

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF LECTURE METHOD

Handout 1

Advantages. Because of its advantages, a majority of instructors use the lecture method at least part of the time.

- The lecture is one of the most efficient teaching methods for presenting many facts or ideas in a relatively short time. Material that has been logically organized can be presented concisely in rapid sequence.

- The lecture is particularly suitable for introducing a subject. To ensure that all students have the necessary background to learn a subject, we can present basic information in a lecture. By using the lecture in this manner, we can offer students with varied backgrounds a common understand. A brief introductory lecture can give direction and purpose to a demonstration or prepare students for a discussion.

- The lecture is a convenient method for instructing large groups. If necessary, we can use a public address system to ensure that all students can hear us. The lecture is sometimes the only efficient method to use if student-to-faculty ratio is high.

- The lecture is often useful to supplement material from other sources or for information difficult to obtain in other ways. If students do not have time for research or if they do not have access to reference material, the lecture can fill the bill. In subject areas where information is available in widely scattered places (textbooks, journals, tapes), the lecture allows the instructor to summarize and emphasize pertinent material. Reports, current research, and information, which change frequently, may not be easily available in written form, and the lecture can give students the most up-to-date information.

- The lecture allows a large number of students to receive information from real experts in a subject. In general, a person who can speak from actual experience or a scholar who has carefully analyzed the results of research will have great credibility with students. The lecture is often the most effective way of communicating the energy and enthusiasm of a person who has actual experience in a field, thus motivating students.

Disadvantages. Although the lecture method can be an effective and efficient teaching method, it has a number of disadvantages.

- The lecture does not lead to maximum achievement in certain types of learning. Speech skills, cooperative group thinking, and motor skills, for example, are difficult to teach with the lecture method. Students can develop such skills well only through practice. Moreover, the formal lecture alone is generally not appropriate for presenting material above the comprehension level of the cognitive domain. Because it allows for little or no student verbal participation, the formal lecture may also be inefficient for comprehension-level lessons in which concepts and principles are developed.

- The lecture does not provide teachers with an opportunity to estimate student progress before an examination. Within a single lecture period, we may unwittingly present more information than our students can absorb, and we have little accurate means during the lecture of determining what they have learned.
- Too often, the lecture makes no provision for participation by the students. As a result, many students willingly allow the instructor to do all the work. Learning is an active process, but the lecture method tends to foster passiveness and dependence on the instructor.
- Instructors may have to spend much time preparing for the lectures. With the demonstration-performance method of instruction, students participate actively. With the case study and guided discussion methods, students participate verbally. The teaching interview relies heavily on the knowledge of an expert and provides for student involvement through a question-and-answer period. But, with lecture, a greater burden for the total lesson rests on the instructor.
- Finally, many instructors find it difficult to hold the attention of their students when they lecture for an entire class period. To use the lecture method effectively, we obviously need considerable skill in speaking.
- The first two disadvantages of the lecture, difficulty in achieving certain types of learning and ineffectiveness of assessing student learning are inherent to the method. The third, student passivity, while characteristic of the method can be alleviated with an effective informal lecture. The final two disadvantages, time of preparation and speech skills necessary for an effective lecture, provide the focus for this course.

Extracted from *The Air Force Instructor's Guidebook*