

## Giving Inclusive Lectures

Clarity is the key criterion here. It is not the same thing as ‘dumbing down’: there is no reason why clear signposting and structure should prevent lectures from being subtle, exciting and thought-provoking.

- Make the structure of each session obvious to the students, perhaps in visual form (on a slide, or in a handout, or on the board); recap from time to time (and at the end), and mark transition points clearly. (Verbal ‘signposts’ in a lecture will make it easier for students recording it to bookmark their recordings for later transcription.) If you have made notes on the board, leave them up at the end of the session, so that students can copy them down or take a picture using their mobile phones.
- Don’t go too fast: allow enough time (perhaps programming in some deliberate pauses for reflection) for the students to absorb each point.
- Hold the students’ attention by switching the focus of the discussion or the medium of delivery every 15 minutes or so. This will help students with poor concentration, but also many other students too.
- Whenever you use new or unusual terminology (or a new writer’s name), write it down on the board. When you have written it down, spell it out.
- Use a variety of different delivery methods and of different media (video, images, maybe passing round a physical object) to capitalize on differences in ‘learning styles’ between students.
- If a student asks a question in a lecture, make sure you repeat it (so that everyone else can hear it) before giving your reply.
- Speak clearly (not too fast) and face the audience (this will help lip-readers); use a microphone if available (it may be linked in to aids worn by hearing-impaired students). Don’t speak when you turn your back to write on the board. If you are using boards/overhead projectors, explain what you’re doing as you do it. Don’t move around the room too much – some students will find it very difficult to track you. Adjust curtains/blinds to avoid appearing in silhouette. If you dim the lights to show slides or a video and you need to speak, make sure that your face is illuminated.
- If you use an overhead projector, use printed rather than handwritten



transparencies.



**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. This work by English Subject Centre is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License.*

- Make it clear to students how you want them to engage with the lecture. Do they need to take notes, or have you provided them with enough supplementary materials (handouts, online resources, etc.) to allow them simply to listen? If you want them to take notes, pause from time to time to allow enough time to do it properly. Many of the respondents to the Subject Centre survey of disabled students in *Staying the Course* were under the impression that they were supposed to take very extensive notes in every lecture: that this was in fact their lecturers' intention in every case seems doubtful. Supplying more materials in support of the lecture should help counter some of this anxiety.
- Using electronic voting systems ('EVS') is an excellent way of gauging student understanding and will help you adjust lecture content accordingly. For an example, see the English Subject Centre case study by Nuria Yáñez-Bouza, 'Enhancing interactive learning in the classroom with 'Turning Point'', available online at [www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/casestudies/technology/turningpoint.php](http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/casestudies/technology/turningpoint.php)
- Allow students to record the session if they want to. You may feel that it would be more useful for a student to access the content of the session in some other way (and if so, you should tell them this). If a student insists, however, the law is probably on his/her side.
- Try to make sure that students who need to be close to the lecturer (for example, for lip-reading) are able to be.
- Be careful about using unexplained idioms or slang phrases that may confuse international students.
- Don't assume that all your students watch the latest soap operas or follow the latest bands: popular culture references can be just as alienating as high culture ones.

Adapted from *Inclusive Teaching: A Guide for Higher Education English* (English Subject Centre, 2011), available online at

<http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/seedguides.php>

