

Living Lectures: Reviving a Cherished Presentation Format

While some educators consider the traditional lecture outmoded or ineffective, many of us favor lectures. And most of us probably remember with fondness and admiration skillful lecturers we encountered as undergraduate and graduate students. In his very interesting book *Active Learning: 101 Strategies to Teach Anything*, Mel Silberman offers advice on cultivating a lecture style which “involves students during the lecture, and reinforces what has been presented.” Note that these strategies may be adapted for presentation online or for presentation with digital media:

BUILDING INTEREST

1. **Lead-off story or interesting visual:** Provide a relevant anecdote, fictional story, cartoon, or graphic that captures the students’ attention to what you about to teach.
2. **Initial case program:** Present a problem around which the lecture will be structured.
3. **Test question:** Ask students a question (even if they have little prior knowledge) so they will be motivated to listen to your lecture for the answer.

MAXIMIZING 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 students already have.
6. **Visual backup:** use flip charts, transparencies, brief handouts, and demonstrations that enable students to see as well as hear what you are saying.

INVOLVING STUDENTS DURING THE LECTURE

7. **Spot challenges:** Interrupt the lecture periodically and challenge students to give examples of the concepts presented so far or to answer spot quiz questions.
8. **Illuminating exercises:** Throughout the presentation, intersperse brief activities that illuminate the points you are making.

REINFORCING THE LECTURE

9. **Application problem:** Pose a problem or question for students to solve based on the information given in the lecture.
10. **Student review:** Ask students to review the contents of the lecture with each other, or give them a self-scoring review test.

Mel Silberman, *Active Learning: 101 Strategies to teach Any Subject* Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, 1996) 20-21.

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