

**Lecture Basics**  
**Center for Teaching Excellence**  
**SUNY Plattsburgh**

As much as we emphasize student activity in learning, the lecture is still a very effective way to clarify, analyze, synthesize and integrate what you want your students to learn. In fact, a well-delivered lecture is actually preferred by students over many classroom “activities.” Why? Because our students value our expertise, creativity and our care for them – and all of these blossom in the classroom relationship. Here are some guidelines and tips for becoming a master lecturer.

Before class: Take ten minutes to relax and review your main idea.

In class - greet them:

⇒ Establish tone and tempo for energy and class direction.

Review previous class }  
Ask for questions } allow yourself and your students time for reflection  
and digression (but keep track)

1. Presentation

- a. Move
- b. Use the board.
- c. Don't over-rely on Power Point presentations – they sap your energy and drain the class.
- d. Speak clearly.
- e. Change your tone.
- f. Stand tall.

2. Interaction

- a. Maintain eye contact.
- b. Be aware of your audience (signaling lack of understanding, boredom, etc).
- c. A great lecture is not all lecturing. Let the students speak.
- d. Don't interrupt your students.
- e. Use signaling tricks (four fingers – they understand, three they somewhat, understand, two – not much, one – not at all).
- f. Ten minute chunks of lecturing – then ask for repeat back.
- g. Use strategies for eliciting student engagement in a consistent fashion.
- h. Use humor (<http://www.davesdaily.com/>; National Enquirer; <http://www.veryweirdnews.com/>; <http://www.usatoday.com/news/offbeat/default.htm>) .

### 3. Organization

- a. Settle with yourself beforehand the one main idea you want them to come away with.
- b. Do prepare notes: outline, review, and plot time to spend on certain concepts.
- c. Don't stick to notes like glue.
- d. Don't rush to get through the material - they won't learn any faster.
- e. Use examples that are real to the students.
- f. Tell stories - be personal enough to create a relationship.
- g. Invite their stories.
- h. Don't tell them your medical history.
- i. Be clear with them what your main idea is for that class.