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Ask the expert

Question:

3. How can I include interaction and engage my audience in a large, lecture-style presentation?

First of all, you need to ask yourself to what extent you wish to engage your audience. Often when trainers are faced with large classes they begin to worry about how they will teach or even lecture. It's tempting to simply let the training become teacher-centered and turn into lectures. If the entire course is like this it can become boring. You may risk that your training cannot turn into a competence-based training as opportunities for students to practise are quite limited.

In this respect, large classes are viewed as problematic and in a negative light. However, this does not need to be the case. Yes, large groups, especially those of 100+, are a challenge but there are many positive aspects to such audiences. For me, one of the biggest plusses is the dynamic nature of the group. With so many students there are lots of opportunities to get people to work together, compare, discuss and benefit from the variety of know-how.

As the training is meant to be based on a lecture-style presentation, you may not have the resources such as space, materials or even time to include interaction intensively.

However, there are a few methods that can still help you. Let me give you some examples:

- **Frequent in-class assessment of understanding:** Make your audience do **pretests** or **posttest** or even cases to be solved after parts of your presentation. In that way students need to think and process instead of listen for the whole time. At the other hand you get immediate feedback on what they understood and what you would need to focus on or go into details.
- „**Think- Pair- Share**“ can be used at the beginning of your lecture, in between for discussions or even at the end as revision practice or problem-solving.

Instructions: <http://www.syracusecityschools.com/tfiles/folder713/ThinkPairShare.pdf>

Further Information: <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2493408>

- **World Cafe Method:** <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>
- **Problem-based Learning** is a learning and teaching approach and focuses on students' engagement and competence training. An outcomes study on its effects completed to evaluate PBL as a teaching methodology for registered nurse students which might be of interest to you. However, this is not simply a method but more of a teaching approach. http://journals.lww.com/nurseeducatoronline/Abstract/1999/03000/Problem_Based_Learning_An_Outcomes_Study.11.aspx

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