Reference and suggested reading


References and suggested reading


Create benefits for students that attend regularly

- Increase class size: Not only get students to class but also can get them there on time if planned strategically.

- Class atmosphere: Classroom atmosphere has an impact upon attendance.
  - Studies show that classroom atmosphere has a definite impact on attendance and academic progress (Erickson and Strommer, 2009; Sleigh, Ritzer and Casey, 2002). Be available to students before, after or outside of class. Show interest in students and learn their names. Share personal insights and experiences with the class. Smile, maintain good eye contact and speak enthusiastically.

- Personalisation: Personalise subject matter by using examples relevant to students.

- Reinforcement schedule: Reinforcement schedule in the form of unannounced quizzes or assignments is another tactic used to increase attendance. Pete Reddy, Aston University, for instance, explains the benefits of rewarding attendance like taking a draw.

- Creating a positive classroom atmosphere:
  - Maintain a sense of humour in class.
  - Share personal experiences with the class.
  - Maintain good eye contact and speak enthusiastically.

Establish policies and practices regarding attendance

- Establish policies and practices regarding attendance
  - Provide additional information in lectures that is not available in the textbook.
  - Do not provide detailed notes in advance. Outlines are fine, but details should be relayed in class.

- Establish positives for students that attend regularly
  - Explain the benefits of regular attendance.
  - Be cautious of requiring attendance and attaching it to grades.
  - Consider awarding credit for in-class activities.
  - Take attendance even in large classes.
  - Consider creative methods of rewarding attendance like taking a draw.

- Establishing a positive classroom atmosphere
  - Maintain a sense of humour in class.
  - Share personal experiences with the class.
  - Maintain good eye contact and speak enthusiastically.

- When students know lecturers are recording their attendance, they are more likely to turn up. Shiner and Catana (2001), for example, found that students were more likely to turn up when professors were likely to be recording attendance.

- When students know that someone is there for them. The anonymity of the university experience can be very demoralising for some students. The presence of an instructor can make the difference.

- External justification: For students that attend regularly.
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Classroom atmosphere has an impact on attendance

Create benefits for students that attend regularly

Establish policies and practices regarding attendance

Quick ideas to increase attendance

Create benefits for students that attend regularly

Establish positive classroom atmosphere

When students know lecturers are recording their attendance they are more likely to turn up

Model appropriate behaviour

Establish positive classroom atmosphere

Create benefits for students that attend regularly

Should classroom climate have an impact on students' academic progress (Erickson and Strommer, 2001; Sleigh, Ritzer and Casey, 2002)?
establishing fairly easy paths to attendance or leaching them to do this on time if it is planned strategically.

More and more lecturers provide innovative teaching methods before or after lectures, in order to make the lecture more individualised but apply to almost any amount of teaching. This variety of material in the way it helps to make it more meaningful for students and can enhance learning as well as interest in attending lectures. Doug Bernheim, University of Southernport noted that one class is known to be interesting and students wanted to attend. He personally uses attendance to set examples as he is a teacher. If attendance is relatively poor, he is likely to find out why and try to help.

Mester and Tauber (2000) suggest utilising the entertainment factor to capture students’ attention, create interest in the subject matter and bring them to lectures. Andy Fields, University of Sussex, is known for applying this concept to the teaching of statistics. In a workshop entitled ‘Exploring the statistics of soccer’ in a workshop outside of class. The course, an exercise that involves statistical procedures in football, shows students how much their own personal goals and needs for learning. The activity is aimed at students that want to gain a deeper understanding of the game.

By providing examples of how to create interest, Gary Simons, King’s College, routinely draws students into class. Some staff who use post-casting often encourage attendance by

Establish policies and practices regarding attendance

Whether or not universities require attendance, it is important for lecturers to set their own expectations for attendance. Sandra Goss Lucas, co-author of Teaching psychology: a step by step guide (2005), notes that students often do not understand the value of attending lectures regularly. This is especially true of first-year students. She advocates explaining the value of attending regularly. Additionally, she suggests that professors should be clear about the expectations set for students who are likely to cease attendance. If students are likely to cease attendance, those policies are in place. Paul Sanders, University of Wisconsin, and Cathy Cardwell, in Teaching Psychology, notes that he has his introduction to Psychology module by describing addressing a number of aspects of students in teaching this module. A similar practice might be made to encourage attendance.

Some staff who use post-casting encourage attendance by

Quick ideas to increase attendance

Create benefits for students that attend regularly

Do not provide additional information in lectures that is not available in the textbook.

Employees perform skills to capture attention and create interest.

Be cautious of requiring attendance and attaching it to grading.

Consider awarding credit for in-class activities.

Take attendance even in large classes.

Create the creative methods of rewarding attendance like making a draw.

Establish a positive classroom atmosphere

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Share personal experiences and the likes.

Smile, maintain good eye contact and speak enthusiastically.

When students know lecturers are recording their attendance, they are more likely to turn up.

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Encouraging Student Attendance

Many of the tenets expressed above are based on sound psychological theory. However, this is not a prescriptive document. Examples are provided to inspire the development of ideas in the context of your own teaching.

References and suggested reading


Buskist and Saville (2001) help to define a ‘positive atmosphere’ with their discussion of rapport. Rapport in a teaching context includes concepts such as liking, trust, understanding, agreement, confidence, empathy and understanding that students sometimes have problems in the classroom.

Another contributor to classroom atmosphere relates to the concept of immediacy. Immediate feedback has been shown to be an important determinant of student satisfaction. Encouraging students to participate in class discussions can help to create a positive class atmosphere. Immediate feedback has been shown to be an important determinant of student satisfaction. Encouraging students to participate in class discussions can help to create a positive class atmosphere.

By Caprice Lantz. With thanks for contributions from Douglas Bernatian, University of Southern California, Glendale; Brewer, University of Central Lancaster; Gan, Q.-Y.; Keenan, Kilmore College; Jan May, University of Sheffield; Keith Parrott, Open University; Pete Relft, Aston University; Paul Senior, Sheffield University; Nick Smiley, York University; Ian Wills, University of Sheffield.

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A positive atmosphere is an important factor in student attendance. Some lecturers believe that students are more motivated to attend when they feel that the lecturer is interested in them, and this interest is reciprocated. Researchers have found that students who attend lectures and tutorials regularly perform better than those who attend less frequently. This is because attending classes helps students to stay engaged and build their understanding of the course material. In contrast, students who do not attend class may fall behind and miss important information.

According to social psychologists, individuals pay more attention to their behaviors when they perceive them as worthwhile. For example, when a student sees their lecturer as interested in them, they may become more engaged in class and actively participate in discussions. This, in turn, can lead to improved learning outcomes.

Many of the tenets expressed above are based on sound psychological theory. For example, the concept of immediacy, which includes eye contact, smiling, expressive speaking, establishing physical proximity, and using appropriate movements and gestures, is known to have a positive impact on students. Anderson (1999) suggests that immediacy can be especially effective in the context of student-teacher interactions. By being relaxed, friendly, and engaging, lecturers can improve student engagement and attendance.

References and suggested reading


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