

Lecture recording: Help or hinder in developing a stimulating learning environment?



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Owing to an increase in demand for undergraduate video lecture recording across the University the University Centre for Teaching and Learning were asked to outline possible alternative practices for the recording and distribution of lectures to students. Discussion with academic and other colleagues on the subject of recorded lectures identified two seemingly conflicting viewpoints; whether the adoption of a recorded lecture system would be beneficial to student learning by way of increased flexible learning provision, or whether effort and money should be better spent on developing staff approaches to active learning, so changing the nature of delivery for many courses from a passive lecture transmission to more engaging and collaborative forms of learning. This poster charts the development of this investigation, detailing the approaches and outcomes to date with particular emphasis on the institutional perspective.

Typically 32 hours of lectures are video recorded each week; this represents approximately 1.7% of the total weekly undergraduate lecture provision. Links to the media files created from these recordings are placed within the corresponding Blackboard courses for student access. Provisional analysis of data on the video streaming server indicates that, of the files available, the majority (approximately 70%) have had 30% or less of their content viewed. This analysis raises questions about how and why students are accessing the video resources provided and which parts of the video materials they are viewing. Consequently further work into the provision of any system for lecture recording will need to consider student use of these materials and the nature of the learning experience arising.

Interviews with a number of academic colleagues whose lectures are video recorded under the current system highlighted a number of reservations over the quality of the materials available and their educational value. Despite these and other concerns, academic colleagues perceived lecture recordings as a means of flexible learning provision. Suggestions arising as alternatives to the video recorded lectures and the dominance of the 'talking head' image included voice annotated slide presentations and high-quality, downloadable audio recordings. Studies of other lecture recording systems outside of New Zealand has highlighted research findings, operational practices, and institutional policies, all of which need to be brought together within the wider institutional development plan, for any recorded lecture system to be of value and to meet the needs of the University's students and staff.

As a result of our investigation to date the two viewpoints initially expressed may not be as contrasting as expected. Students searching, reviewing, discussing, analysing and reflecting on lecture recorded materials for concepts review or revision suggest a means of engagement with learning materials which also lie within the goals of active learning approaches. Providing students with access to recorded lecture materials may also be a stimulus for academic colleagues to reflect over the best use of their contact time with their students, the kind of tasks they set students away from the lecture room, the learning outcomes they wish their students to achieve.

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