Interactive lecturing: strategies for increasing participation in large group presentations.

The goal of this review article is to 1) describe the advantages and indications for interactive lectures, 2) discuss common fears and concerns about using this method of teaching, 3) outline a number of interactive techniques that can be incorporated into medical teaching at all levels, and 4) highlight general guidelines for successful interaction and audience participation.

Following is a sketch of the article’s contents:

I. What is interactive lecturing?

Active involvement and participation by the audience—therefore, students are no longer passive in the learning process. Also, in this approach, the role of the instructor is more like that of a facilitator.

II. Why give an interactive lecture?

Promotes:
1. Active involvement.
2. Increased attention and motivation.
3. A ‘different’ kind of learning that promotes higher order thinking. Students would immediately analyze and synthesize material, apply it to other situations and evaluate the material presented.
4. Feedback—to the teacher and the student.
5. Increased student—and teacher—satisfaction.

III. What prevents us from giving interactive lectures?

1. Fear.
2. The ‘context’ of learning.

IV. What are the commonly used interactive strategies?

1. Breaking the class into small groups.
2. Questioning the audience.
   - Straightforward questions
   - Brainstorming
   - Rhetorical questions
   - Surveying the class
   - Quizzes and short answers
4. Use of clinical cases.
   - Cliffhanger cases. These are cases that outline a complex situation and that include a problem calling for decision. The case narrative stops at the description point but students are asked what they would do and why. In class, students have to defend the factual basis and reasoning that led to their decision.
   - Incident type cases. Here students are presented with a short description of a problem situation. If they ask the right questions, they are supplied with more information. As a group, the students take the role of the decision maker trying to sort out the problem.
   - Inviting patients
5. Use of written materials – e.g., handouts of slides.
6. Organizing debates, reaction panels and guests.
7. Using simulations and role plays.
9. Audiovisual aids – e.g., overhead projectors, flipcharts, whiteboards, slides and computer-assisted learning.
10. Using effective presentation skills.

V. What general strategies will help us to become more interactive?

1. Be willing to take risks and overcome your fears.
2. Prepare—and practice.
3. Be clear in your objectives and cut down on your material.
4. Prepare students for their role in interactive lectures.
5. Remain flexible—and do not overdo it.

Conclusion: Through interactive lectures, students will become more engaged in the learning process, and retain more information. Furthermore, both student and teacher will be more satisfied.

Implications for TUSM: Given the effectiveness of interactive lectures in promoting active learning, as stated in the literature, we need to work on turning our lecture halls into interactive learning and teaching experiences for all students and faculty.