IAP: Lectures and note-taking

Learning Advisers
UniSA
Why go to lectures?

• Imagine you have a friend who doesn’t want to go to lectures?
• Can you think of 5 good reasons why they should go?
Why go to lectures?

• Central part of your university experience
• Creates a framework for the content to be learnt
• Learning from your lecturer’s knowledge and experience.
• Sense of shared learning with your peers
• Opportunity to compare notes with and get help from other students
• Saves you time
• A lot of lectures are recorded and posted online BUT don’t depend on this. Powerpoint slides are often available but are no substitute for a lecture.
Today’s workshop

- Understanding the purpose of lectures
- Preparing for & revising lectures
- Recognising what lecturers do in their introductions
- Recognising how lecturers use language
- Identifying key points in lectures
- Learning note-taking strategies
- Using online listening practice resources
• Today’s workshop will be useful whether you go to lectures or listen to them online.
Lectures and tutorials

- Large venues
- Lecturer-centred
- Limited interaction
- Listen & take notes

- Small venues
- Student-centred
- Highly interactive
- Listen, take part & take notes
Purpose of lectures

• Provide overview of key concepts, ideas and topics

• Summarise, review, or expand your reading materials

• Lay the foundations of knowledge necessary for tutorial discussions and assignment work
Before lectures

• Review your notes from last week’s lecture

• Check what the next lecture will be about

• Carry out required reading and check unknown vocabulary or concepts

• Ensure you have note paper, stationery etc. Take water with you!

• Arrive on time, switch off your mobile phone, and find a good seat
During lectures

• Don’t chat. You’ll have more to talk about after the lecture!

• Take notes as a way of keeping your attention focused. Your pen is like a third ear!
During lectures

• Don’t waste time noting down stories or personal opinions. Focus on recording the key points.

• Some lecturers may allow you to record them (MP3 player/mobile phone) but you must ask them first!
During lectures you need to make decisions about what to write down for later reference and what to leave out. This means you need to recognise when your lecturer is:

- Giving you specific information
- Stating a key point
- Supporting their point with an example
- Lightening the general atmosphere
- Adding information of interest
- Giving more advanced but non-essential information
- Organising their thoughts
What do lecturers do?
Lecturer’s toolbox

- Define key concepts and abstract terms
- Give examples
- Give reasons
- Explain processes
- Outline arguments
- Challenge your preconceptions
- Describe types
- Make comparisons
- Ask questions
- Talk from their own personal experience
- Other?
Words lecturers use

• Your lecturers will introduce you to technical terms that are a part of the professional field, e.g. desalination. Make a note of these.
• They will also use formal or academic words (e.g. deteriorate)
• Equally, your lecturers will often use everyday colloquial English
   Don’t be surprised if they use:
   o Multi-word verbs (e.g. fall apart)
   o Idioms (e.g. go to pieces)
How do lecturers speak?

- **Pausing:** lecturers often do this when they are about to change topic

- **Speed:** lecturers often change to slower speech to make an important point

- **Volume:** lecturers often speak louder to make an important point

- **Intonation:** lecturers often let the pitch of their voice fall at the end of a sentence to show they’ve finished with an idea
Lecture introductions

• The introduction to a lecture is an important first stage

• Your lecturer might open a lecture in a number of ways....
What lecturers may do in their lecture introductions

• Preview the content or structure of the lecture
• Outline the scope
• Give background information
• Refer to previous research
• Refer to content of previous lectures
• Lead in with a media item
• Introduce different approaches to the topic
• Put lecture in context of an assignment
• Mention whether students need to take notes or if there will be handouts/online materials
We’re going to listen to the introduction to a lecture about globalisation
Predicting content

• What does globalisation mean to you?
• What kind of people does it affect?
Forming a structure

• What information do you think is important to note down from the lecturer’s introduction to his talk on globalisation?

• Don’t note down everything!

• Just take notes of the most important points
Task #1: How does the lecturer introduce his lecture?

- Preview the content or structure of the lecture
- Put lecture in context of an assignment
- Give background information
- Refer to previous research
- Outline the scope
- Lead in with a media item
- Introduce different approaches to the topic
- Refer to content of previous lectures
- Mention whether students need to take notes or if there will be handouts/online materials
Task #1: How does the lecturer introduce his lecture?

- Preview the content or structure of the lecture (3)
  - Put lecture in context of an assignment
- Give background information (1)
  - Refer to content of previous lectures
- Outline the scope (4)
  - Lead in with a media item
  - Introduce different approaches to the topic
- Refer to previous research (2)
  - Mention whether students need to take notes or if there will be handouts/online materials
Lecturers are not robots. They do not program their speech or organise the lecture content as a logical factsheet.

Many enjoy the live performance experience of giving a lecture.

So be prepared for digressions from the flow of information.

Informal digressions may include personal asides, afterthoughts, unplanned observations, jokes, and stories.
Digressions

Useful digressions may include:

- Quick definition of a key term
- Impromptu reference to a book
- Housekeeping information about the course
- Use of a personal anecdote to illustrate a point
• You need to be able to tell when the lecturer has finished their digression and is back on track
What do you think the lecturer is going to talk about?
Where does the lecturer digress?

- My first set of examples come from some recent government initiatives and I’ll be talking about some very important work that’s been done in the area of water resource management but before doing so I would like to point out that there is a really good chapter on this very issue in Connor’s book, which is included in the reference list for this lecture. It’s very up-to-date, thoughtful, and comprehensive, and I’m just going to mention a few of the examples she gives. But if you seriously want to think about this area, and it involves many complexities, her chapter is a very good place to start.

Anyway, water resource management in South Australia has been pushing ahead with desalination and the development of technologies which optimise absorption processes for the removal of salts and trace organic pollutants.

(Adapted from Campbell, C & Smith, J 2007, English for Academic Study: Listening, Garnet Publishing, Reading.)
My first set of examples come from some recent government initiatives and I’ll be talking about some very important work that’s been done in the area of water resource management but before doing so I would like to point out that there is a really good chapter on this very political issue in Connor’s book, which is included in the reference list for this lecture. It’s very up-to-date, thoughtful, and comprehensive, and I’m just going to mention a few of the examples she gives. But if you seriously want to think about this area, and it involves many complexities, her chapter is a very good place to start. Anyway, the South Australian government has been pushing ahead with desalination and the development of technologies which optimise absorption processes for the removal of salts and trace organic pollutants.

(Adapted from Campbell, C & Smith, J 2007, *English for Academic Study: Listening*, Garnet Publishing, Reading.)
Taking notes

• What kind of information should you write down when you take notes?
• What are some good ways to organise your notes?
Taking notes

• Be **selective**. You can’t write everything down.

• Be **brief**. Use headings, abbreviations, codes, symbols, mind maps, etc. Avoid full sentences.

• Be **clear**. Revise your notes immediately after the lecture so that you can rewrite them or fill in what’s missing.

• Be **organised**. Make a note of anything that needs to be followed up (e.g. online search).
Taking notes

**Cornell Notes**

- Main Idea
- Key words & ideas
- Important dates/people/places
- Repeated/Stressed Info
- Ideas/brainstorming written on board / overhead projector
- Info from textbook/stories
- Diagrams & Pictures
- Formulas

Summary of your notes in your own words

**TOPIC:** Hofstede’s model of cultural diversity

**DATE:** 3rd September 1999

- Richard outlined Hofstede’s measurements of cultural difference.
  - focus this attention on masc. / fem.
- Some critics disagree with its model of masc. / fem.
- too rigid and not based on social factors
- Weeks (1989) disagrees with outmoded model
- David thought that masc / fem scales still useful in some regards

**Link with**
- Globalisation and multi-culturalism
- Chase up reference WEEKS, J. (1989)
Identify these things in your notes

- Facts
- Opinions
- Supporting examples
- Arguments
- Evidence
- Sources and references
After lectures

It’s important that you can make sense of your notes later on when preparing for exams or assignments.

- Review your notes and clarify meaning
- Check text books etc. if you are unclear
- Organise sections and rewrite (if needed)
- Listen to the recording for missed points
- Use colour! **Underline** or **highlight** points.
- Make a visual representation of some of your notes for easy reference....
Making your notes work for you

• Refer to your lecture notes while doing required reading.

• Review lecture notes before tutorials.

• In tutorials, ask your tutor and/or classmates to explain anything that was unclear in the lecture. Note down what they say.
Mindmapping

Retailing Mix

- Parking
- Phone
- Internet
- Localization and access convenience
- Fast service
- Operating hours
- Availability of merchandise
- Search, in-store movement and purchase convenience
- Non-transparent prices cause psychological cost
- No hidden cost
- Value and communicate total customer experience

- Set the Fairest (Not the Lowest) Prices
- Connect with Your Customers’ Emotions
- Treat Customers with RESPECT

- Retailer as a place of perceived solution
- All under one roof?
- Specialty store?
- For a certain target group
- For a specific situation/problem

- Availability of merchandise
- Provide accurate information
- Navigation
- Prices
- Toilets
- Places for relaxation
- Cleanliness
- Competence
- Courtesy
- Well trained staff
- Fair treatment policies
- Transparent
- No discrimination
- Giving and getting

© Viktor Vojtko 2008
http://www.vivaysystems.cz
vojtko@vivaysystems.cz
Visual notes can be very effective and help you to conceptualise key concepts

https://www.verbaltovisual.com
• Take notes while you listen to Prof. Steffen Lehmann’s lecture on

Green Urbanisation – Sustainable Communities

What we need is social innovation...
Two innovative Australian towns

- Taree, New South Wales
- Mildura, Victoria
Lecture

• **Green Urbanism - Sustainable Communities**

• [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r9bLg2UkZw&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r9bLg2UkZw&feature=youtu.be) (11.12 – 19.18)
Example notes

- Soc. innovation/sustainability
- Reduce consumption → behaviour/attitudinal change
- Consumption ← demand ← design
- Bad design → high consumption
- Taree, NSW: Aust’s first no-low carbon urban dev. (70,000).
  - Use river water to cool buildings.
  - Free bikes for new residents – encourage people to use bike lanes
• Mildura: 50% energy produced onsite – mainly solar; water park – cleans water, kids can visit
• Smaller towns/countries lead the way. Many are ahead of govts
• Singapore plans to:
  o combustion engine $\rightarrow$ elec in next 5 yrs
  o spend 8% GDP on pub trans (9% China, 1.5% Aust)
Example notes

- Smaller towns in China – 99% solar hot water
- 1972 Club of Rome (Limits of Growth) “we cannot consume endlessly”
- Research centre projects:
  1. food waste - 40%
  2. Change behaviour towards sustainable lifestyle
Example notes

• ‘Holistic systems thinking’ – looking at changing preschool kids’ behaviour

• Louis Ramfort (?), U.S. “Are you good enough to have this country in your possession?”
Useful listening resources

UniSA Knowledge Works – past lectures

TED
<http://www.ted.com/>

English for Academic Study