Engaging Large Enrollment Classes in the Online Environment

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Today’s Focus

1. The challenge of large enrollment classes

2. Options for online teaching modalities

3. Organizational/management strategies for:
   • all modalities
   • mixture of synchronous and asynchronous modalities
   • fully asynchronous courses
   • fully synchronous courses

4. Technology and tools for engagement and collaboration
Typical Challenges

• Often gateways to the Major/pre-reqs
• Content heavy
• Students from different backgrounds and preparation
• Fear factor
• Difficult to engage all students in class
• Large time demand on faculty
What does the research indicate?

Students learn best when they feel a connection to the

- Course content
- Faculty
- Each other

For suggestions on how to connect with students in the virtual environment, please see “Creating Presence and Engagement”
Maximizing learning

Aim: students develop knowledge and skill sets that can meet increasing challenges of the discipline

Challenge: motivate and inspire, without losing sight of those who need support

- Consider a course “pre-test” to alert students to expected prior knowledge.

Provide links to resources
Options for Teaching

• Use a mixture of asynchronous and synchronous modalities

• Present the course in a fully asynchronous mode

• Present the course fully synchronous mode
For all modes of online teaching:

Plan

- Can you get assistance?
- Define the roles and responsibilities of TAs and facilitators in classroom management (chat function, breakout rooms, discussion boards, etc) & grading
- Consider YOUR time in planning and managing the course schedule

- consider length/spacing of assignments; can any have automated grading?
- meet regularly with TAs
- provide model answers/rubrics for grading purposes;
- allocate specific graders to particular questions/projects for consistency
- consider whether peer-grading (using a rubric) might work
Organize Your Course

- Provide a clear and consistent course platform (see handout on Organizing your Blackboard platform)
- Break large class into groups to complete activities and discussions.
- Manage email – expectations, bundle responses
- Provide clear & timely notifications/announcements, FAQs, etc.
- Consider a student Q/A board (TA can monitor it)
- Manage office hours – consider occasional topics-based/review sessions
- Ask for feedback – reflect back with the students
What modality should I use?

Consider the pros and cons – professional and personal

**For the mixed/hybrid** – using both synchronous and asynchronous modes

Pros: you decide what, when and how.

Consider “flipping” the learning – or a part of it

- For content provided *asynchronously* be mindful of time demands;
  - include guides or questions to help alert the student to the important points (you can embed questions in PPs, use BB quizzes, etc.)
  - try to present material in a number of formats; keep pre-records < 20 minutes
  - If giving homework, make explicit connections to student learning outcomes

- For the *synchronous* portion, allow time at the beginning to address questions

- Aim for consistency
Pros: For **fully asynchronous** classes, we give ourselves and our students flexibility. But the biggest challenges are

- creating a sense of community
- keeping everyone on-track and involved

For tips and suggestions, we have created a [20-minute presentation](#) and/or a [summary handout](#)
Fully synchronous classes

Pros: We hope to achieve

• dynamic, organic interaction
• active learning
• timely awareness of student progress

Challenges are:

• *Is there anybody out there?*
• Balanced involvement
Resources

Tips for Designing Online Courses: https://edservices.wiley.com/tips-designing-moderating-large-online-courses/

Tips for Managing Large Classes Online: https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/tips-for-managing-large-online-classes/

Time Saving Tips for Large Enrollment Classes: https://teachingcommons.lakeheadu.ca/time-saving-tips-large-online-classes