

Peer review: The Odour of Chrysanthemums lecture

Collection: Large group teaching

Resource: Peer reviewing lectures

Approximate duration

One hour

Learning outcomes

This peer review exercise is designed to prompt individuals or groups to begin thinking critically about what makes a good lecture/lecturer and what tools and tasks can help make a particular lecture more or less successful. This is also a reflective exercise which will develop:

1. an enhanced level of critical self-awareness as a teacher;
2. an ability to deploy one's own subject skills (close reading; linguistic awareness; metaphorical play) on pedagogic subject matter [e.g. ability to 'read' a lecture];
3. one's repertoire of tools and media for engaging students as a result of observing other lecturers at work.

Introduction

Over the course of your career you can expect to be peer-reviewed for your lecturing and be called upon to peer review others, so we have designed this task along those lines: we'd like you to review a selection of lectures and lecturers (thus this information and the questions we ask will necessarily repeat in the related activities). We realise it is unusual to evaluate just an excerpt of a lecture, but we've done our best to choose a dense example. Of course there will be a spectrum of opinion surrounding the ideas of 'good' lecturers and 'successful' lectures so we have designed our questions to enable



you focus upon specific aspects of the lecture as well as the wholistic event. You also have the option of watching the lectures in full if you would like to [see below].

In the following clip, Dr Sean Matthews of the University of Nottingham, Department of English is delivering the second lecture of a first year lecture course on the early works of D.H. Lawrence. The course aims to explain, historicise, and model literary criticism. About one third of the course is comprised of single and joint honours English students while the other two thirds come from subjects such as history, geography, and many of the physical sciences. As such there is a wide range of abilities with respect to English studies. The course is delivered through 90 minute interactive lectures, there are no seminars or tutorials. The topic of the lecture you will be watching is Lawrence's short story, 'Odour of Chrysanthemums.' In the lecture Matthews's objective is to get students thinking about the different editions (with different endings) of this short story while also providing a historical and literary context for the work.

Following the activity you can view a post-lecture interview with Matthews in which he provides additional background to the lecture and discusses some of his ideas and opinions about lecturing. You can also choose to watch the entire lecture.

The activity

Watch the clip of Dr Sean Matthews lecturing on the D.H. Lawrence short story, 'The Odour of Chrysanthemums' and then answer the questions below. Don't try to take too many notes as you are watching. You might find it useful to represent to yourself in diagram form the orientations of the lecture towards a) the subject matter and b) the audience.

We are very grateful to our colleagues for allowing us into their classrooms and lecture halls to observe their teaching. As you work with this example of teaching please keep your commentary focused on pedagogy and refrain from criticism that would be unhelpful or unkind in a face-to-face peer review or similar situation.



2 | This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.

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1. Was there anything that particularly struck you or surprised you about Matthews's approach to the lecture? Would you have done it the same way? What would you do differently?
2. how did Matthews manage the balance between content and discourse? How much attention was given to signposting, the meta-level of guiding the audience through the lecture itself? (Or looking back and forward?)
3. How did Matthews involve the audience? For example, were students asked to carry out activities, form buzz groups, carry out a short task, etc. during the lecture?
4. What was your sense of audience rapport? Did students seem engaged with the lecture? How frantic did note-taking seem?
5. When Matthews used technological aids (Powerpoint, videos, etc.) how well were these integrated into the substance of the lecture?
6. How did Matthews cope with things that went wrong? (late arrivals, interruptions, technological mishaps, etc.)
7. Imagine a spectrum between a lecturer with their head in their own notes, and one who is perpetually looking around and making eye contact with the audience, or even moving around. Where did Matthews fit on this spectrum?

Now watch the post-lecture interview with Sean Matthews and learn more about what he was trying to achieve.





Links & References

You can watch Sean Matthews' entire lecture below, it is divided into Part 1 and Part 2.

Part 1



Part 2



Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity



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More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

Resources in the *Large group teaching* collection

- Large group teaching: introduction to the collection
- Peer reviewing lectures: resource overview
 - Peer review: A Science of Literature lecture
 - Peer review: Shakespeare's London lecture
 - **Peer review: The Odour of Chrysanthemums lecture**
- Identifying good and bad practice: resource overview
 - How to give a bad lecture: individual activity
 - How to give a bad lecture: group activity
 - The written and the improvised
- Planning and evaluating your lecture: resource overview
 - The genre of the lecture: individual activity
 - Peer review: group activity



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