



University of Colorado **Denver**

Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Unsure of how to break up your lecture into more manageable 10-20 minute segments? Consider using these activities to segment your lecture.

Activity	Description	Time
Pair and compare	Students pair off with their neighbor and compare lecture notes, filling in what they may have missed. This activity makes students review and mentally process your mini-lecture content.	2-3 minutes
Ask, pair, share	Same as pair and compare but with the addition that students first individually jot down questions on your mini-lecture content. Students then in pairs answer one another's questions; you field the remaining unanswered ones.	3-5 minutes
Active listening check	Students put away notes and write down the most important 1-3 points of your mini-lecture. Then display your 1-3 most important points and students can compare. Doing this activity will make students review and mentally process your mini-lecture content. Students could also work in pairs for this activity.	2-3 minutes
Reflection/reaction paragraph	Students individually write out their affective reaction to the mini-lecture content (or video). Ask a few volunteers to share.	3-5 minutes
Multiple-choice question	Give students a multiple-choice question, preferably a conceptual or applied one, related to your mini-lecture. Survey student responses. You can also ask students to rate their confidence level in their answers. Then give them a minute to convince their neighbor of their answer and resurvey the responses of the class. This activity makes students apply and discuss your mini-lecture content while it's fresh in their mind, and it immediately informs you how well they have understood the material. You can then clarify misconceptions before proceeding to new material.	3-5 minutes
Correct the error	Using immediate mini-lecture content, students correct an error in a statement, equation, or visual that you have intentionally made. The error may be an illogical or inaccurate statement, premise, inference, prediction, or implication.	2-3 minutes, plus 2-3 minutes to survey responses from the class

Pair and discuss	Students pair off to discuss an open-ended question that asks them to apply, analyze, or evaluate your mini-lecture content or to synthesize it with other course material. This question should have multiple possible correct answers. Have students outline their answers in writing. This activity makes students examine and extend, as well as process, your mini-lecture content and serves as an effective prelude to a general class discussion.	3-10 minutes depending on the question's complexity
Pair/group graphic	Students develop a concept map, mind map, thinking map, graphic organizer, picture, diagram, flowchart, or matrix of your mini-lecture content in pairs or small groups. What they are actually doing is integrating and reassembling their understanding of the concept into a big picture graphic. It is one of the purest constructivist activities you can have them do, and it yields powerful learning benefits. Because these graphics provide you with deep insight into your students' interpretation of the material, you may want to collect and peruse them. You may also want to return them with some feedback-at the very least, pointing out any misconceptions and oversimplifications they reveal.	3-10 minutes
Complete a sentence starter	Students accurately complete a sentence stem related to your mini-lecture content. The completed statement may be a definition, a category, a cause-and-effect relationship, an implication, a rationale, or a controversy. Present students with a sentence starter that requires reflection and higher order thinking, not just rote knowledge, to complete.	1-2 minutes
Support a statement	Students garner support for a statement-a conclusion, inference, theory, opinion, or description- you present. Sources of support may be your mini-lecture, the readings, or evidence they generate on their own. You can also have students do this in pairs.	3-5 minutes
Put it in your own words	Students put an idea-a definition, theory, statement, procedure, or description-into their own words. This paraphrasing task can be just a check on their comprehension or a little more when you add the twist of targeting the paraphrase to a specific audience. For example, you could ask the students to write a tweet with limited characters or to direct their answer towards non-experts in the field.	2-3 minutes plus 2-3 minutes to survey responses from the class
Seventh-inning stretch	For a few minutes, play some popular music and have students get out of their seats and stretch. Afterward, students often seem more alert. To build community, ask students for playlist recommendations.	2-3 minutes