Improving Lecturing



Eric Evans, Corinna Peniston-Bird, Peter Yeandle, Roger Lloyd–Iones. Bertrand Taithe, and Tim Thornton

Following the keynote presentations, broad question areas for the group to discuss were set.

The broad question areas were:

- What do students remember from lectures?
- How has lecturing changed over time and in accordance with shifting student expectations?
- Do student/lecturer objectives conflict, and if so, how might this divide be broached?

What do students remember from lectures?

- Importance of asking what students remember certain material for? What does the student prioritise as important?
- And need research into how students structure their own process of remembering.
- Need for lecturer to clearly 'flag' significant points of the lecture;
- And to explain the purpose of each lecture.? Follows then that there is a matter of improved communication.
- Discussed the 30 second test.? That is, two weeks after a lecture, give students 30 seconds to recall what they found to be the salient points.? Reveals that jokes, analogies, visuals and asides often help students remember key points.
- This also is important because signifies the importance of the human relationship between lecturer and student.
- Question of non attendees raised: are these students 'voting with their feet' because they do not like topic/lecturing style, or would they miss the session regardless?

How has lecturing changed over time and in accordance with shifting student expectations?

- Pedagogical awareness generally led to a number of important issues: how to utilise
 the time available, usually a 50 minute slot; awareness of how students learn; how
 lecturing has changed in the light of coursework only assessment; how best to use
 technological innovation.
- Also discussed the significance that students now 'pay' and therefore expect a 'product'.

Do student/lecturer objectives conflict, and if so, how might this divide be broached?

- Emphasis was placed on communication and need for clear course outlines, so that students would be aware of the lecture's purpose.
- Lecturers need to be aware that students are confronted with a range of styles, and therefore often judge less on the value of the lecture, and more on a style that they dislike
- Nature of interaction in lectures: given that Bertrand Taithe's findings, in particular, suggested that students wanted facts, facts and more facts, it is important to be clear with them the purpose of interactive sessions.
- Issue also of lecturer's integrity versus personality.
- Are lectures end points in themselves, or gateways to independent thinking?? Students may not also be clear.