

Making Your Lectures Interactive Tip Sheet

The following tips were written by Richard Olivo for Harvard University's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning and slightly revised by Lee Warren.

- Plan the level of your lecture for **the students you have**, not the students you wish you had.
- Choose **one main point** or takeaway for the lecture. Determine what main thing you want students to know or be able to do at the end of it.
- Use **no more than three or four sub-topics** in a 90-minute lecture to make that point: illustrations, examples, explanations.
- Where possible, cut! **Fewer points** made clearly are far more effective than a download of material.
- Make sure you convey how the lecture fits into the **overall context** of the course.
- Begin with a **provocative question or problem** that the lecture will address.
- If you can, start with **something the students already know** or are interested in.
- Put an **outline of your main points** at the edge of the blackboard, and refer to it as you progress through the lecture. This will help students understand the structure of your talk.
- **Emphasize main points** in your voice and your body language. Repeat important points to keep everyone with you.
- **Watch the class.** If everyone is busy taking notes, wait before moving on.
- **Transitions** are important. Help the class understand when you are closing a topic and starting the next one.
- **Invite questions.** Even in a large class, questions can help underline important points, clarify misconceptions, and wake everyone up by changing the pace.
- At the end, if you have 15 minutes of material to cover and only 5 minutes available, **save the material for next time.**