ENHANCING TEACHING: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF EFFECTIVE PREPARATION AND DELIVERY OF LECTURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The article addresses the issue of identifying the most efficient methods for preparing and delivering university lectures. Despite being the oldest instructional approach, lectures remain widely employed in universities worldwide. However, recent pedagogical research by Ukrainian scholars has not fully explored this matter, hindering the development of practical guidelines for instructors aiming to organize and deliver effective lecture courses.

*The article **aims** to provide insights into best practices, methodologies, and strategies that contribute to the effectiveness of lectures, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in higher educational institutions.*

*The following research **methods** were used to solve the assigned tasks: theoretical – analysis of scientific sources, pedagogical and teaching-methodical materials, comparison; empirical – generalization of pedagogical experience.*

*The **results** are the following. In the article we underscore the significance of establishing learning objectives, precise timing and structuring, reducing content volume, outlining lecture notes, careful selection of examples, and the lecturer's adaptability. Additionally, the authors highlight the importance of understanding the main stages of delivering a lecture, recognizing the nuances of maintaining students' effective attention, and involving them in active learning practices.*

The article provides practical recommendations for lecturers based on the reviewed sources and the authors' experience, accompanied by precautionary remarks. These precautions include avoiding the simultaneous use of numerous types of illustrative material and an excess of visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations. Such practices can lead to cognitive overload, as different processing forms may interfere with one another.

***Conclusion.** The present study has explored the challenges and opportunities of effective lecturing in higher education, drawing on the insights from the British and American literature review and the empirical data collected from Ukrainian lecturers and students. Moreover, the article endeavors to conduct a more methodical analysis of efficacious techniques for preparing lectures, encompassing the critical stages of presentation. Furthermore, the present study seeks to delve into the nuances of captivating students' effective attention and involving them through practices associated with active learning.*

KEYWORDS: *Practical Recommendations, Effective Ways, Preparing and Delivering University Lectures, Goals, Timing and Structuring, Flexibility, Active Learning.*

INTRODUCTION

Effectively delivering lectures constitutes a perennial challenge within the contemporary global landscape characterized by the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies. The compilation of academic courses by educators frequently brings about the challenge of orchestrating a compelling lecture, notwithstanding the availability of alternative pedagogical methods. As stated, "The lecture is probably the oldest teaching method and still the method most widely used in universities throughout the world" (Hontarenko, 2021).

Notably, the methodologies and tools employed by our Foreign Language (FL) educators appear to lag behind those embraced by their international counterparts. The extant pedagogical research within native sources fails to comprehensively address this predicament, rendering it insufficient for serving as substantive guidelines for instructors aspiring to achieve efficacy in lecture organization and delivery. This

discrepancy has propelled our investigation into this matter within the realm of foreign pedagogy.

The principal objective of this article is to succinctly synthesize and accentuate pivotal considerations aimed at augmenting the quality of lectures, as scrutinized by researchers from Great Britain and the United States.

One crucial aspect pertaining to the effectiveness of a lecture lies in its meticulous preparation. The initial phase involves the establishment of learning objectives for the academic course as a whole and for each specific lecture. As articulated, "Once you and your students know where you're going, the trip is easier and more efficient" (Chekhratova et al., 2022).

Prior to or concurrently with articulating these objectives, it is imperative to consider contextual factors such as the students' background (including age, ethnicity, gender mix), their predispositions (including hopes, fears, and level of interest), as well as their prior knowledge or experience with the subject matter or the lecturer. Additionally, the environment in which students will engage with the course information holds significance, encompassing considerations such as the size of the lecture hall, lighting and sound conditions, and the time of day (Hrytsenko, 2013).

Scholars from Berkeley University, California, advocate a structured approach to establishing learning goals, proposing the following steps:

– Answer the question, "What do I want my students to know or be able to do after completing my course?" (e.g., critically analyze a text, understand the causes of World War I, and so on);
– Revise your syllabus to match these goals;
– Decide what evidence you will need to prove that students have met the goals (e.g., certain questions on an exam, a research paper or annotated bibliography that meets particular criteria, and so on); and
– Make sure that every goal has a clear assessment. Mind that outcomes should be measurable (Hrytsenko, 2013).

The article **aims** to provide insights into best practices, methodologies, and strategies that contribute to the effectiveness of lectures, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in higher learning institutions.

METHODOLOGY

It is necessary to explore and emphasize the significance of efficient preparation and delivery of lectures in the context of higher education. The focus is on how these aspects play a crucial role in enhancing the learning experience for students.

The following research methods were used to solve the assigned tasks: theoretical – analysis of scientific sources, pedagogical and teaching-methodical materials, comparison; empirical – generalization of pedagogical experience.

RESULTS

In higher education institutions, a lecture traditionally holds one of the most significant roles in the educational process. The term originates from the Latin *lectio*, meaning

reading, and its derivative *lector*, referring to a reader. This meaning is rooted in the historical practice by which, initially in Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and later in medieval European universities, the primary method of teaching involved annotated reading of texts.

In the modern era, a lecture serves both as an organizational form of education, a "specific way of interaction between the lecturer and students, within which diverse content and teaching methods are implemented," and as a teaching method, a monological presentation of educational material in a systematic and sequential form, primarily focused on fundamental scientific issues.

A lecture (Latin *lectio* – reading) is a concise, logically concluded, scientifically justified, sequential, and systematized presentation of a specific scientific problem. A lecture should organically complement other forms of educational activities, serving as a foundation for deepening and systematizing the knowledge acquired by students through both in-class and out-of-class learning activities.
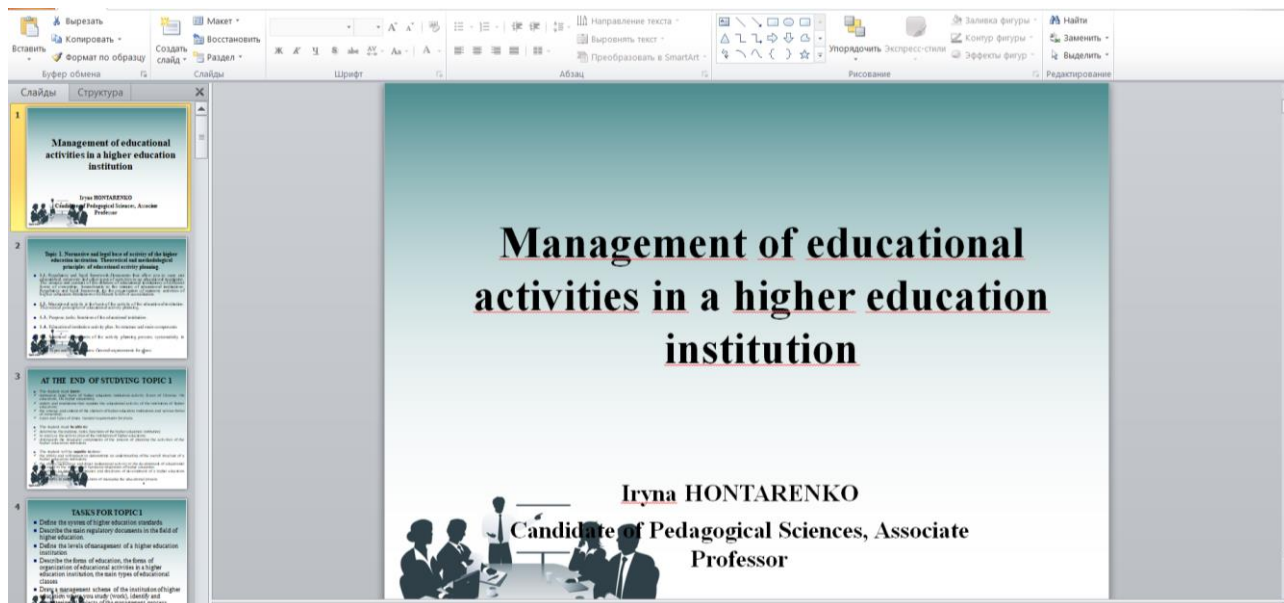
Consider the advantages of lecture-based teaching:

1. Economical concentration of Iinformation: Lectures allow for the concentration of information related to the educational content in a concise and economical form.

2. Rapid response to legislative changes: Lectures can adapt to changes in legislative and regulatory frameworks much faster than printed publications.

3. Compensation for lack of updated textbooks: Lectures can to some extent compensate for the absence of the latest textbooks and manuals.

4. Classification and commentary on diverse perspectives: Lectures enable the classification and commentary on trends, especially when there are numerous and sometimes conflicting viewpoints on a particular issue.

5. Focus on complex issues: Lectures allow the concentration on the most complex issues that may be challenging for individuals to grasp independently.

6. Development of listening and comprehension skills: Lectures contribute to the development of listening and comprehension skills, involving important cognitive operations such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, and more.

7. Direct contact and emotional impact: Lectures provide direct contact, emotional, and educational influence from the instructor to students, which no textbook can offer.

8. Integration of theory with practice: Lectures embody the principle of connecting theory with practice, showcasing the results of both individual and collective scientific activities.

9. Effective guidance for further independent work: Lectures are highly effective in outlining directions for subsequent independent work.

The example of the author's online lecture from Ukraine to foreign students in English is presented in figure 1.

Figure 1

Introductory lecture on the course "Management of educational activities in a higher education institution (in English)" in Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics presented by the author

Consider the disadvantages of lecture-based teaching:

1. Mismatch with modern professional trends: Lectures may not align with the contemporary trends in professional preparation, as practical expectations now include not only knowledge but also a greater emphasis on skills and abilities.

2. Encouragement of reproductive learning: Lectures may foster reproductive learning, hindering creative independent thinking. Subsequently, seminar sessions might transform into a mere repetition of lecture content.

3. Shift in the role of instructors: In the present era, instructors are no longer the sole source of knowledge. Independent student work with textbooks, the internet, and other resources is often more effective.

4. Passive role of learners: Lectures compel learners to remain in a passive position within the educational process.

5. Limitations in differentiated approach: Simultaneous communication with a large audience restricts the ability to employ a differentiated approach, making the lecture less engaging and beneficial for both high-achieving students and those with average abilities.

6. Time constraints: Lectures are time-regulated, and not all questions can be adequately addressed within the allocated time.

7. Potential for dictation-style delivery: Lectures can sometimes turn into dictations, where not everyone has the opportunity to fully comprehend the information presented by the instructor.

8. Overreliance on auditory analysis: In the absence of teaching aids, lectures engage primarily the auditory channel, while approximately 80–90 percent of individuals predominantly receive and memorize information through the "eye-brain" channel.

This psychological factor may result in a deviation from the principles of perception.

Experienced lecturers recommend maintaining a manageable and realistic number of learning goals or outcomes, with five or six objectives being considered a prudent starting point (Kazak, 2018). The crux lies in clearly communicating to students the grading procedures, attendance requirements, policies regarding late homework, and protocols for missed tests, among other aspects, in writing, and distributing this information on the first day of the course (Blight, 2000).

Similar principles apply to setting objectives for individual lectures. A logical and effective starting point is to pose the question, "What do you want the students to know and be able to do at the end of the lecture?" Additionally, formulating guiding questions that the lecturer will address can optimize the instructional potential of the lecture. Displaying these questions as an overhead or using handout materials at the outset of the class serves as a means of assisting students in comprehending the nature and scope of the specific learning outcomes they are expected to progressively achieve as the lecture or session unfolds.

Accurate timing and the clear structuring of a lecture are integral factors contributing to its enhanced effectiveness. When planning a lecture, it is advisable to consider that it should not span the entire allocated time period. This is prudent for two reasons: first, it requires some time for the lecture to gain momentum, and second, students' questions often consume more time than anticipated (Stynska et al., 2021).

The significance of clear lecture structuring is underscored by a majority of scholars as a fundamental principle of effective lecturing (Stynska et al., 2021). Experts from Waterloo University offer specific guidance on the process of structuring a lecture, emphasizing the following points:

1. Providing the "Big Picture":

   – Explain how the lecture connects to previously covered material, course themes, and overall goals.

   – Begin the class with a brief review of key points from the last session and conclude with a preview of topics for the next class, including reminders about readings or assignments.

2. Introduction, Body, and Conclusion Framework:

   – Clearly articulate what will be discussed before delving into the day's topics.

   – Summarize key points after covering the material to reinforce understanding.

   – Repeat key information during the lecture to aid student note-taking.

3. Visible Lecture Outline:

   – Keep the lecture outline visible for students, whether written on a corner of the blackboard or displayed on an overhead.

   – Return to the outline periodically to demonstrate progress through the material and emphasize key points.

4. Explicit Transitions and Mini-Summaries:

– Make explicit transitions between topics with mini-summaries.

– Link current material to previously learned content and future lectures.

– Clarify how one topic connects to the next, or ask students to articulate these connections.

5. Focused Coverage:

– Cover only a few main points in each lecture, aiming for depth over breadth.

– Present central points or general themes that unify multiple topics.

By adhering to these principles, lecturers can enhance the clarity and coherence of their presentations, contributing to a more effective learning experience for students (Stynska et al., 2021).

The selection of lecture material is a critical and meticulous process, underscored by a term introduced in foreign pedagogy known as "Content Tyranny," which addresses a pervasive issue among college instructors. Mitigating this challenge often involves a strategic reduction in the volume of material covered. The authors of the concept propose that lectures should prioritize the following types of material:

1. Key points and general themes

2. Especially difficult material

3. Material not covered elsewhere

4. Examples and illustrations

5. Material of high interest to students

To address this, researchers recommend a methodical approach: instructors should review the syllabus, categorize each topic as "essential" or "helpful," and subsequently exclude the "helpful" topics, relocating them to "suggested further reading" (Kazak, 2018).

An additional key element in effective lecturing is the practice of outlining lecture notes, avoiding the creation of a complete script. This approach, advocated by American colleagues, is deemed less time-consuming and enables instructors to maintain eye contact with students, fostering spontaneity. Professor William E. Cashin supports the idea of listing major points and underlining them with minor points that elaborate or explain each major point. Experimentation with different note-taking methods, such as detailed outlines, lists of major points, or tree diagrams, is suggested to identify the most effective approach. Lecturer's notes should encompass key definitions, proofs, solved problems, examples, and analogies.

Careful consideration of examples is another crucial aspect of lecture organization. Relevant and relatable examples, especially those familiar to students, prove more effective than lengthy abstract or theoretical descriptions (Hontarenko, 2021). Including "delivery notes" for oneself is emphasized, allowing for additional notes about audio-visual aids, questions for students, and last-minute examples. The use of color-coded notes is also recommended.

Flexibility during the lecture is essential, with instructors encouraged to gauge students' interest and confusion levels to adjust the depth and order of content accordingly.

Lecturers are advised to be mindful of the listener, presenting content in a listener-friendly manner using simple words, short sentences, and a conversational speaking style. Visual and auditory presentation of information is encouraged whenever possible (Stynska et al., 2021).

During the presentation or delivery stage of a lecture, special emphasis should be placed on the opening and closing segments. It is advised to steer clear of a predictable opening and instead capture students' attention right from the start. Dimming the lights and displaying the first overhead can be more effective in engaging students than attempting to quiet pre-lecture chatter through loud talking. Ignoring latecomers is also recommended (Stynska et al., 2021).

Initiating the lecture with a provocative question, anecdote, or current event related to the content is deemed more effective. Experts suggest alternative methods, such as asking a student to summarize the previous session, utilizing a question box to address interesting or challenging questions, or presenting a problem with the promise of providing the tools for a solution by the end of the class

Regarding the conclusion of the lecture, a more effective approach is to plan to end five minutes early, allowing time for summarization, raising questions, previewing the next topic, and framing an approach for assigned reading. Researchers recommend avoiding the pressure to cover all material, as even experienced lecturers may overestimate what can be covered in a given timeframe. Prioritizing thorough coverage of a portion of the material is preferable to rushing through all of it, with adjustments possible in future sessions to balance content (Kazak, 2018).

Concerning the core part of the lecture, two critical considerations include understanding the nuances of students' effective attention and engaging them through active learning practices. D.A. Bligh, the author of *What's the Use of Lectures*, notes a decline in student attention and lecturer performance throughout a traditional lecture, with the effective attention span being 25–30 minutes.

Introducing interruptions, even brief respites, can have beneficial effects. Strategies such as inviting questions, posing simple-choice questions with hands raised, or assigning simple exercises for buzz groups can help maintain engagement (Kazak, 2018).

In the examination of cognitive theories, Stanford University researchers delineate three phases of the learning process. The initial phase involves selectively orienting attention, making it imperative for the lecturer to capture the audience's attention. In the second phase, individuals organize what they hear or observe into a coherent mental pattern or structure.

Accordingly, providing students with a framework for interpreting lecture material facilitates their understanding of new ideas. These first two stages contribute to the creation of short-term memory for new information. To transition this information to long-term memory, rehearsal and connection to existing knowledge frameworks are required. In the classroom, this final stage commences with review and application, extending beyond the classroom through well-crafted assignments.

A more comprehensive exploration of emotional means to capture students' attention is detailed in another article. Notably, the instructor's expressiveness and enthusiasm for the subject are identified as crucial elements. The concept of the lecturer's presence—

physical, emotional, and intellectual – is highlighted as a significant attention-grabber, with no additional gimmicks necessary (Stynska & Kondur, 2020).

Addressing the challenge of organizing information into a mental structure, the second stage of learning, can be accomplished by providing students with a framework for each lecture. Several approaches are suggested:

1. Study Guide:

   – Develop a study guide for the course that outlines each lecture's objectives, key concepts, and questions to consider.

2. Lecture Handouts:

   – Provide handouts with the lecture's major points to guide students in listening and identifying central elements. For instance, a method guide incorporating lecture notes can streamline information delivery for topics like the History of Great Britain and the United States.

3. Skeletal Lecture Handouts:

   – Distribute skeletal lecture handouts with space for students' notes, potentially more effective than furnishing full lecture notes.

4. High-Level Questions:

   – Introduce each part of a lecture with a high-level question that the forthcoming information aims to answer.

Moreover, a lecturer should strive to be explicit about what students should focus on, incorporating variations in pacing and voice, pausing strategically before new or key points, and considering the use of gestures. Clear introduction of key concepts and definitions is crucial. Experts recommend employing verbal and visual cues to emphasize major points and categories. Additionally, asking students to review or explain the most important points can prove effective (Stynska & Kondur, 2020). These strategies collectively contribute to the creation of a framework that enables students to successfully identify core ideas in the lecture.

It is essential for the lecturer to be mindful of not overloading students' memory, recognizing that students cannot immediately absorb extensive new information. Considering Bligh's assertion that audience attention in a lecture diminishes significantly after 10 minutes of listening (Stynska & Kondur, 2020), incorporating short breaks and introducing formal activities or assignments every 15–20 minutes of presentation can help maintain engagement.

Summarization, in particular, can be useful to break the monotony of the lecture flow. Researchers advocate providing students with practice in note-making, emphasizing that students benefit more from summarizing, prioritizing, and making their notes personalized learning tools rather than mere transcriptions. Thus, dividing the lecture into discrete segments, both in terms of time and material (e.g., 10 or 15-minute blocks with specific topics), and subsequently asking students to summarize and make notes can effectively interrupt the lecture routine, rejuvenate students' attention, and engage them in active learning practices.

Overloading students is a critical concern, and using too many diverse types of presentation materials simultaneously may exacerbate this issue. While lecturers often

incorporate audio, video, and written materials to capture students' attention, cognitive overload can occur when different forms of processing interfere with each other. Research by Mayer suggests that replacing written explanations with auditory narratives, utilizing a different sensory channel, is more effective when presenting illustrations. Thus, coordinating verbal instructions with other media and maintaining a reasonable pace are recommended strategies (Stynska & Kondur, 2020).

The final stage of the learning process, revision and application, can manifest in two primary ways:

1. In-lecture review and application:
   - Allocate time during the lecture for students to review and apply ideas.
2. Assignments encouraging review and application:
   - Provide assignments that prompt students to revisit their lecture notes and apply the content.

Various small tasks can be integrated during a lecture, such as discussing problems or issues in pairs, working individually and voting on a solution or position, reading extracts from handout material, creating charts, tables, or concept maps, asking and answering questions, giving feedback, performing calculations, prioritizing items, and more. Berkeley University experts suggest engaging in-class exercises, including breaking the class into groups to investigate a problem and responding randomly, passing cards with questions to generate discussion, and showing short relevant video clips (Stynska, & Kondur, 2020).

R. M. Felder proposes a range of in-class exercises, such as drawing and labeling charts, providing reasons for the usefulness of solutions, and brainstorming lists of reasons or possible solutions. Responses can be given individually, in pairs or groups, and sometimes worked on alone and improved in pairs (think-pair-share) (Felder & Brent, 1999).

In-class activities can also serve as a conclusion to a lecture period by having students write and submit a brief statement of the main point of the lecture or suggest improvements to the class. Felder notes that incorporating one or two active learning exercises lasting no more than 5 minutes in a 50-minute session can provide sufficient stimulation to keep the class engaged without disrupting the syllabus (Hontarenko, 2021).

DISCUSSION

Although extensive research has been carried out by international researchers in this domain, a more thorough examination of incorporating active learning into the lecture process in Ukraine is essential, setting the stage for future investigations. To sum up, the matter of effective lecturing continues to be relevant, and insights from British and American researchers provide a framework for future exploration. Further scrutiny into active learning, interactive elements in lectures, and the judicious use of visual aids, such as computer presentations, is warranted and will be the primary focus of upcoming research.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study has explored the challenges and opportunities of effective lecturing in higher education, drawing on the insights from the British and American literature

review and the empirical data collected from Ukrainian lecturers and students. The findings suggest that lecturing is still a dominant and valued mode of instruction, but it requires adaptation to the changing needs and expectations of the learners.

While significant research has been conducted by foreign colleagues in this field, especially in the UK and the US, a more detailed analysis of integrating active learning into the lecturing process in Ukraine is necessary, serving as an objective for future investigation. In conclusion, the issue of effective lecturing remains pertinent, and the experiences of British and American researchers help outline major directions for further study.

The utilization of active learning, interactivity in lectures, and the appropriate use of visual aids, including computer presentations, warrant more detailed analyses and will be the focus of future research. Moreover, the study of the impact of lecturing on student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes, as well as the development of lecturers' professional skills and competencies, are also important areas for further inquiry.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:

ОПТИМІЗАЦІЯ ВИКЛАДАННЯ: КЛЮЧОВА РОЛЬ ЕФЕКТИВНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ ТА ПРОВЕДЕННЯ ЛЕКЦІЙ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

Стаття присвячена проблемі визначення найбільш ефективних методів підготовки та проведення університетських лекцій. Незважаючи на те, що лекції є найдавнішим методом викладання, вони продовжують широко використовуватися в університетах по всьому світу. Однак останні педагогічні дослідження українських науковців не повністю

досліджують це питання, що перешкоджає розробці практичних рекомендацій для викладачів, які прагнуть організувати та провести ефективні лекційні курси. Щоб заповнити цю прогалину, ми розглядаємо праці британських та американських дослідників, узагальнюємо їхні рекомендації та виокремлюємо ключові аспекти для підвищення якості університетських лекцій.

Метою *статті є ознайомлення з найкращими практиками, методологіями та стратегіями, які сприяють ефективності лекцій, що зрештою сприяє покращенню результатів навчання у закладах вищої освіти.*

*Для вирішення поставленої мети використовувалися такі **методи дослідження**: теоретичний – аналіз наукових джерел, педагогічних та навчально-методичних матеріалів, порівняння; емпіричний – узагальнення педагогічного досвіду.*

Результати. *У статті підкреслюється важливість постановки навчальних цілей, точного хронометражу та структурування, скорочення обсягу контенту, конспектування лекцій, ретельного підбору прикладів та адаптивності лектора. Крім того, автори підкреслюють важливість розуміння основних етапів проведення лекції, розпізнавання нюансів підтримання ефективної уваги студентів та залучення їх до активної навчальної діяльності.*

Стаття містить практичні рекомендації для викладачів, що ґрунтуються на опрацьованих джерелах та досвіді авторів і супроводжуються застереженнями. Ці застереження включають уникнення одночасного використання численних видів ілюстративного матеріалу та надлишку візуальних засобів, таких як презентації в PowerPoint. Така практика може призвести до когнітивного перевантаження, оскільки різні форми обробки інформації можуть заважати одна одній.

Висновок. *У цій роботі досліджуються проблеми та можливості ефективного викладання лекцій у вищій освіті, спираючись на висновки британського та американського огляду літератури та емпіричні дані, зібрані від українських викладачів і студентів. У статті зроблено спробу провести більш методичний аналіз щодо ефективних прийомів підготовки лекцій, охоплюючи критичні етапи презентації. Крім того, дослідження прагне заглибитися в нюанси ефективного привертання уваги студентів і їх залучення за допомогою практичний дій, пов'язаних з активним навчанням.*

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: *практичні рекомендації, ефективні способи, підготовка і проведення університетських лекцій, цілі, хронометраж і структурування, гнучкість, активне навчання.*