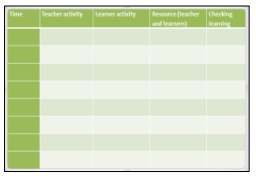
University of Hertfordshire

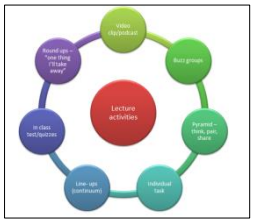
# Top tips for large class teaching

1. **Plan the session thoroughly**. Our natural starting point is often to plan what we will be doing (i.e. what content we will cover), but think about what the students will be doing and how they will be learning. Plan when they will be listening; discussing a concept with a peer; answering questions; watching a video clip; taking notes; identifying key points etc.

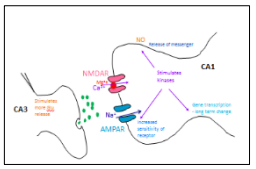


2. **Try to get to know the class.** Even in large lecture rooms you may be able to use student names by asking students to fold an A4 page into three, writing their name on it and placing it in front of them. You could also use the electronic voting system (EVS) (or raising hands) to find out some demographic information (e.g. how many students are from another country, how many students did a BTEC, how many students travel to university everyday, how many students have a part time job).

3. **Be alert to short attention spans**. To ensure student engagement, 15 minutes of lecture followed by a learning activity is a sensible approach e.g. videoclips/podcasts; 'think, pair, share' task; 5 min discussion with nearby peers; individual task (write a definition/identify 3 examples).




4. **Design your slides well.** Text may be difficult to read in large lecture rooms so use text sparingly and in large, clear fonts. To help explain complex concepts consider using diagrams, images and/or animations.




5. **Facilitate students' use of their own devices.** Many students will have smart phones/tablets/laptops. Manage their use of devices by clarifying expectations of only looking at course related material, but give students the opportunity to use their devices for example, finding a relevant journal article or looking up an answer to a question that you have set.

6. **Use props.** In large lecture rooms don't be put off from showing an object or piece of equipment to aid student understanding; place the object under the visualizer so the three dimensional image is displayed via the overhead projector or pass the object(s) around the class.

7. **Use the space.** Using a wireless presentation 'clicker' can help you escape the lectern and enable you to engage with all students. Think also about getting your students to move around the room for discussion with peers.

8. **Facilitate peer learning.** Don't let tiered lecture rooms inhibit student discussion. Solving a problem with the person next to them or negotiating an answer with someone in-front of, or behind them, will benefit their learning and create a positive buzz within the room.

9. **Test student understanding.** Just asking "has everyone got it?" won't help you gauge how much the students have understood. Some students will be intimidated in large classes and may not respond to verbal questions so consider using EVS or Padlet to enable students to express their answers or opinions anonymously.

10. **Finishing the session.** Review the learning outcomes and get the students to summarise the key points. Ask students to post questions or points on the module discussion site so you can end the class promptly.