Feedback from PHYS1121-1131. Week 4, S1 2005. Lecturer Joe Wolfe

The instructions were: Please take one minute to write down feedback about my lectures in this course: what is working, what is not working. In particular, I should like feedback about the one minute discussions. If you write "Do more [something]", please add also "Do less [something else]"  (240 responses handed in.)

1-min discussions
One minute discussions are not working  (17 responses)
Typical comments: "useless to students without physics background" "Don't know my neighbour and am reluctant to talk to someone I don't know" "feel inferior because I don't have anything to say" "sit next to quiet person" "One minute discussions only work if I understand" "better if everyone discussed topic" "30 s not long enough" "keep to 30 s" "may be a bit long"

One minute discussions help/ good etc  (59 responses)
Typical comments: "give you a chance to get your head around an idea with help of your neighbours" "make us think for ourselves" "think for ourselves before you tell us" "it's a good break from following the lecture" "good to know I'm not the only one who doesn't know the answer" "wake me up when I'm tired" 

(Joe comments in italics)  It looks as though about two 30 s sessions per lecture would be useful

Do more of....
More explaining  (40)
Typical comments: "more time explaining concepts, more depth" "more time explaining the algebra" "more explaining how equations relate to diagrams" "more words, less maths" "explain the problem more before starting to solve it" "do examples starting from scratch" "hard to follow notes and listen at same time" "more explanation of notation" You assume wrongly that everyone did well at HSC" "don't omit steps"
More examples  (27)
Typical comments: "more questions we do together" "more harder examples" "more of the practical examples" "more examples that would be in exams" "more with numerical values"
More theory  (16)
Demonstrations/experiments  (10)
More mathematics/ explain formulae and how used  (9)
More geometric representation/diagrams  (4)
More revision  (4)
More jokes (4) More discussion of implications (1) More lollies (1) More relevant facts (1) More class participation (1) More definitions (1) More falling over in class (1) More looking silly (1)

Do less of....
Fewer examples  (10)
Typical comment: "fewer, but explain them more" "we have the notes, can do them in own time" "fewer examples but explain theory more" "working through problems is for tutors"
Less 30s discussion  (9) Typical comment: "waste of time"
Fewer demonstrations  (9) "more theory, fewer demonstrations"
Less theory  (6) "we can download it from the web site"
Less practical, problem based stuff  (3)
Less maths (2) "it is in reality a maths lecture. (do more) logic/physics" Less administrative stuff (1) less irrelevant jokes (1) less caffeine (1) fewer stories (1) Less complication (1).

The trouble is putting in all these 'more of' with so few 'less of'. Then see the comments below about rushing. I suggest that you signal when you need more explanation.

What is not working (and other negatives):
Lectures seem rushed  (22)
Typical comment: "speak too fast" "Decrease rate of teaching" "too much assumed knowledge" "give us time to learn new formulae" "slow down on symbols, it's confusing" "explain more slowly" "you jump from one step to the next, but sometimes it's not clear" "was hard to get used to but once in a rhythm they are perfect" "when we can't catch up with you, the textbooks are no better"
One student put it nicely: \( \text{knowledge} = \text{explanation.dt} \)

**Maths**
- is too difficult/too fast (9)
- "too brief for those without maths background" "don't jump steps" "explain more how to set up equations"

**What is working (and other positives):**

**Lectures good/ fine as they are etc.** (62)
- "Enthusiasm is good" (8) "Everything is good! I love physics!!" "having lots of fun and learning heaps" "you present topics in a fun, interesting way" "excellent" "nothing to say: keep up good work" "friendly learning environment" "Lectures are quite interesting and I don't get sleepy as I do in other lectures"

**Demonstrations and experiments are good** (44)

**Humour**
- humour is good (8) "keeps us attentive" "Stupid jokes are good to wake me" *Gee thanks...*

**Examples/relevance**
- Practical, relevant examples are good (10)
- "I like the way you relate physics to interesting things..." "practical examples are really good"

**Downloadable notes from web**
- good etc (4)
- Diverse other positive and negative comments. Complete list: "I wish notes is a fully filled version so I don't need to print every single page" "Gaps in notes to be filled in class" "number pages of notes and refer to them" "Although we have the lecture notes, we should do more than just look at them in lectures" "notes seem not so organised" "don't move back and forward in notes" "not same order as lectures" (2) "are in random order" "provide formula list" "let us know when it's not in the notes" "links between example and what we have learnt would make it clearer" "useful but brief" "add page numbers to text"

**Tutorials**
- "not all problems are related to work in lectures" "do problems in lecture similar to tut problems" "tutorials way too big" "please provide detailed answers to tutorial questions on net" (2) "lectures fun, tuts boring" "tutorials difficult by web solutions help"

(four comments about tutors omitted. This feedback was asked about lectures and lecturer)

**Misc comments**
- Too many people, not enough space (2)
  - "slides hard to read from the back" (2) "can't hear at the back" "too much noise" "use a microphone" "throw people out for talking, mobiles" **Move to front if you have hearing/vision problems**
  - "Hard for ESL people" "Extra (optional homework) problems good" "(homework problems) keep our minds ticking" "boring when solving question" "Hard to understand when swapping back and forth from examples explaining different things" "More handwritten calculations would be good" "explain what variables stand for" "start later: it's a long way from Matthews theatre" "syllabus not clear" "little structure in classwork" "additional info and history of physics are great" "make the figures more human: no missing arms or legs" "less subscripts and stuff" "more video and powerpoint" "you get monotonous at times which makes it difficult to follow" "have a summary slide" "subject is difficult"

**Personal**
- Several irrelevant personal comments were made and questions asked. *The answers are "Yes." "No." "It depends." "Me too." and "Gowings."*