

Lecture recordings

114 & 379

Two Environmental Sciences courses (LEC114 & LEC379) who had lecture-capture software recorded lectures from these courses. Students could access these recordings online and view at their convenience. We wanted to know how useful this study aid is and how people used it. To this end, a questionnaire was constructed to address these questions. 14 people on the LEC114 class and 7 people on the LEC379 class took this questionnaire.

Students answered questions on a scale of 1-5 assessing how useful the lecture recordings were. All students from LEC114 & LEC379 rated the lecture capture software as highly useful in terms of Quality (Fidelity of the recordings), user friendly and general usefulness. Students also rated lecture recordings as somewhat more useful than their own lecture notes.

We then asked students how they used lecture recordings while studying. For unit LEC114, 79% students used the recordings to study for test/exams and rated them very helpful. 71% LEC114 students used them to help them write essays and was rated them very useful. For LEC379 86% students used lecture recordings to revise for test/exams but only 14% used them to write essays (possibly due to structure of the course). Nobody from LEC114 and LEC379 did not engage with the lecture recordings indicating to potential popularity of lecture recording. Most students used the lecture recording when studying by themselves and rated them highly useful.

Contrary to common concerns all/most people stated that having access to lecture recordings did not make them less likely to attend lectures, in fact they actually reported that lectures were more enjoyable.

In summary, student's rated their lecture notes as of a high quality, easy to use, useful and in fact more useful than their own lecture notes. Lecture recording tended not to be used for writing essay but are widely used for exam preparation and in these instances are found to be very helpful. Fears that introducing lecture recordings would result students not attending lectures. Our findings suggest this is not the case and knowing that lectures are being recorded results in a more enjoyable lecture experience.

	114 Mean Scores	379 Mean Scores
Were the lecture recordings of a high enough quality to be useful?	4.29	4.43
Were the lecture recordings more useful than your own notes?	4.00	3.43
How useful was the software used to watch the recoded lectures?	4.86	4.29
How useful were the lecture recordings?	4.71	4.86
Students answered on a scale of 1-5		

What have you used the lecture recordings for?		
	114	379
To retain information from the lecture.	52.94 %	42.86 %
To revise for a test/exam.	64.71 %	85.71 %
To write an essay.	58.82 %	14.29 %
To compare with your own notes.	58.82 %	85.71 %
I intend to use them at a later date.	17.65 %	00.00 %
I did not use the lecture recordings and do not intend to.	00.00 %	00.00 %
How did you use the lecture recordings provided to you?		
	114	379
In study groups.	05.88 %	00.00 %
While doing the recommended reading.	11.76 %	00.00 %
While re-read the lecture slides.	47.06 %	85.71 %
Studying by myself.	70.59 %	85.71 %

	114 Mean Scores	379 Mean Scores
How useful were the lecture recordings when writing an essay?	3.90	NA
How useful were the lecture recordings when studying for exams?	4.45	4.17
Students answered on a scale of 1-5		

	114 Mean Scores	379 Means Scores
How helpful when studying by yourself?	4.58	4.83
How helpful when studying in a group?	4.00	0.00
How helpful when doing the recommended reading?	3.00	0.00
How helpful when re-reading the lecture slides?	4.75	3.86
Did it make lectures more enjoyable?	3.29	3.29
Did it make you less likely to attend lectures?	1.50	1.43
Did it have a positive effect on your lecture experience?	3.64	4.14
Students answered on a scale of 1-5		

Lecture Note Sharing

218 Summary

Environment Science unit LEC218 was provided with a note taker for the last five weeks of the course. These notes summarised the lessons and were intended to be used for revision purposes. This was done in order to find out how helpful lecture notes provided to an entire class were and what positive effect they could have. Students were then invited to give feedback via an online survey asking how helpful these were as well as how these were used.

Participation in this survey was low with only four people participating. Students on average found the notes only slightly helpful rating it 2.25 out of a possible 5, However, this may be due to the quality of the lecture notes. While students thought the notes corresponded well with what was taught in the lecture and found them somewhat clear. The notes were also rated of moderately detailed (mean =2.5) but not as good as their own notes.

Out of the four respondents two used the lecture notes to compare with their own notes while two used them to revise for test/exams. We asked people to rate the usefulness in both these cases but a sample size of 2 is likely too small to be useful.

Most people stated that having lecture notes provided did not result in students being less likely to attend lecture. Meaning fears that providing these lecture notes would result in a drop in attendance is unfounded.

It is difficult to draw any far reaching conclusions for this data set due to the lack of students. The lecture notes provided to students may have some positive benefit but this study is incapable of discerning this. Lessons could be learnt for further research in this area namely the importance of having detailed lecture notes relevant to the subject area. Students thought the notes lacked detail and thought their own notes were of a better quality. This could be due to the fact that the person taking the lecture notes was not familiar with the subject of Environmental Science. Within any academic discipline there are a number of terminology's and theories that may which may appear alien to people from outside that discipline. Since people on the course would be more familiar with the discipline they might know better were to direct their attention when making their own notes and therefore would consider the quality of their own notes superior to the ones provided. Therefore, if this study was to be repeated the person who is taking the note for the class should be well versed in the subject.

	Mean Average
How clear were the notes?	3.25
Do the notes correspond to what was taught in class?	4.00
How detailed were the notes?	2.50
Were the notes provided better than your own notes	2.00
How well are the notes laid out?	2.75
How useful were the notes?	2.25
Did it make lectures more enjoyable?	2.25
Did it make you less likely to attend lectures?	1.75
Did it have a positive effect on your lecture experience?	2.25
Students answered on a scale of 1-5	

What have you used the lecture notes for?	Total
To retain information from the lecture.	50.00 %
To revise for a test/exam.	50.00 %
To write an essay.	00.00 %
To compare with your own notes.	50.00 %
I intend to use them at a later date.	00.00 %
I did not use the lecture notes and do not intend to.	00.00 %

Mind Maps

Lancaster University provides mind mapping software to all students via the software jukebox. We want to see how useful this software is to students. To investigate this, we took a unit from the environmental sciences and integrated mind map software into a class. Students attended a class taught by Heath Boffey and were given training as to how to use mind mapping software to create a mind maps to aid them in studying from exams. Heath Boffey volunteered his time freely to teach this class and we would like to thank him for time and effort he invested in this study.

After the class a survey was administered to the students in the class find out the usefulness of this software. On average students rated the usefulness of the class as 4 (out of a possible 5). Students also felt they were skilled enough after the class to use the software by themselves and also said they would benefit from more class with this software. Students were asked would they use spider diagram software in other areas of study. Students were less likely to use spider diagram software for planning essays or general organisation. Students did rate mind maps useful when studying for test/exam. Together these findings indicate that the mind mapping software while not useful across all academic areas it is very useful when studying for exams. Also training in the use of mind mapping software is considered very good and has a positive impact on students' ability to study.

Students were also surveyed as to how much students knew about the mind mapping software available. Out of the five people who took part in the survey only two people knew that the software was available from Lancaster University Library. Nobody knew that the university provides training in the use of this software and 3 out of 5 would have attended a training session if they knew it was available. Finally, 4 out of 5 students would have recommended using this software to a friend.

To summarise students did not rate mind maps useful for writing essays but this might be the result of a structure of the course i.e. little coursework present on that unit. This pattern of effects may not be present in other academic disciplines which is something that other research could focus on. It would appear that students find both mind mapping software and training in using said software very useful. However, nobody knew that this training was available and few are aware that this software is available to use on their own computers. Students would benefit from being made aware of this software availability as well as the training available to get the most use of this software..

	Mean Average
How useful did you find the class?	4
Did the class provide any useful skills you could use in the future?	3.6
If you had to do an electronic mind map/spider diagram again, do you feel skilful enough do this?	4.2
Do you think you would benefit from other classes using this software?	4.2
How likely are you to use mind maps/spider diagrams when studying for a test/exam?	4.4
How likely are you to use mind maps/spider diagrams when planning or writing a essay?	2.6
How likely are you to use mind maps/spider diagrams when for general organisation and planning?	2.6
How helpful would it be to have this training in mind maps/spider diagram in the first year of university	4.2

	Yes	No
Were you aware that the mind maps/spider diagrams software was available via the Lancaster University Library?	2	3
Were you aware that the university provides training in the software?	0	5
If you knew about this training would you have attended?	3	2
Would you recommend using mind maps/spider diagrams software to a friend?	4	1