IDENTIFYING LECTURE STYLES

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1- Introduction

The lecture is the standard model of academic teaching. It implies the presence of a lecturer and tens or hundreds of students in a lecture theatre. Sometimes lecturers write on the board with chalk, and sometimes use an overhead projector to provide visual support for students. Students are supposed to take notes while listening with, generally, little interaction.

2- Historical background

This term is derived from the Latin word "lectare" meaning "to read aloud." This technique goes back hundreds of years to the monasteries of Europe before the use of printed books. Scholars used to travel hundreds of miles to gain access to specific texts. So, they would listen to a monk reading out a book and the scholars would copy it (the book) word for word.

3- Definition

A lecture is used as a way of teaching in higher education all over the world. So, how is it defined? Below is a number of definitions:

❑ It is the transference of the notes of the lecturer to the notes of the student without passing through the brain of either (Anon),
❑ A discourse given before an audience or class, especially for instruction. (Merriam- Webster),
❑ A talk or speech given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject (Merriam–Webster),
❑ A speech read or delivered before an audience or class, especially for instruction. (dictionary.com),
❑ A formal talk on a serious subject given to a group of people, especially students.
❑ (Cambridge Dictionary, online)
❑ An exposition of a given subject delivered before an audience or class, as for the purpose of instruction. (The Free Dictionary, online)

❑ A talk that is given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject, often as ? of a university or college (Oxford)

4- Conventional lecture form

The **conventional** form of a lecture is **teacher-centred** and entails **one-way** presentations. This model of teaching is described as **Didactic**, which means intending to instruct/teach. It is also viewed as an example of **passive** learning in which the only activities students engage in during a lecture are listening and note-taking.

Supporters of the traditional lecture form argue that teaching is the most cost-effective way of teaching students. That is, one teacher (lecturer) can teach hundreds of students in a large lecture theatre. Those **arguments** include:

    a- communication enthusiasm for the topic (which cannot be gained by independent learning),

    b- providing a structure (or framework) for the material: a good form for emphasizing certain points that students should read about because they are essential and may relate to other topics,

    c- providing current information (which may not be included in textbooks or other resources, not up-to-date/ present recent research results),

    d- tailoring material to the student's needs (according to the depth or the right level for the audience),

    e- supporting the increasing number of students and the lack of facilities (teaching- inside the university).

Critics of traditional lecturing say that it is usually passive and didactic. It is also:

    a- boring (little intellectual stimulation),

    b- tiresome (listeners tire of a lecture very quickly),

    c- suitable for auditory learners (other learning styles are neglected),

    d- students weak in note-taking will suffer,

    e- teachers may not know about students' understanding because of the lack of exchange.

5- Learning outcomes

In recent years a great deal of discussion has focused on "**active learning**" in higher education. This type of learning incorporates such interactive activities as discussion, questioning, participation, problem-solving, etc., to encourage **deeper** learning. Also, there are calls for adjusting the modalities of learning to the knowledge outcomes (expected learning results/objectives). Hence, it is necessary to know the types of outcomes (cognitive objectives) at the tertiary level:

    a- factual / conceptual understanding

    b- application and use

    c- problem-solving and evaluation

It must be noted that some categories of outcome are better gained using specific teaching vs learning methods/types.

6- Types of lectures

Lectures can take different forms including topic- list, question-answer, compare-contrast, series of events, cause-effect, and problem-solution

    a- **Topic-list**: The teacher presents the topic followed by subtopics, details, sub-details. Words like first, second, next, and finally are used in this style.

b- **Question-answer**: T introduces the topic followed by some questions about the topic. Each question is answered after it is introduced. Words used are like what, why, which, when, etc.

c- **Compare-contrast**: The teacher starts with the identification of 2 objects that will be compared (similar object) and contrasted (different object) All words serving this purpose are used: alike, equal, resemble, the same, different, distinct, disparate, opposite, on the contrary.

d- **Series of events**: Teacher identifies the topic then describes an initial event, step or stage related to the topic. Additional events, steps or stages are gradually presented. Words like initially, at the outset, next, later, etc., are used.

e- **Cause-effect**: Teacher begins by presenting the cause of something, followed by effects related to the cause in detail. Words used include as, since, thus, consequently, etc.

f- **Problem- solution**: T introduces a problem and says why it is so (problem). T describes solutions to the problem providing details as needed. T concludes by emphasizing the final solution. Words used include puzzle, quiz, issue, dispute, solution, solve, answer investigate, examine, check, etc.

You may find other classifications of lectures:

1. **By Levels of Student Interaction**: formal lecture, Socratic lecture, Semi-formal lecture, Lecture-discussion, Interactive lecture.

2. **Categorized by Content**: Expository lecture/oral essay Storytelling lecture , Point-by-point lecture Lecture-demonstration Problem-solving lecture.

3. Categorization by Medium: Naked lecture, Chalk and talk lecture, Multimedia lecture, Video lecture.

Identifying the lecture style helps you write good notes.

7- Strategies to succeed in lectures

In order for students to succeed in coping with lectures, they should undergo these steps.

Step 1. Pre-lecture preparation: 24 hours before lecture, devote about 30 minutes to preview the material to be covered (especially if you have the syllabus).

- read the title and chapter objectives,
- skim the chapter by reading subheadings and viewing the content under those subheadings. Begin applying what you see within the text and images to what you already know.
- read the chapter summary to gain familiarity with the concepts,
- acknowledge unfamiliar vocabulary which may hinder your understanding,
- note questions that may arise in your mind.

Step 2. Be active during lecture: now that you've effectively prepped for the lecture's content, taking notes and following along should be far more manageable. However, concentration can be affected by a variety of factors, so to ensure success, practice the tips below:

- avoid distraction (external or internal),
- try to find answers to the questions you noted in stage one (mentally alert),
- include ambiguous or incomplete information in your notes so that you can get more complete answers later.

Step 3. Post-lecture review: within 24 hours of the lecture, it's important to solidify the information that you took in. This is the most time-consuming step within the process, but it becomes easier by consistently following the first two steps.

- compare your pre-lecture notes to post-lecture ones. Did the information seem to link together more readily during lecture?
- utilise your resources (textbook, lecture slides, teaching assistant, tutor, supplemental instruction, etc.) to fill in any gaps that remain from lecture,
- test your understanding through questions (e.g. study questions of chapters),
- revise your notes frequently preparing for the exam.