

Teaching Large Classes

Effective Lectures

1. Don't repeat (re-cover) material from the assigned homework
2. Hide your lecture notes on a separate printout – use the screen to display images, charts, graphs that generate thought and interest
3. Let the reading/videos/text “cover” most of the material. Use class time to “uncover” only a few key concepts or applications (but make explicit that tests will include assigned reading)
4. Beware the “expert blind spot” – you need to lecture at THEIR level, not yours
5. Listeners perceive a temporary “illusion of mastery.” Challenge this by forcing them to apply/engage material from previous lectures on an ongoing basis
6. Maximize real-world applications and scenarios to keep the concepts as concrete as possible
7. Display as much enthusiasm and energy (both vocal and physical) as your personality allows; teaching is more of a performance than an intellectual unpacking of ideas

Effective PowerPoint

1. Awaken both conscious and unconscious interest by asking questions first, instead of just moving from “answer” slide to “answer” slide.
2. Do not provide PowerPoint presentation as a handout for students (even after each lecture) – this discourages note-taking and mental summarizing that are crucial to forming long-term memory

Interactivity

1. Interactive Techniques – see 200+ strategies at <http://bit.ly/interactive-techniques>
2. Consider Undergraduate Learning Assistants (ULAs – coming in Fall 2023)

Classroom Management

1. Discourage (or disallow?) laptops – at least explain why handwritten notes may be superior
2. Consider confining laptop users to the back of the room, to minimize distractions to others

Cheating

1. In-class testing
 - a. Consider open-book exam and administer test through Canvas (live; synchronous; BYOD) for automatic grading
 - b. Alternate exams (renumbered)
 - c. Fake alternate exams – same exams but colored paper
 - d. Roam the room! (and especially move behind them)
 - e. Change as many test questions as you can each term
 - f. Do not hand back paper tests; keep your questions as private as you can
 - g. Consider open-book tests. Aim for higher-order operations instead (think: GRE rather than memorization)
2. Plagiarism / contract writing

- a. Make writing prompts so unique that even experienced writers had to be present for lectures to meet expectations
- b. Use turnitin
- c. Do not re-use writing prompts
- d. Early in the semester, collect an in-class writing example in handwriting to compare styles to later

Logistics

1. Email
 - a. Clear guidelines for how long responses take (and what hours of the day)
 - b. “Three before me?” (require they ask other students first?)
 - c. Blackout times: tell students up front you won’t answer emails within 24 of a test
 - d. Consider numbering sections of the syllabus, so you could write back with simply: “see syllabus #14b”
2. Taking Attendance
 - a. “UCF Here” – see details: https://ucf.service-now.com/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=KB0013581
 - b. Clickers or clicker alternatives (Top Hat)
 - c. Canvas quiz on BYOD as attendance
3. Encouraging Attendance
 - a. Daily quizzes (especially impactful if all are cumulative for the semester)

Further Reading

Wilsman, A. (2013). Teaching Large Classes. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved 9/27/2022 from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-large-classes/>

Carbone, Elisa Lynn. Teaching Large Classes: Tools and Strategies. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, c1998.

Stanley, Christine A. and M. Erin Porter. Engaging Large Classes: Strategies and Techniques for College Faculty. Boston: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2002.