

Engaging and Interactive Lectures Checklist

Interactive lectures include at least one opportunity for students to interact actively and directly with the material through a specific learning task. These can be brief segments within a larger lecture-based class period, and can include a single repeated technique or a mix of several different ones.

Place a check mark next to strategies you already use. Place a star next to strategies you are interested in trying. Place a question mark next to strategies that you have questions about or might find challenging to adopt in your context.

- 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.).
- Notes Review:** After lecturing for 15-20 minutes, 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. This allows students to think critically about the gaps in their own knowledge while building knowledge collaboratively with peers.
- Notes with Blanks:** Provide students with lecture notes and/or slides with strategic blanks that they will need to fill in in order to have a complete set of notes. This strategy can encourage students to engage more actively during lecture, and you can also use this to facilitate note review activities during class.
- 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.
- Asking Conceptual and Problem-Solving Questions:** Pose questions to students that require them to apply factual and technical knowledge to more complicated or conceptual problems. Move from questions like “What is __?” to “Why is __ important?” or “What considerations should you have before using __ technique?” You can use these questions to facilitate individual or group engagement:
 - One-minute paper:** Students write for one minute on a specific question before you ask for volunteers to answer the question. This gives students a chance to think before having to answer publicly.
 - Group problem solving:** Prompt small groups of students to think through a complicated question. You can then either ask groups to volunteer answers, or you can demonstrate the process of arriving at the answer.
- Purposeful Question Activities:** Rather than periodically asking “are there any questions?,” give students purposeful and structured opportunities to develop and answer questions. This can look like:
 - Pausing lecture and asking students to **write down one or two questions** they have about the material covered in class. The pause to write gives students a chance to think about their own learning and work out what questions they have. You can then ask students to

- volunteer their questions for you to answer, or you can collect all questions and prepare to answer them during the next lecture.
- Provide students with generic **question stems** that they can use to engage actively with the course materials. Question stems can help students ask useful questions for themselves to answer during class or while studying. Sample question stems include: “What is a new example of ___?,” “What is the difference between ___ and ___?,” “Why is ___ an important technique?,” “What are the long-term impacts of ___?”
 - **Muddiest Point:** Ask students to write for one minute during a pause or at the end of a class session about the most confusing part of the lecture. You can collect these and address them in email or during the next class session.
 - **Mind Dump:** Ask students to spend five minutes writing down everything they remember from the class session, from homework reading, or from a previous lecture. This is an effective *retrieval practice* that helps students build durable long-term learning by accessing what they have learned from memory.
 - **Case Study:** Give students the opportunity to work in small groups on an illustrative case. Case studies can take a few minutes or be longer activities. You can use cases in various ways:
 - Ask students to **identify the type of problem** presented by a case, even if they cannot solve it.
 - Present an abbreviated case with an **ethical dilemma** related to the discipline.
 - Alone or in small groups, ask **students to develop a case** (a fictional situation which presents a problem) based on the theory of the current topic. This can be done in class, as homework, or both. The class should then discuss several of the cases.
 - **Practice Problem:** After lecturing on a particular type of problem, give students a problem to work at their seats that resembles the kinds of problems they’ll see on their homework. After giving students a few minutes to try to work through the problem, discuss the problem with the class. By having students attempt what will later be an independent task in a guided setting, they are able to anticipate and address issues they might otherwise have been unable to solve on their own.

References and Further Reading:

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