

Lecture Capture at AUC: Enhanced Active Learning

Dr Pandeli Glavanis, Associate Director, CLT

Several previous CLT Newsletters and workshops have advocated active learning strategies in the classroom as a way of enhancing “student-centered learning” and thus transforming students from being passive listeners into active learners. Faculty response is invariably positive as most recognize the limitations of the traditional lecture format. Nevertheless, faculty have also expressed concerns over the “sanctity” of the syllabus and whether they will be able to cover what is required in the time available. Thus, although active learning in the classroom has been accepted in principle many colleagues are concerned to make the move and adopt such innovative teaching strategies for fear of not being able to cover the basic syllabus. Lecture capture which was recently introduced at AUC resolves this dilemma for faculty. Let me elaborate.

Lecture capture (or Panopto Focus as it is known at AUC) is an exciting new extremely user-friendly instructional technology that has drawn the attention of several faculty across the campus since it was first introduced during the imposed H1N1 closure of the university a few months ago. Faculty pre-record their lectures and then make them available to students over the internet from a secure server. Other faculty use lecture capture in order to provide additional material and some cases in order to demonstrate the correct solutions to particular problems. The overall effect, irrespective of how the software is used is that it has enabled such faculty to restructure how they make use of class time. It enables them to focus on active learning experiences during class without the fear of not covering essential course material. It is not surprising therefore that this new instructional technology has drawn the attention of faculty across campuses in many major universities such as Duke, Stanford, UC Berkeley and Wisconsin-Madison.

Survey results from universities that have made use of lecture capture are very encouraging. The popularity of lecture capture across USA campuses is confirmed by survey results that indicate that the majority of college students who have used it now prefer courses that offer recorded lectures over those that do not. Students cite convenience, flexibility and positive impact on learning as the main reasons to have recorded lectures. (Fernandez, Simo & Sallan, 2009) Similar encouraging responses were obtained from the 16 faculty at AUC who have participated in the first pilot. Faculty represented departments from all the Schools at AUC underscoring its flexibility irrespective of the discipline. Of the faculty that did use lecture capture 67% indicated that they were “very satisfied” and the remaining 33% indicated that they were “somewhat satisfied”. Of particular interest is also the variety of ways in which AUC faculty made use of lecture capture. These included:

Presenting new material for class discussion	20.0%
Recording lectures for students to review	46.7%
Solving exercises/problems for students to review	13.3%
Using in case I was absent from the university	33.3%
Providing additional material for course content	40.0%
Other (please specify)	13.3%

Source: CLT survey of AUC faculty piloting lecture capture, Spring 2010

Furthermore, when AUC faculty were asked how lecture capture contributed to learning they also responded with different answers:

Facilitating class discussion of theory	57.1%
Providing an opportunity to revise complex theoretical issues	50.0%
Generating points for students to discuss online as groups or as individuals	28.6%
Other (please specify)	21.4%

Source: CLT survey of AUC faculty piloting lecture capture, Spring 2010

The variety of ways in which lecture capture can be used is also reflected in the responses of students who noted the following forms of use:

Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Prepare for in-class discussion	4	20	3	1
Prepare for online discussion	2	12	5	0
Understand how problems/exercises are solved	9	15	6	0
Revise for the end of semester	15	13	3	0

Source: CLT survey of students using lecture capture, Spring 2010

Lecture capture is still a new instructional technology whose potential is yet to be fully realized. Nevertheless, there are two important points that need to be made even at this early phase. **First**, the software being used currently at AUC (Panopto) is extremely user-friendly, does not require any specialized hardware and can be installed on any computer or a lap top very quickly. Comments from AUC faculty who used it confirm this:

- *“Excellent capture! It is a real efficient software”* Dr Sanaa Makhlouf, Rhetoric & Composition
- *“This is fabulous!! Really, I can’t thank you enough. I am delighted with the recording”* Ms Sophie Farag, ELI
- *“This is great technology and it will allow me to keep one lecture in reserve, just in case we miss any more days”* Dr Stephen Everhart, Department of Management
- *“Amazing!”* Dr Brandon Canfield, Scientific Thinking Coordinator.

Second, preliminary surveys of students exposed to lecture capture are generally very positive. A couple of comments from these surveys confirm this:

“Students report gaining a better understanding of class material in courses that used the technology.”

“Undergraduate students have reported that podcasts helped them stay focused on the course, made learning more fun and informal, supported independent learning, and enabled deep engagement with course material.” (Zhu and Bergom, 2010; p 2)

N.B. For further information and the installation of the Panopto software on your computer/laptop for trial use, please contact Mr Ahmad Zorkani at CLT (zorex@aucegypt.edu).

Sources

Fernandez, V., Simo, P. & Sallan, J.M. (2009), *Podcasting: A new technology tool to facilitate good practice in higher education*, **Computers & Education**, 53, 385-392

Zhu, E & Bergom, I (2010), *Lecture Capture: A Guide for Effective Use*, CRLT Occasional Papers, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan, No: 27.