

## **"What I like about small group teaching"**

### **Tutors**

1. The informal atmosphere -- opportunity to get to know students at a personal level and for them to get to know me.
2. Their attainment is not constrained by pressures of curriculum, difficulties associated with large group inflexibility, and above all passive lethargy in a mass environment.
3. Feeling of informality and, when things go right, that students have learned something and even in Statistics -- enjoyed themselves.
4. Seeing a student suddenly grasp an idea for the first time, which makes for him, a number of other disjointed ideas simultaneously fall into place.
5. I can be stimulated by students' ideas.
6. Hearing the spontaneous insights of students.
7. Opportunity for providing instantaneous, personal feedback on their own thoughts and efforts.
8. Being able to give praise.
9. The educational goals are readily defined, almost as a contract between myself and the group.
10. Talking. Contradicting superficial ideas.

### **Students**

1. I personally have a greater influence on what is being discussed. I can actually remember, and feel I understand what we are discussing.
2. You can discuss issues together rather than be told them.
3. Being able to participate and to find out other people's ideas.
4. Being able to discuss and having queries sorted out there and then.
5. It is less formal, less intimidating. There is a possibility of asking questions. You learn more.
6. You get more individual attention.
7. I like the flexibility of a small group. We aren't bound to a rigid schedule.
8. It teaches you how to converse in a literate manner.
9. Helps develop your power of analysing problems and arriving at solutions.
10. By being in a smaller group, one feels part of the class rather than just another face in a sea of faces. I actually feel more part of the university.

## **Difficulties and dislikes**

### **Tutors' difficulties**

1. Keeping my mouth shut.
2. Getting a discussion going.
3. It often requires considerable skill to direct discussion in fruitful directions
4. It requires considerably more mental alertness and flexibility than a formal lecture, and can be a bit of a strain.
5. Keeping on you toes all the time. Perhaps I'm getting old, but it's tiring.
6. Getting students to see me as an equal, talk to me as they would to their peers, and lose their inhibitions about displaying ignorance in front of me and their peers.
7. Very difficult to establish the kind of atmosphere in which students will begin to talk. They tend to be very much afraid of not saying the right thing.
8. Shutting up the vociferous.
9. Bringing in the meek.
10. How to deal with a poor or irrelevant answer.

### **Student Dislikes**

1. A small group can be easily dominated by one person.
2. When members of the group will not talk.
3. Long silences.
4. You can't hide out.
5. Being asked to contribute when you don't want to.
6. Being directly asked vague questions.
7. I am sometimes frustrated at being held up by the problems or queries of other group members.
8. A feeling of being assessed by the lecturer through your answers to questions and your attitudes.
9. Sometimes you feel threatened by the closeness of the lecturers.
10. You have to have completed a certain amount of work to understand what is going on.

(Note most students said "none")