

# Making the Most of Lectures and Tutorials



**Which is which?**

**How would you describe the differences?**



# outline

- What happens in lectures and tutorials
- Lectures -
  - the rationale
  - Being effective in lectures
  - Following up lectures
- Tutorials –
  - Rationale
  - Preparing
  - participating – assessment tasks in tutes
  - Following up

# Lectures and Tutorials at University

- Most courses have a combination of lectures and tutorials (sometimes called ‘tutes’)
- Lectures are formal and have large numbers of students – usually everyone doing a particular course (often 100+ students)
- Tutorials divide the students into smaller groups (20-40 students) and have a much more interactive format

# The rationale for lectures

At university, lectures are used:

- to provide a summary of essential knowledge in a subject area.
- to guide your learning and skills development.
- to demonstrate how to do something, e.g. solve a problem
- to present a point of view or different points of view
- to challenge your thinking by presenting an area of controversy
- To stimulate your interest

# A lecture is

- Up to 2 hours long
- Usually one speaker – lecturer
- Can be multimedia
- Not often highly interactive
- An essential part of a course, providing information
- Can be challenging for students

# Prepare for lectures

- Print and read any web lecture notes.
- If reading has been recommended ahead of the lecture, read it.
- Go over your notes from the last lecture so you can make connections between lectures.
- Identify what you already know about a subject, because this develops your ability to understand new material.

# Being effective in lectures

Active listening:

- is when you listen carefully to make sure you understand and learn the information that is being conveyed
- Is different to the type of listening we normally do, which tends to be passive
- In a lecture, listening actively involves:

# Listening for main points and major sub-points

- Don't just write everything down
- Listen carefully and make sure you understand what the *purpose* of this lecture is
- As you take down notes, keep the main point in mind
- make sure you understand how these notes are related

# Remove distractions

Don't tempt yourself!

Put away the:

- campus newspaper
- your Sudoku puzzle
- your mobile
- anything else ...

that might be more interesting than the lecturer

## practise

- Learning to concentrate and listen actively is an endurance skill
- Make yourself do it, and
- it will get easier over time

## Following up the lecture

- Go over your notes soon after the lecture when you can still remember it
- If your notes seem insufficient, try:
  - to fill in the gaps later from that week's reading.
  - make a list of questions /new terms and seek answers from reading, other students, tutor, and lecturer.
  - to leave a lot of space so you can fill in the gaps later.

# Tutorials – rationale and what happens

- Opportunity to ask questions and check your understanding
- You learn from practising activities and working on questions
- You can test your answers to problems
- You can meet other students and discuss issues
- Different to (more sociable than) learning in lectures and private study

# Participation mark for tutorials

- To encourage you to participate actively
- Recognised as effective in improving and extending students' understanding of subject matter
- Sharpens and develops communication skills
- Linked to graduate attributes, working in teams, communicating, presenting information ...
- Important for career

## Natural reluctance to participate

- Many students find tutorials difficult
- Some feel shy about speaking up
- Some worry their English is not good enough
- Some are afraid they're not clever enough
- Some feel too clever and don't want to share their ideas
- This reluctance can stop you from benefiting from a core aspect of studying at university

# Tutorial activities at U/G to P/G levels



## An example of a tutorial activity/ assessment task

- from MGMT 1001 Managing Organisations and People:

### **Individual Participation 20% of final mark (Tutorial attendance and Participation 5%)**

Preparation for, and active participation in your lectures and seminars is a vital component of the learning in this subject and as such students who prepare and participate in the classroom will be rewarded. Participation may involve small group discussion, short informal presentations to the class, answering questions, participation in class discussion.

... Simply attending tutorials without getting involved in class discussion is of little value either to you or your classmates ...

# Getting the most from tutorials

*be prepared:*

- Do homework/ activities/ read the required texts
- Think about your understanding of the topic
- Prepare your ideas/questions in your head

## If you're tutorial encourages interaction

- Talk over the topic with friends or fellow students – an opportunity to test your ideas/approaches
- Visualise the scene – imagine yourself relaxed and in control, interested in what's going on and knowing what its about
- Forget what others might think and focus on your own goal
- Learn the names of some of the students in the group
- Use body language that communicates you are involved and actively participating

## During the tutorial

- listen closely to the tutor's explanations, directions
- raise questions or seek clarification about points not understood, including about assessment tasks
- Try to be as active as possible in finding solutions to questions
- encourage others to contribute

## After the tutorial

- Contact the tutor to clarify any important points you didn't understand
- Finish any unfinished work
- Revise. Sit down and consolidate the concepts that you have learned
- Enter questions in your notebook; write answers
- Check terms/ jargon
- Associate concepts with terms

## References and further information

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