

Ruth Fairclough, University of Wolverhampton

Traditional lectures with 21st century students

Day 1 – Parallel III (16.30-17.00)

The phrase 'traditional lecture' stirs memories of chalk dust and an aching hand. Typically, an academic talked into the board with their back to the class, scribbling mathematics and occasionally referring to some yellowed old notes. It was a feat for students to write everything down before the dreaded board rubber materialised to wipe away what they were so desperately trying to copy down. At the end of term there was a long queue of students waiting for the library photocopier, armed with the notes the most diligent had taken, discussing what might be in the next set of examinations.

A traditional lecture now involves the whirr of electronic equipment, the academic stands at the front facing the class, with a slide presentation going on behind them. The students do not seem to expect to write very much down and ask where the hand-outs are. The use of VLEs has eliminated the queue to the photocopier at the end of term, and increased the number of questions received about the dazzling variety of assessments we set.

What is worth saving from these modus operandi? Old School chalk and talk certainly did make the students take notes, and they were quick and easy for the academics to deliver. Students knew what to expect with assessments as they were nearly all examinations. However it is questionable about how this prepared students to the world of work after graduation, and were at a time when there was less emphasis on 'good honours' outcomes for students.

The Maths staff at the University of Wolverhampton use tablet PCs to assist the delivery of their lectures. A pilot was run many years ago with one member of staff, and using tablet PCs was deemed so successful this has been adopted as the main piece of equipment used for teaching by the team. The presentation will discuss what has been learned by the team to use this equipment effectively. A demonstration of a variety of different ways of using a tablet pc to facilitate the delivery of lectures and supporting student learning outside the class will also be conducted.

This presentation will assess how 'chalk and talk' can be brought into the 21st century with the use of tablet PCs, so the traditional lecture can be evolved for the 21st century student rather than wither and die.