



## Teaching Large Classes

Teaching a large class is an opportunity to leverage (more) students as key stakeholders in the learning process, to adapt or innovate your instructional practices, and to enrich and build robust community.

**Continue reading for large class teaching tips related to different aspects of your teaching.**

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*To have a successful large class, all you need to do is **ACT**:*

*Focus on the large class **Advantage**, Recognize the **Challenges**, and Identify **Teaching Tips** that will work best in your context.*

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### SYLLABUS AND COURSE POLICIES

**Advantage:** Opportunity to create clear policies that answer most student questions and address potential issues before the course begins.

**Challenge:** Creating policies that make sense for a wide variety of students.

#### Teaching Tips:

- Ask a TA or past student for advice on how to make your syllabus easier to read and understand.
- Use a personal tone (e.g., use "you" and "I") to break down barriers and create a sense of personal agency and responsibility in the course.
- Share your (and your TA's) availability and the best methods of communication with you.
- Create a FAQ page in eLC to answer common course policy and syllabus questions.
- Include a link in your syllabus to survey students about their interests, motivations, and goals for learning. Use the results to inform your course policies.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

**Advantage:** Diverse perspectives in the classroom can expand and enrich student learning.

**Challenge:** Difficult to engage all students during class time, often due to low motivation to attend, increased ease of distraction, lack of comfort talking in a large group, etc.

#### Teaching Tips:

- Provide multiple means for student engagement with the material (videos, discussion, etc.).
  - Incorporate [active learning](#) to engage all students and deepen connections with content.
  - Use tools like [Perusall](#) and [Top Hat](#) for technology-mediated interaction.
  - Direct student focus by sharing learning outcomes at the beginning of class.
  - Invite students to raise questions anonymously (e.g., parking lot, discussion board in eLC). Be encouraging with student contributions during class to increase comfort level to participate.
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## ASSESSMENTS & GRADING

**Advantage:** More data about student learning, areas of confusion, etc.

**Challenge:** Difficult to effectively grade student work efficiently.

### Teaching Tips:

- Determine where students need to receive timely, nuanced feedback from you vs. discrete, corrective feedback from automated sources.
- Use auto-graded eLC quizzes for low-stakes, formative assessment.
- Use a student response system to gauge student comprehension across the class.
- Use [group assignments](#) and [peer review](#).
- Design and use [rubrics](#).

## CREATING COMMUNITY

**Advantage:** More students means more peers in social and learning networks.

**Challenge:** Difficult for students to be known as individuals.

### Teaching Tips:

- Ask students to make paper name tents or share their name each time they participate. Use their names.
- [Co-create community norms](#) with your students and amend your syllabus so that students have a written record of what was established.
- Tell your students about yourself.
- Create student neighborhoods, interest groups, or zones to make the classroom feel smaller and friendlier. Bonus: allow students to create their group name!
- Move around the classroom so that you can engage and interact with different students to help build relationships and connections.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- ✓ [Build community in large classes](#) (Cornell University)
- ✓ [Comprehensive resource for teaching large enrollment courses](#) (The Ohio State University)
- ✓ [Incorporating active learning in large classes](#) (UT Austin)
- ✓ [Large class teaching resources including working with TAs](#) (Vanderbilt University)
- ✓ [Make a larger class feel small](#) (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)
- ✓ [Research on why to make large classes feel small](#) (Cooper & Robinson, 2000)
- ✓ [STEM-focused teaching strategies in large classes](#) (Allen & Tanner, 2017)
- ✓ [Student perspectives on large classes](#) (UNC Charlotte)



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