

Lectures

The teaching styles used at university contrast with those in secondary school where, generally, students are told precisely what they need to do to pass the subject and only that material is presented in class. At university, a range of resources and technologies are provided to enable you to pursue your field of study. The traditional lecture is still used extensively for on-campus university students.

Face-to-face

Lectures are used to present new material, ideas and concepts and to give an overview of a particular topic area, which is chosen and organised by a lecturer. This face-to-face contact is valuable for establishing a common vision among students and staff with regards to core material, concepts, learning and teaching expectations. Attending lectures can also be an important means to creating a social bond and a sense of belonging.

Material presented in lectures may be available on Moodle (often in abbreviated form). However, lecturers may give special information and tips in lectures only, making attendance at them important. Moodle generally supplements the lecture series, and not only contains course materials, but also dates relevant to assignment submission, other assessment tasks and issues, website references, announcements from lecturers and contact links for students and lecturers. Some students will access this material from remote locations. Moodle may also contain video clips from lecturers, or podcasts. Students can network with other students, tutors and lecturers associated with their course through the Moodle forums.

Some lectures may be less traditional. A variety of teaching approaches are used in lectures for seminar/group work or other activities, which give you the opportunity for discussion or self-reflection. These approaches are often more about enhancing your own learning (and learning skills) rather than being focused on teaching, and are an attempt to cater to your own preferred learning style.

E-learning in lectures

With the introduction of technologies such as Skype, you may find your lecture group interacting with an expert in your field who is not physically present, rather, who communicates via audio and video conferencing. You may be handed a microphone to ask a question of someone in another part of the country (or world) and watch them answer on-screen. Your remote guest speaker may also show you a document or presentation.

An increasingly common approach to blending face-to-face and online learning is known as 'flipping'. In a 'flipped classroom', the content delivery (lecture) and homework elements of a course are reversed. In this model of teaching, students no longer passively sit and watch in a lecture theatre, rather, class time is used for interactivity related to the content, which has been delivered to students online.

Beyond the lecture

Taking responsibility for your own learning

At university you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning progress. You are expected to actively enrich your understanding using library and web research from academic sources relevant to your field of study. The material provided in lectures and tutorials should not be regarded as the only source of information necessary for understanding the topic. You are expected to supplement lecture material through active learning in your own time. The course materials should provide clues to sourcing relevant material. Consider the following:

- What books and websites are recommended by your lecturers?
- Your lecturers are marking your work - what materials do they specify in the course outline?

Use your library

Federation University library gives you access to a wide range of learning resources available through the homepage: www.federation.edu.au/library

- QuickSearch is an easy way to start searching the University Library collections (books, eBooks, articles, multimedia) related to your topic, in one quick search
- Search for items and request them from other campus libraries and universities through BONUS+
- Search for a particular journal through E-Journals A-Z (an alphabetical list of journals and newspapers to which our library subscribes)

In QuickSearch you can narrow your search results to those only available in the library, scholarly journals or fulltext. Save materials on your USB or email them to yourself.

In lectures and tutorials

During a lecture, listen actively. It is also important to listen *and* take notes. Note-taking can:

- help you identify the main points of a presentation
- jog your memory when you revise and help you to recall the lecture content
- focus on examples the lecturer/tutor provides that help you to understand key concepts
- be alert for verbal cues that help you determine how the material fits into the topic, such as "There are three main areas...", "In summary..." etc.
- identify key words used by the lecturer/tutor, and use them to research the topic further

Ask for clarification if you don't understand a point. Other students are probably wondering the same thing. If it is not convenient to ask during the lecture, ask your lecturer/tutor later. For more tips on effective note-taking, refer to the helpsheet, *Note-taking*.

Fatigue

There is a definite relationship describing learner attentiveness (Concentration) as a function of time during a lecture. The graph below illustrates the distribution of concentration in a one-hour lecture.

The three phases are:

1. Orientation

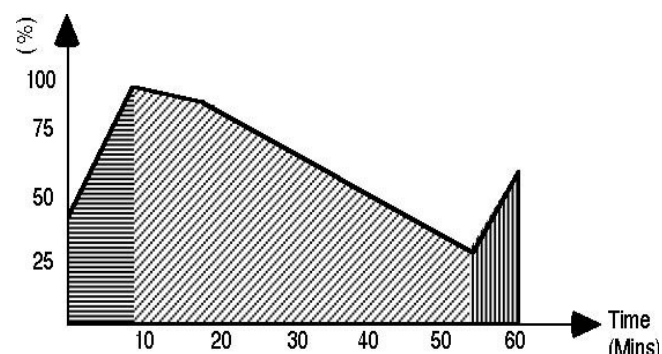
Concentration gradually increases as the focus shifts from arriving and settling to the lecturer's voice and the content of the lecture.

2. Maintenance

Concentration is gradually eroded as mental fatigue sets in. Concentration may be lost at a faster rate if the student is unfamiliar with the material or if there are other sources of distraction (such as other students talking).

3. Termination

Concentration increases slightly as the lecturer summarises material and talks about readings, class assignments or upcoming topics. Organise your final notes while content is still in short-term memory.



Other helpsheets available

- Time Management
- Note-taking
- Reading and Writing Critically