

A COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC LECTURES WITH LOW AND HIGH STUDENT INTEREST

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The paper reports findings from a study which analyses lectures offered by different lecturers in a postgraduate language teacher education programme. Students attending those lecture classes were invited to record their level of interest at regular intervals (approximately every 30 minutes). The lectures with highest interest scores were compared with those with the lowest interest scores in terms of four situational factors: 1. lecture content, 2. lecturing style and structure, 3. activities and tasks used, and 4. the personal behaviour of the lecturer. It is discovered that lectures with highest interest scores demonstrate several features:

- the contextualisation, concretisation, personalisation of the topic
- the participatory style of the lecture where students are involved in the conceptualisation of the topic and encouraged to do the kind of thinking that characterises the discipline or the particular discourse community
- the use of open, but goal-directed tasks
- the lecturer's demonstration of enthusiasm and positive stance towards the lecture content.

With increasing emphasis on 'life-long learning' and 'active learning' in higher education, the challenge is for lecturers to find ways of triggering and increasing student interest in the subject they are studying. It is hoped that the findings of the study will make a difference in our understanding of academic lectures and effective learning and teaching in higher education.

Type of presentation: Paper (refereed stream)

Sub-strands: Teaching the teachers, Teaching styles and strategies

Note: *If the paper is accepted, we would be grateful if we could present it on 28th or 29th June.*

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Biodata

Tan Bee Tin has taught various English language courses and language teacher education courses. She currently lectures on language teacher education programmes at the University of Auckland. Her research interests are materials development, studies of academic discourse, and the role of affective factors in learning. She has published in these areas.

Seunghee Pak is currently a Masters student at the University of Auckland in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics. Her thesis research looks at the changing motivation of South Korean EFL students in Auckland and the effects this has on their language learning. She also completed Masters of Professional Studies in language teaching and learning at University of Auckland.

Bethany Lanier is a current Masters student at the University of Auckland in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics. She is in the process of completing her Masters of Professional Studies in Language Teaching and Learning. She has an interest in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and plans to pursue this avenue in the future.