

Analysis of Lecture as a Teaching Method

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Lecture remains the top teaching method within classroom instruction today (Saini, Kaur, Kaur, Thappar, K, 2015). Saini et al. (2015) indicated it is the choice of many instructors due to class size and the ability to communicate a larger amount of knowledge to students within the instructional setting. Additionally, the use of lecture allows instructors to provide large amounts of information within a short time frame versus other methods (Dehghanzadeh & Jafaraghaee, 2018). Lecture is described as an approach that is instructor-focused and relies on the transfer of knowledge passively to promote superficial learning (Sanaie, Vasli, Sedighi, & Sadeghi, 2019). Per Bastable (2019), every lecture should include three parts, the introduction, body, and a conclusion.

Occurring simply as a lecture without any discussion, lecture fits the behaviorism theory of learning. Within this learning theory, learning occurs as a change in behavior resulting from interaction from an external environment (Oermann, DeGagne, & Philips, 2018). Lecture is usually assessed through a model in which the learner is rewarded if learning occurred, which is a key component of the behavior learning theory (Oermann et al., 2018). However, with additional strategies applied to lecture as a teaching method, such as pre-exposing the learners to the content before the lecture or engaging learners with the content as it is delivered, lecture fits into the brain-based learning theory (Oermann et al., 2018).

### **Advantages of Lecture**

There are many advantages to using lecture as a teaching method. First, it is an efficient way that is also cost-effective to deliver large quantities of information to large groups of learners all at the same time and usually within a short time frame (Bastable, 2019). It allows for the delivery of the same information to all of the students in one setting (Oermann et al., 2018).

Furthermore, in using lecture, educators will find it useful in demonstrating patterns, bringing forth main concepts, and also summarizing data (Bastable, 2019).

Bastable (2019) added that it can also provide a foundation to support other learning methods like group discussions. Oja and Kelly (2016) further showed how the content of lecture can transform into a story, which allows for active classroom discussions. Educators who are inspiring through lecture will further gain the interest of their students (Oermann et al., 2018). Oermann et al. (2018) added that with lecture, the instructor also keeps control of the classroom, helping keep the focus on the material being taught.

Lectures can also easily be supported with supplemental materials like handouts and audiovisual tools (Bastable, 2019). PowerPoint, for instance, is one tool that can allow for the integration of various multimedia components (Saini et al., 2015). These can include the use of graphics, sound, and video, which makes the material more interesting to learners and enhances their engagement (Saini et al., 2015).

### **Disadvantages of Lecture**

Lecture also has disadvantages. Lecture is an ineffective way to influence both the affective and psychomotor learning domains (Bastable, 2019). It is a passive transfer of information and since an assessment model is often used, a learner is rewarded more for being able to reproduce facts without a full understanding of the content (Sanaie et al., 2019). Research shows that lecture also does not promote critical thinking due to the large amount of information that is relayed in a short time frame without effective communication among students (Dehghanzadeh & Jafaraghaee, 2018). Dehghanzadeh and Jafaraghaee (2018) added that critical thinking development is not supported because of the limited opportunities to

actively participate in discussions, activities, analyzing data, and being able to use the knowledge in practice.

Sanaie et al. (2019) included that it hinders students in regards to development, motivation, and learning. Some students find this method does not motivate them, nor meet their educational needs (Sanaie et al., 2019). This is further complicated within lecture because individual differences of students are not accounted for, such as backgrounds or learning styles (Bastable, 2019). Another disadvantage Bastable (2019) pointed out is that the information is delivered the same for every student no matter what the student's learning needs or cognitive abilities are. Lecture further limits the ability to reach all learners equally because it is not possible to address the diversity of all of the learners present (Bastable, 2019). Lastly, lectures, especially lengthy ones, can be viewed by students as boring and tiring (Dehghanzadeh & Jafaraghaee, 2018).

### **Educator Attributes and Tips to Facilitate Lecture**

The right attributes within an educator can contribute to making lecture a valuable and effective method of teaching that students will enjoy. While Bastable (2019) described lecturing as a skill that is acquired and perfected over time, specific attributes of the lecturer will aid in developing that skill. The lecturer should be prepared, well-organized, and enthusiastic about the lecture (Oermann et al., 2018).

Introducing the lecture is a time in which a lecturer should make connections and develop a rapport with the learners, showing his or her personality and using humor appropriately (Bastable, 2019). This can also be a time in which the lecturer includes information that identifies the knowledge and expertise of the lecturer, especially on the subject matter being presented. The expertise of the lecturer can also be interwoven through the use of relatable

stories or situations throughout the lecture (Bastable, 2019). Bastable (2019) stated that by being enthusiastic, showing one's expertise and interest in the topic captivates an audience and keeps their interest throughout the lecture.

During the lecture, the lecturer needs to address the class as if speaking to each learner individually and to be aware of the variables of speech itself (Bastable, 2019). Lecturers should move about the room and vary the style in which the presentation is delivered, being cognizant of body language (Bastable, 2019). In conclusion, it is important to be mindful of time and to wrap-up the lecture appropriately (Bastable, 2019).

### **Domains of Learning and Higher Level Thinking**

Bastable (2019) identified lecture as an effective approach within the cognitive domain of learning, but an ineffective one within the affective and psychomotor ones. Much of lecture as a teaching method is based on the delivery of knowledge. This fits into the cognitive domain, which involves knowledge and the ability to recall facts and patterns (Randall, 2011). As mentioned, Sanaie et al. (2019) described lecture as a method in which the learner is rewarded for being able to reproduce facts when assessed. However, it is important to note that much of what is accomplished through lecture, the delivery of knowledge that can be recalled, lecture may be limited to the lower portions of the cognitive domain as Bastable (2019) noted. On the other hand, depending on the strategies used within the lecture, higher levels of the cognitive domain can also be achieved. This can be accomplished by adding situations and allowing the learners to place themselves into a scenario and relate to it, so that they may apply, analyze, and synthesize the knowledge into it.

As Bastable (2019) pointed out, lecture is much more ineffective for the affective and psychomotor domains. The lowest level of these domains can be addressed if a lecture is

accomplishing the higher levels of the cognitive domain. The biggest issue with lecture involves its ability to develop critical thinking skills, which is pivotal for nursing students. Studies have shown that lecture in the traditional form cannot promote critical thinking (Dehghanzadeh & Jafaraghaee, 2018). A more learner-centered approach must be used to facilitate deeper thinking to promote learning, which lecture, being instructor-centered, cannot accomplish (Dehghanzadeh & Jafaraghaee, 2018). Therefore, lecture provides the foundations of learning, but to reach into the other domains and achieve them at higher levels, other strategies must be used in lecture along with using it in conjunction with other teaching methods.

### **Learner Types and Acceptance of Lecture**

Those learners who are most accepting of lecture as a teaching method based on the visual, aural, read/write and kinesthetic (VARK) learning styles would be aural learners. This type of learner, per Bastable (2019), enjoy lectures as they prefer directions and information be read aloud and discussion of topics. If other methods are used within lecture, such as presentations, graphics, and video, visual and read/write learners would also enjoy this method. Visual learners prefer graphical representation, while read/write learners desire the written word in conjunction with other sources of information, which can be delivered through lecture (Bastable, 2019). The learners of the VARK learning styles that would not be as accepting of the lecture method are the kinesthetic learners. As Bastable (2019) explained, these learners want hands-on activities or to act out or return demonstration to learn best.

### **Resources to Implement Lecture**

There are various resources available that can be used to implement lecture. One used most often is PowerPoint presentations, which replaced written notes on chalkboards and transparencies on an overhead projector (Saini et al., 2015). PowerPoint presentations can

supplement lectures and are easy to use and popular among learners (Saini et al., 2015).

According to Saini et al. (2015), using this tool allows for the representation of the information through visual and auditory mediums, which improves learning. It is important, however, to use it properly, not reading from slides or overloading information on the presentations (Saini et al., 2015). Students prefer that instructors instead use PowerPoint presentations as a way to elaborate, explain, and allow for discussion within the classroom (Saini et al., 2015).

Another option to incorporate as a resource to lecture is the use of an audience response system (ARS). This allows for student-teacher interaction, which is important in creating a positive learning environment that promotes learner development (Meguid & Collins, 2017). During lecture, educators can present questions to learners and receive immediate feedback when using ARS (Meguid & Collins, 2017). According to Meguid and Collins (2017), research has shown that using ARS during lecture increases attendance, enjoyment, and interaction. In their study, Meguid and Collins (2017) received positive feedback from students and identified that the ARS allowed for lectures to be more interactive, effective, and student-centered.

### **Personal Reflections**

While I am a kinesthetic learner per the VARK instrument, I feel that has developed more as a nurse. During the time I received my associate's degree in nursing (ADN), I enjoyed lecture. However, when I returned to earn my bachelor's, I found the online lectures to be less useful and more of a task than learning. Those are in the online world, which limits interaction, however, in attending lectures in person, I am also not as enthralled as I once was by this method of teaching unless the lecture is vivid with experiences shared by the lecturer and participants and discussion is encouraged. While I feel I can still learn from this method, I have to apply myself a lot more to do so if the instructor does not engage me.

As discussed in the learning domains, lecture is effective for the cognitive domain to a specific level. Hence, because I have met this level and have developed critical thinking skills, oftentimes lecture does not meet my educational needs as it does not go beyond the cognitive domain. I feel lecture also met my affective domain of learning in its lowest level while earning my ADN and does still to a small extent if I can place myself into a situation or recall an experience that applies to the material being delivered in the lecture. On the contrary, I do not feel the psychomotor domain was met through lecture while receiving my ADN, however, it was and is in some ways while earning my BSN and MSN. I contribute that again to being able to apply past experiences to lecture to better learn and comprehend the material but only at the lowest levels.

What this has taught me as a future educator is that when I chose to use lecture, which I do plan to as a teaching method option, is to ensure that it fits the content and the message I want to deliver about the knowledge (Bastable, 2019). I also will incorporate various strategies, including technology to make the lecture more engaging for learners. It is also important to consider how all domains of learning will be met, especially since only the foundation of knowledge is set in using lecture. Lecture can be an effective method of teaching if delivered expertly and especially when used in conjunction with various strategies to deliver the content and along with other methods that learners can use to apply the knowledge (Bastable, 2019).



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