

International Forum for Peer Learning

Facilitating interactive learning in large lectures with the use of academic mentors

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Theory of Peer Learning

Vygotsky's social constructivism (Williams and Reddy, 2016)

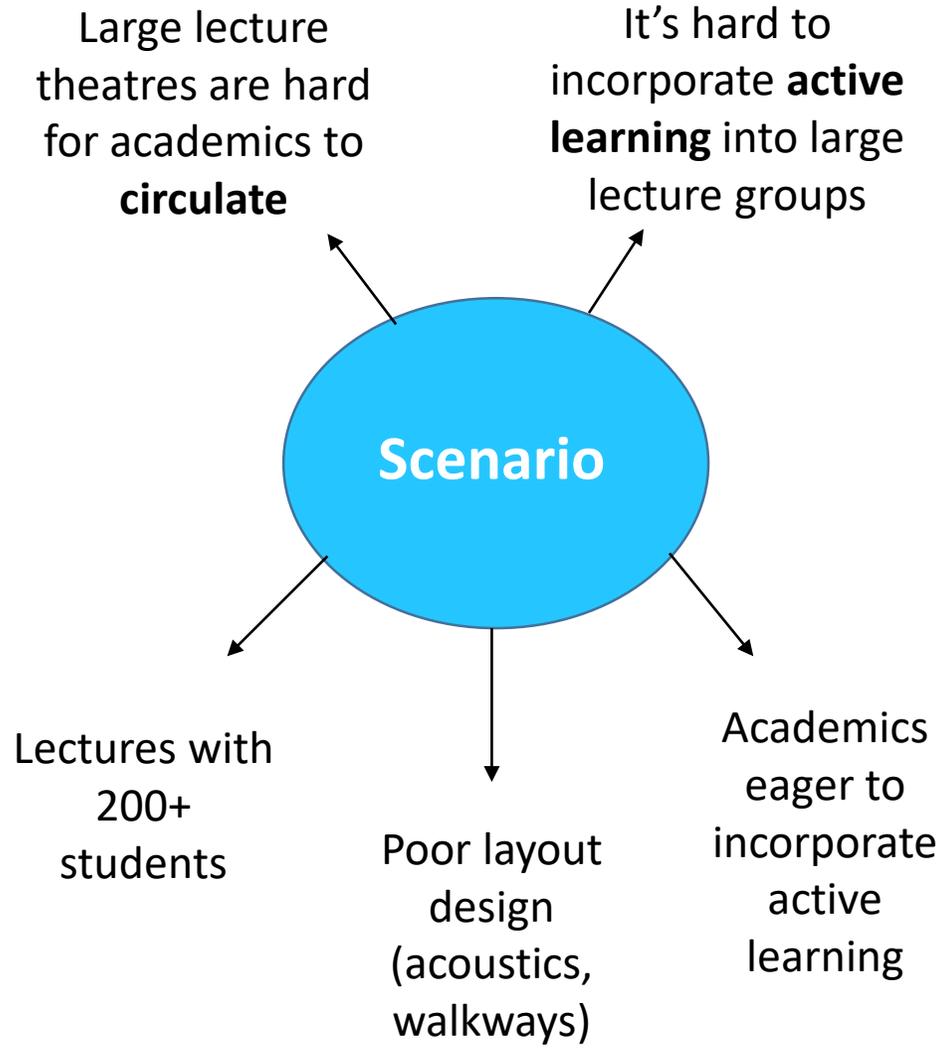
The success of peer learning depends on social interactions between students and a shared culture of knowledge – 'hot knowledge'

Arthurs & Templeton (2009)

In large lecture groups, student outcomes are best when lectures are interactive and follow up work is individual. This improves their attitude towards learning, as well as their understanding of content.



Aim: To make large lectures more interactive, improving engagement



Lecture theatres were divided into zones and assigned to mentors



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Trial in Criminology:

- Duration: 10 weeks
- KU policy of paying students mentors (LLW)
 - 1 hour prep
 - Mentoring
- 2 mentors per zone, 1 floating mentor
- Academic Champions: ML & lecturer
- Briefing via email
- Debriefing in person
- Office hours for questions



Key considerations for success

1

Knowledge

Identification and recall of information

define
fill in the blank
list
identify

label
locate
match
memorize

name
recall
spell

state
tell
underline

Who _____?
What _____?
Where _____?
When _____?

How _____?
Describe _____?
What is _____?

2

Comprehension

Organization and selection of facts and ideas

convert
describe
explain

interpret
paraphrase
put in order

restate
retell in your own words
rewrite

summarize
trace
translate

Re-tell _____ in your own words.
What is the main idea of _____?

What differences exist between _____?
Can you write a brief outline?

Student and lecturer experience

Learners:

Same mentors
1st hand experience
Easy to talk to
Group work
Love of learning
Engaging
Mixing of year groups
Space to practice

Mentors:

Sense of belonging
Revision
Worthwhile
Academic Champion
Confidence
Love of learning
Employability
Presentation skills
Sense of belonging
Soft skills gained

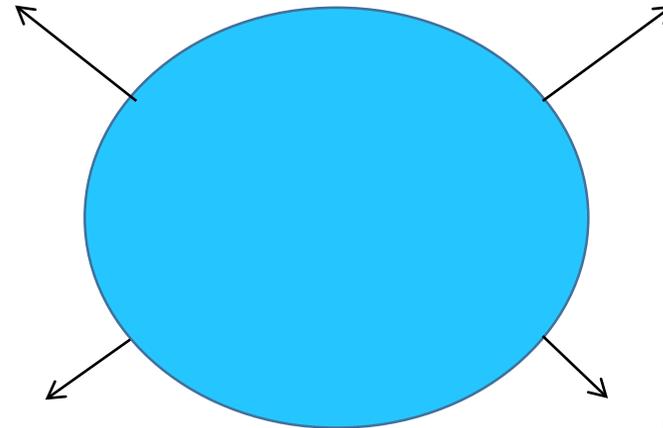
Lessons Learnt

- Be organised with the scheduling admin
 - Set ground rules with mentors e.g. inform us if they swap a shift
 - 'Live' schedule
- Over recruit & talk to timetabling
- Give mentors tasks for preparation time
e.g. prepare questions using Blooms, knowledge mindmap, Mentimeter quiz
- Training:
 - SEND awareness
 - Procedure for letting lecturer know if a student is struggling
- Greater CPD may be required to embed 'active learning' and gain buy-in from academics

Moving online...

Mentors assigned to
'Breakout rooms' for online
lectures, supporting
interactive teaching

Mentor led online sessions,
focusing on **applying learning**
interactively (not re-teaching)



Creating **interactive resources** to use during
lectures
e.g. Mentimeter quizzes

Mentors replying to **'chat box'**
questions/requests for help whilst
lecture is occurring online

Any Questions?



References

Williams, B. & Reddy, P. (2016) 'Does peer-assisted learning improve academic performance? A scoping review', *Nurse Education Today*, 42, pp.23–29.

Arthurs, L. & Templeton, A. (2009) 'Coupled collaborative in-class activities and individual follow-up homework promote interactive engagement and improve student learning outcomes in a college-level Environmental Geology course', *Journal of Geoscience Education*, 57, pp.356-371.