience as closely as (hopefully) they’re observing you. Not everyone will be ready or able to speak up or to come to the front to help you demonstrate something so don’t put people on the spot until you’re sure they can handle it **and** if everyone’s scribbling away and not looking at you perhaps you need to slow down a bit.**Own the space**: where/if you can, get mobile. You can make the experience less anonymous by physically closing the gap between yourself & students *(\* Remember though that some learning support statements may mean that your mobility has to be limited e.g. if a student needs to lip read)*. |