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Characteristics of the Modern Lecture

At SXSWedu, educators and edu-preneurs convened to discover and discuss edtech's most promising technology. During the two-day LAUNCHedu competition, early-stage startup founders took the stage to pitch their companies. Appropriately, presenters incorporated the latest learning technology to deliver engaging presentations. They used Prezi for memorable, fluid slide presentation, and audience members used [Top Hat](#) to submit feedback.

The room resembled a 21st century lecture hall. Modern educators leverage technology to create engaging and effective learning environments for their students. Below, we have created a list of 5 characteristics that shape the modern lecture.

1

Modern Lecture is Active



Top Hat was built on the knowledge that the most effective learning model is an active one. John Dewey, an educational philosopher, supported this vision long ago, saying “[Teachers] give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, or the intentional noting of connections; learning naturally results.”

As University of Maryland professor Jason Farman stated in his blog post [A Manifesto for Active Learning](#), lectures are not the enemy of active learning and should never be passive. Because “active learning” is one of the most effective ways to maintain student engagement, modern educators are turning to technology to ask create engaging, experiential lecture classes. In addition, educators are using student devices to administer frequent student assessments, which [has proven to boost performance](#) in large classes.

2

The Modern Lecture is BYOD

The ubiquity of mobile devices, coupled with the growing standardization of BYOD (“bring your own device”) policies on college campuses, makes active learning possible regardless of class size. [89% of universities](#) have implemented BYOD models, and [one survey](#) at Ball State University showed that 99.5% of students report owning a mobile phone.



The Top Hat platform allows educators to take attendance, ask questions, collect feedback, start discussions, launch quizzes, and more. Students are able to participate in Top Hat activities using any mobile device. BYOD is advantageous for a host of other reasons, displayed on this [Modern Lecture Infographic](#). Professor Farman points out that “Finding a way to incorporate this common technology can expand the possible ways students connect both in and out of the classroom.” He says that having found a way to leverage technology in his classroom has resulted in students far more engaged with course material than Facebook or Snapchat.

3

The Modern Lecture Has Feedback



Dr. Derek Bruff, a thought leader in classroom engagement and response, created [an awesome Prezi](#) that outlines the ways that technology supports student learning. He presented “More Than Just Shiny Objects” at Boise State’s Great Ideas for Teaching and Learning Symposium.

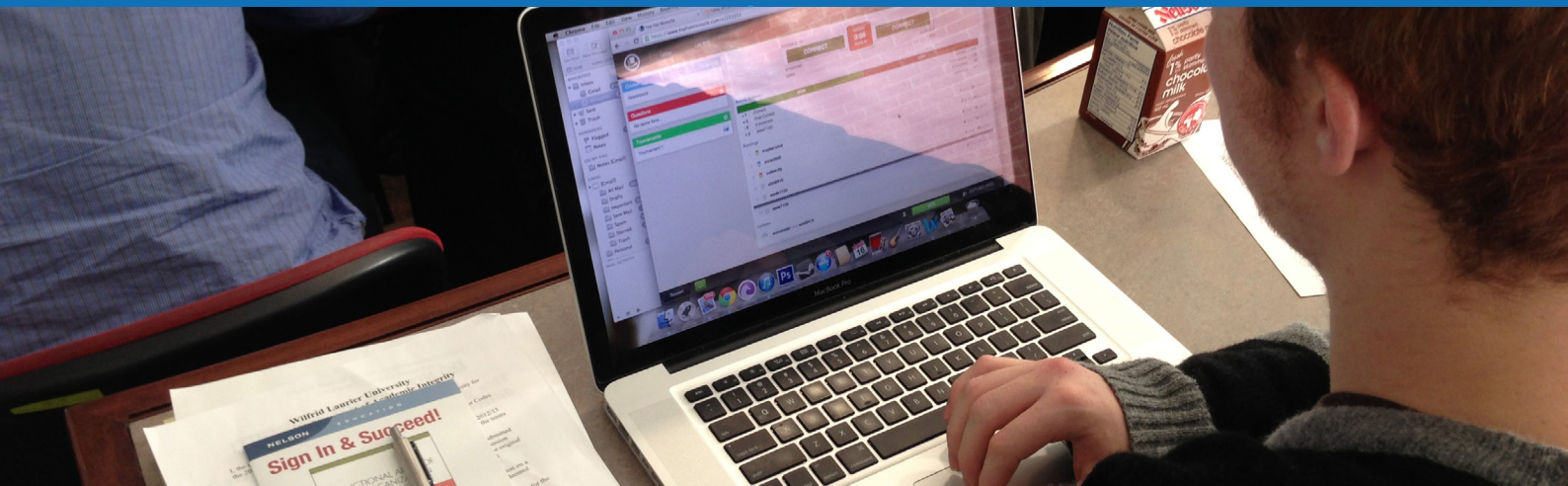
Much like the presenters at LaunchEDU, Dr. Bruff used audience response and Prezi to create an engaging experience for his audience. He brings this philosophy into his classrooms, explaining that technology creates an atmosphere for explanation and “telling” as well as practice with feedback. Students must be able to grapple with ideas and skills and they need to get feedback on their practice. The feedback element is important, he explains, so that students can refine their activities. [Watch the video](#) to hear examples of how technology enhances the feedback process. One of these is formative assessments, which makes student learning more visible for the educators.

Deborah Murray, a professor at Ohio University, uses Top Hat for what she calls “check your understanding” moments. Professor Murray asks application questions and uses Top Hat’s Reports function to follow her students’ logic. As a result, she can see how students are thinking, what they are retaining, and can amend or revise any issues along the way.



4

The Modern Lecture is Democratic



In today's entry-level courses, enrollment can be several hundred students. Educators will encounter a mixed bag of introverted and extroverted students. Technology gives every student a voice and allows introverts to participate through a channel in which they feel comfortable.



Celine Mondry, an educator at Wilfrid Laurier University, uses student mobile phones to create an equal playing field in her classroom. She uses Top Hat tournaments for a gamified way for students to demonstrate their understanding. Introverts were able to show their knowledge of course material without having to

raise their hands. Oftentimes, Ms. Mondry noticed that her introverted students had the highest marks on exams but would not earn the 10% participation mark. Now, she says, they are proud to see their names on the leaderboards!

5

The Modern Lecture is Inspiring



Lectures have evolved beyond the transfer of knowledge. The internet has transformed content delivery and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) threaten to replace the traditional lecture model. This is not to say that lectures will no longer exist, rather they will be one piece of an educator's focus on collaboration, conversation, and mentorship. [When some question](#) the value of a college education, in fact, it may be more valuable than ever before.

In a [WIRED article](#) on using technology to empower people, its author Margaret Stewart recalls a quote from "Godmother of Silicon Alley" and NYU's Telecommunications Program (ITP) founder Red Burns, "Software changes. Technology changes. You are here to learn how to learn."

It is up to educators to create engaging, valuable lectures that inspire students and instill a sense of curiosity, empowerment, and purpose among your students. From [Burns' opening remarks](#) to new ITP students:

Appolinaire said: – Come to the edge, -It's too high, – Come to the edge, – We might fall, – Come to the Edge, – And he pushed them and they flew.

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