

# Peer review: A Science of Literature lecture

**Collection:** Large group teaching

**Resource:** Peer reviewing lectures

## Approximate duration

One hour

## Learning outcomes

This peer review exercise is designed to prompt individuals or groups to begin thinking critically about what makes a good lecture/lecturer and what tools and tasks can help make a particular lecture more or less successful. This is also a reflective exercise which will develop:

1. an enhanced level of critical self-awareness as a teacher;
2. an ability to deploy one's own subject skills (close reading; linguistic awareness; metaphorical play) on pedagogic subject matter [e.g. ability to 'read' a lecture];
3. one's repertoire of tools and media for engaging students as a result of observing other lecturers at work.

## Introduction

Over the course of your career you can expect to be peer-reviewed for your lecturing and be called upon to peer review others, so we have designed this task along those lines: we'd like you to review a selection of lectures and lecturers (thus this information and the questions we ask will necessarily repeat in the related activities). We realise it is unusual to evaluate just an excerpt of a lecture, but we've done our best to choose a dense example. Of course there will be a spectrum of opinion surrounding the ideas of 'good' lecturers and 'successful' lectures so we have designed our questions to enable



**1 |** This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.

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you focus upon specific aspects of the lecture as well as the holistic event. You also have the option of watching the lectures in full if you would like to.

In the following clip Professor Bob Eaglestone of Royal Holloway, University of London, is delivering the second lecture in the core and compulsory 2<sup>nd</sup> year Theory course. The course is made up of single and joint honours English students and the English/Drama degree cohort. The topic of the lecture is Introduction to Structuralism. Afternoon seminars followed this morning lecture and provided a space where some of the issues introduced in the lecture could be addressed in more depth. Similarly, the next lecture would return to issues such as narratology and semiotics in more detail.

## The activity

Watch the clip of Professor Bob Eaglestone and then answer the questions below. Don't try to take too many notes as you are watching. You might find it useful to represent to yourself in diagram form the orientations of the lecture towards a) the subject matter and b) the audience.

We are very grateful to our colleagues for allowing us into their classrooms and lecture halls to observe their teaching. As you work with this example of teaching please keep your commentary focused on pedagogy and refrain from criticism that would be unhelpful or unkind in a face-to-face peer review or similar situation.



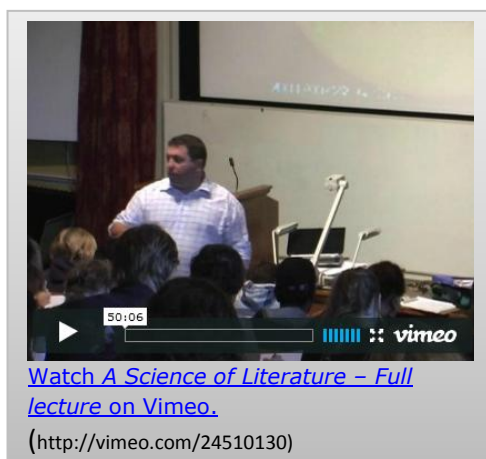
1. Was there anything that particularly struck you or surprised you about Eaglestone's approach to the lecture? Would you have done it the same way? What would you do differently?



2. How did Eaglestone manage the balance between content and discourse? How much attention was given to signposting, the meta-level of guiding the audience through the lecture itself? (Or looking back and forward?)
3. How did Eaglestone involve the audience? For example, were students asked to carry out activities, form buzz groups, carry out a short task, etc. during the lecture?
4. What was your sense of audience rapport? Did students seem engaged with the lecture? How frantic did note-taking seem?
5. When Eaglestone used technological aids (Powerpoint, videos, etc.) how well were these integrated into the substance of the lecture?
6. How did Eaglestone cope with things that went wrong? (late arrivals, interruptions, technological mishaps, etc.)
7. Imagine a spectrum between a lecturer with their head in their own notes, and one who is perpetually looking around and making eye contact with the audience, or even moving around. Where did Eaglestone fit on this spectrum?

## Links & References

- Watch Bob Eaglestone's entire lecture



## Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Large group teaching* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

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## Resources in the *Large group teaching* collection

- Large group teaching: introduction to the collection
- Peer reviewing lectures: resource overview
  - **Peer review: A Science of Literature lecture (\*you are here)**
  - Peer review: Shakespeare's London lecture
  - Peer review: The Odour of Chrysanthemums lecture
- Identifying good and bad practice: resource overview
  - How to give a bad lecture: individual activity
  - How to give a bad lecture: group activity
  - The written and the improvised
- Planning and evaluating your lecture: resource overview
  - The genre of the lecture: individual activity
  - Peer review: group activity

