

# Admission Tickets

Jacob Arnbjerg

Aarhus School of Engineering, Chemistry and Biotechnology, Denmark, ja@ase.au.dk

## ABSTRACT

*Keywords* – Student activity, mandatory preparation, student motivation, teaching as a right or a privilege

Please indicate clearly the type of contribution you are submitting: **X hands-on**, \_\_\_explore, \_\_\_poster.

Most teachers will know the familiar problem that they feel students do not come prepared for the teaching activities. This may have a number of unwanted and negative consequences, including

- i) frustration for the teacher as well as those students who have come well-prepared
- ii) confusion for the teacher in terms of selecting the appropriate material and the academic level
- iii) being part of establishing a negative culture around “that it is ok to come unprepared”

The concept of using admission tickets is aimed at addressing the abovementioned challenges. Simply stated, the teacher establishes conditions such that it is not “free-of-charge” to attend the teaching activities. And before the students can gain access to the teaching session, they must demonstrate they have access rights. This may be in the form of handing in exercises done in advance or other mandatory out-of-class activities. If the students have not prepared they are in principle not granted access to the teaching session.

This is clearly a somewhat provocative approach, as it touches upon some very fundamental questions about teaching and the students relations hereto. Is teaching a right, a duty or a privilege? Experience shows that the concept of admission tickets can indeed be very effective and help student motivation and active participation. But it is critical that the concept is presented in the right framework and that it becomes a matter of mutual trust rather than mistrust. As such, a serious amount of preparation must be done in advance, both in terms of how to present the concept to the students, but also in terms of the concrete activities intended. Activities should be properly aligned with the intended learning outcomes such that the students can see a clear benefit.<sup>1</sup>

Experiences will be shared from personal experiences from a course where the concept was implemented successfully. Here the admission ticket was in the form of completing exercises which addressed topics from the previous teaching session. This way the students automatically got to repeat key points, which helped them link previously encountered concepts with the current topics.<sup>2</sup> Student responded positively when asked if the “teaching activity had helped them in their learning” (87 % strongly agreed), and also if “the level of feedback during the course was good” (67 % strongly agreed). This was reflected by the students “delivering high academic effort” (93% strongly agreed) and also by a very high grade average at the final oral exam (9,1 in average in a class of approximately 60 students).

Following a brief introduction, the participants will work with how this conceptual framework might be implemented in their own work and what benefits and possible challenges they may foresee. The session will be concluded with a discussion and evaluation in plenum.

## References:

1. Biggs, J. & Tang, C., **Teaching For Quality Learning At University**, Society for Research Into Higher Education, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Open University Press, 2011
2. Mazur, E. **Peer Instruction – A User’s Guide**, Addison-Wesley, 1997