

Notes: 4



Notes: 4 / Paul Glennon

Journal of Further and Higher Education / Vol. 28, No 3, Aug 2004

Article: Lecturers' Perceptions of Lectures

Peter Sutherland (Stirling) & Richard Badger (Leeds)

This article explored the perceptions that lecturers hold about each other and their roles in contemporary teaching. With the digital era is the lecture still relevant?

The study focused on a sample of lecturers who were responsible, mostly, for the teaching of first year students (first years were deemed to have the hardest time coping with transition).

Little research has been conducted in this field, but similar types of study do exist such as the role of lectures within teaching, classification of the lecture (e.g. classical methods, problem solving, sequential, comparative and thesis methods) and the main aim of a lecturer. Comparatively, more research has been completed about how students perceive lectures and lecturers. This seemed normal, as the evaluation has become an important part of everyday teaching and lecturing.

Note taking was discussed in some depth. The better the note taking the better the retention of knowledge. Handouts were also deemed to be helpful in this process. Ultimately all this suggested how important it is for the lecturer to be good at explaining the subject using the most relevant and up to date resources.

First year students were quoted as being happier with 'group-based activity' and 'interactive lectures', rather than the 'formal' style (Sander et al. 2000).

Once the article dealt with prior research the data were presented and evaluated. 25 lecturers were interviewed in a UK university and asked 15 relevant questions. The results were as expected, but with some interesting findings:

- Most lecturers had embraced the technology required but some still preferred the 'medieval' approach.
- In comparison with previous studies lectures now placed more emphasis on the relationship between lectures and assessment.
- The 'thesis method' of lecturing (lecturer makes an assertion at the outset and then argues in favour of the assertion) was deemed unsuitable by all of the interviewed lecturers (lack of motivation).
- Lecturers' aims seemed to be focused on getting students either to think critically or to inspire (linked to the fact that most lecturers were teaching first year students).
- Most lecturers gave out handouts.

This article revealed typical aspects which were of no surprise, but some important conclusions were drawn:

- 'It is clear that much more empirical work needs to be done on what lecturers regard as the aim of lectures.' (p.280).
- '...very few lecturers questioned students, nor did they encourage students to question them.' (p.287) This was deemed to be 'disappointing', suggesting a lack of change from old traditional styles of lecturing.
- 'If lecturers want students to take down only the main points and not every word, how do students know what important points are?' (p.287).