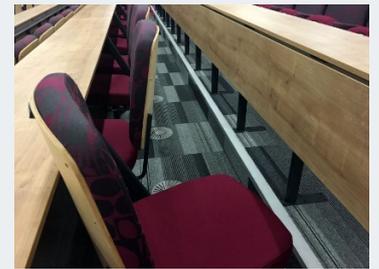


Charles Street

Turn-and-learn

The active learning lecture theatre



Turn-and-learn seating in every other row

What

The Charles Street lecture theatre includes 'turn and learn' seating. Students in alternate rows can swivel around to work with the row behind. This allows the academic to make the lecture more interactive, supporting collaborative learning ideals.

Why use turn-and-learn

Traditionally, lecture theatres have been designed in ways that direct the attention of the students to the lecturer at the front, limiting the opportunity for students to work in groups and promoting a didactic, information-transmission approach. As a result, students, particularly those in large cohorts, can feel anonymous and disengaged in such sessions.

However, a new style of lecture theatre has been created in the Charles Street building, one that uses innovative furniture to make learning more active and participatory. This new style is called 'Turn-and-Learn' and it allows lectures to become more like seminars, with students receiving information from the lecturer followed by working in small groups where some of the students turn their seats so that they can work with their peers in the row behind.

The seating affords small group work (typically for students) in the midst of large group teaching.

Turn-and-Learn theatres have been installed in several universities, including City University London, University College London, Aberystwyth University, and the University of Birmingham (*see Further Information*).

Points to Consider

- What types of activity would be suitable for your session?
- Now that students can access up-to-date content more easily using e-content and digital media, how does that help you to devise more interactivity in lectures?
- Will you sustain a pattern of activities across sessions or introduce different methods from week to week?
- If the students are producing artefacts in their groups, how will these be shared with the other groups? Do you need to test technology to do this?

Using the turn-and-learn features

The following ideas for using the turn-and-learn seating to promote interactivity in the lecture come from the curriculum design toolkit on Active Lectures. They are intended to help you think about your own approaches,

- **Engagement with the debate (1)** - "I've presented one theory or model. Suggest one way in which it could be tested empirically."
- **Engagement with the debate (2)** - "I've presented one theory or model. Offer one critique or counter example."
- **Problem pairs** - Provide a problem on the screen and ask partners next to each other to respond to it. After a minute or so ask them to swivel and work as a group of four by comparing responses and drafting a new collective response to the problem.
- **Research critique** - Lecturer: "I obtained the data on the screen using the method in your hand out. In fours, discuss how effective you think the research design has been? Suggest ways to improve it."
- **Think, pair, share** - students are required to think about a problem initially on their own, then with a partner and then with the group of four. The lecturer may then ask them to share it with the class.

Visualiser



Full lectern



- **Making theory work** - "Think of an example to illustrate the theory. Discuss your idea with your neighbours. Be prepared to share your example."
- **Annotate an image** - Give students a copy of an image or diagram and get them to annotate it in small groups so that they have engaged with the material before you cover it in depth. Ask for a group who has managed to annotate all of the dimensions you were looking for to feedback.
- **Question time** - "Write down one or two questions you have at this point. Get the question exactly right... Ask the people around you until you're satisfied."
- **The Jury's Out (Moot)** - use the lecture space as a mooting space. Each week ask two small student groups to research a contentious issue. One group will offer a formal defence, the other a 'prosecution'. Next week new groups will argue a new case.
- **Read your notes** - "Take two minutes to look at your notes. Check them, fill in gaps, make sure you understand them. Can you read your own writing..?" Share them with peers to help them check their notes and vice versa.
- **Create!** - ask students to compare their understanding with partners and generate metaphors, draw pictures, create a Google Doc or library action plan.
- **Electronic Voting Systems** - Also known as Audience response systems or Clickers, use an electronic voting response system (like the free Socrative or PollEverywhere apps) to create live data and to gauge student understanding. Do this as a small group activity or individually. Think about sharing the data later through Blackboard as collective products from the session.
- **Problems, problems...** - use problems to encourage high quality thinking e.g. "Tackle this problem I am displaying on the screen" or "In pairs, discuss the following question" or "What does this picture illustrate?" or "Why is this conclusion invalid?" Or...

Further information

- Active Lectures - from the Learner Engagement Toolkit. Online at: <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/engagement/toolkit/practical-guides/>
- Interactive Techniques for Large Group teaching (University of Central Florida) <http://goo.gl/nPx9U>
- City University London: <https://goo.gl/62QYEx>
- University College London: <https://goo.gl/R92ryj>
- Aberystwyth University: <https://goo.gl/B6mp1n>
- University of Birmingham: <https://goo.gl/opjhYR>

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