Draft document prepared by Patricia Reed - Active Learning in the Large Class

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# Why do this?

“In my experience, a class can follow an instructor for 20 – 25 minutes without too much loss of attention. More than that, and large numbers start to drift. What this means is that if you then put in a short “commercial” break or two where they’re doing something, anything, other than listening to you and taking notes, you can pick up their attention again. The trick is to make this one- to two-minute break something that is educationally useful and complements the traditional narrative part of the hour.” (Heppner, 2007)

Video: (about 6 min) (Brooke, 2011a) – “With intentional planning, it is possible to begin building community in a large classroom on the first day. See how sharing exercises encourages students to interact with one another and sets the tone for active learning.”

# As an Instructor

* Eliminate the instructor vs. student space
  + When using group discussions, walk up and down the aisles to build community
  + Have students come up to front to talk, write on board, etc.
* Start group discussions on the first day to set expectations
* Stop your lecture occasionally, pose a question on what you've just covered, and have students discuss their answer with their neighbor for a minute. Then, pull the class back together and discuss the right and wrong answers. (“Large Class Teaching,” 2011)
* Many have pointed out that a cordless microphone can facilitate class participation. They recommend walking around and up the aisles, so that students can no longer hide in the back of the room. This makes it appear that everyone is a potential participant. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Someone reminded that you should repeat student comments and questions (when you are the only one with a microphone), so that everyone can follow--and participate in--the dialogue. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)

# Supporting learning from a lecture

* Provide empty outlines: in a limited amount of time students complete an empty or partially completed outline of an in-class presentation or homework assignment. (T. Angelo & Cross, 2012)
* In an outline form, students analyze the “what” (content), “how” (form), and “why” (function) of a particular lesson or message (e.g. poem, newspaper story, billboard, critical essay) (T. Angelo & Cross, 2012)
* Encourage students to build concept maps – ask them to share them either in small groups or collect them and project 1 or 2 on the doc-cam in the next class session
* Many teachers put outlines of their notes on the Web page. This encourages students to come to class, but it makes them more selective in their notetaking since they know what key concepts are.(“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Before class starts, display an overhead with key words or an outline for the upcoming lecture. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)

# Individuals

* When you come to a natural stopping point in your material, tell the students to pull out a fresh piece of paper. Then tell them, “Write down the three most important things I said in the last 25 minutes. Be prepared to read them aloud.” Give them 45 seconds or so, then start calling on them. You will discover that the phrase “most important” may mean something very different to you and your students. … After the first time we do the exercise, I have an excuse to talk about “important things” and what they are. I emphasize that they have to listen to the lecture, not just transcribe it. (Heppner, 2007)
* **Case study -** Time requirements: 20-50 minutes
* Special features: The case-study method was pioneered at the Harvard law and business schools. Business and law cases tend to be very detailed and long, and take several classes to analyze, but instructors can apply a simplified case-study method (described below) for teaching in many disciplines. Applying theory to an instance as described by some source material can demonstrate the applicability of the course material beyond the classroom. A good case study:
  + Presents students with a situation they can relate to from their own life experience.
  + Includes realistic information. Examples can include scripts of exchanges that took place between key parties, news articles about situations of interest, background information about the organization of interest, etc.
  + Has a conflict that students can resolve.
* **Procedure**
  + Get source material (short story, news articles, account of a decision or procedure, video, role-play script, etc.) to use as the basis for the case study.
  + Provide students with a focus or framework to use in doing their analysis.
  + Give students time to analyze the case individually or in groups, and to write down their analysis.
  + Begin a discussion of students’ analyses.
  + Act as a mediator of the discussion. Don’t offer your own opinion except to provide guidance on the process (remind students of the framework if discussion becomes unfocused).
  + After analysis has been completed, show how the case study illustrates application of theoretical or background concepts in course material.
* **Function in the class**: Use a case study to lead into a discussion or lecture of course material, showing its relevance by referring back to the case study.

(“Varying Your Teaching Activities: Nine Alternatives to Lecturing,” n.d.)

* **Variation on case study**: Rather than using case studies of the Harvard Business School variety, many teachers employ such things as video scenarios, brief narratives, students' own experiences, newspaper articles, mechanical design snags, graphs, and even data sets to help students apply difficult concepts to real-world problems. For example, a single case can be used in conjunction with a related data set to show that while the data may support a particular theory, that theory may be difficult to apply in the single instance. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* A number of instructors are assigning problems related to data provided by current students on the first day of class. This gives students the opportunity to analyze data provided by their own cohort and to design data collection forms for the same group. Laura Simon (Statistics) has generously provided URLs so that you can take a look at two such forms, the first designed by her and the second by her students: http://www.stat.psu.edu/~lsimon/webforms/forms/instr250.html and http://www.stat.psu.edu/~lsimon/webforms/forms/instr250b.html (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* For case studies or any other group problem-solving activity to be successful, students must be prepared for the activity ahead of time and must understand how to tie it back to course objectives once they've completed it. For example, one faculty member gives an individual writing assignment prior to asking students to work in groups on a related problem so that the transition to group activities is gradual. Another gives a "prepare quiz" to make sure students understand the goals and procedures for the upcoming group project. Some of the integration of group problem-solving and course objectives can be done on a course Web page and through discussion via a class list. (T. A. Angelo, c1993.)

# Pairs

* Ask them to sit next to a partner, write down the three most important things individually, then negotiate with the partner until they can agree on at least two important things. Then I call on individual groups to name off one of their important things. A remarkable amount of learning takes place in these little negotiating sessions. There is also a bonus because they know that if I call out this activity, and they’ve been sleeping or off on Mars someplace, there is a certain embarrassment potential when they have to compare lists with a partner. (Heppner, 2007)
* **Guided analysis - Time requirements**: 30-50 minutes
  + **Special features**: This technique helps students develop their analytical skills in any field by observing your analytical skills in action.
  + **Procedure**
    - Select a document (a short review, section of computer programming, poem, proof, chart, abstract from an article, news item, etc.) to analyze as an example.
    - Make enough copies of a similar document to distribute to all class members or to small groups (depending on your preference).
    - Perform an analysis of your document in front of the class, making clear the procedure you use to reach your assertions, and using visual aids and supplementary material as necessary.
    - Give students five to ten minutes to analyze their document: the conclusions they reach will be their own, but they will have learned rigour and analytical skills from you.
    - Depending on class size, have students (or representatives from small groups) present their analysis, and respond to each one.
  + **Function in the class**: An entire 50-minute tutorial or lecture can be structured around this exercise. Consider leading into the exercise with a mini-lecture on the type of document you and your students will be analyzing.

(“Varying Your Teaching Activities: Nine Alternatives to Lecturing,” n.d.)

* Word pairs – each student writes down the key terms for the lesson then they exchange papers and write in definitions, then discuss.
* Create small ad hoc groups (or pairs) that work in class on a focused question, problem, or exercise; this gives students an opportunity to interact and really engage the material, and it also gives them a needed lecture break. Those with recitation sections sometimes assign the group problems there, and then hear reports in the lecture. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Invite student groups or partners to present the assigned reading and lead the class in discussion (they can use questions you provide as a start). Although only a small fraction of the class gets to present, many more are willing to participate when their peers take the lead. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Ask students to supply information (facts, data, examples, etc.) for in-class problem-solving. Whenever possible, ask for information directly related to students-eating habits, study habits, demographics of any sort. This increases enthusiasm and participation. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Conduct demonstrations that involve all or a subset of your students. For example, Gita Sathianathan (Chemistry) passes a lead brick and a plastic brick of the same dimensions around the classroom during the first part of her lecture and then asks students for a comparison to introduce the concept of density. Peter Maserick (Mathematics) uses a Java applet showing triangles that make up a hexagon. He asks students to tell him the value of pi to two, three, four, five, etc. decimal places. As he enters each response, the hexagon increasingly resembles a real circle. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Bob Melton (Aerospace Engineering) contributes another activity: "Once or twice a week I ask students to divide up into pairs and give them a question to answer. This is usually in the last 10 minutes of class. Sometimes I ask the pairs to write a one-minute paper together, stating a key idea that they've learned that day; then they also have to pose a question for me. (I quickly review the exercise at the beginning of the next class and answer a few of these questions.) I assess their written responses using a rough scale of 1-3, but these scores do *not* count toward their final grades. I check the correlation between these scores and their test scores--it's usually rather high--and tell them this as a means of encouraging their participation in these exercises." (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)

# Small groups

* **Pro and con grid: Time requirements:** 15-20 minutes
  + **Special features:** This technique helps students develop analytical and evaluative skills, and encourages them to go beyond initial reactions to complex issues. It can be used in any discipline: students can evaluate the pros and cons of a procedure, technique, conclusion, action of a fictional character, political decision, etc.
  + **Procedure**
    - Divide students into small groups.
    - Specify how many pros and cons you’d like each individual or group to develop.
    - Allow five to ten minutes for discussion or silent thought.
    - Ask for input: write pros on one side of the board and cons on the other side.
    - Combine pros and cons that are very similar, and count the number of times they recur to show their perceived importance.
  + **Function in the class**: Consider using the pros and cons as the basis for a debate, or for a discussion/lecture structured around the evaluation of course material.
  + (“Varying Your Teaching Activities: Nine Alternatives to Lecturing,” n.d.)
* **Role-play Time requirements**: 20-30 minutes
  + **Special features**: Role-plays can be used to allow students to experiment with different styles of interaction, practice new communication techniques or explore complex issues. They are generally used in classes dealing with social issues (social sciences, management sciences, etc.) or communication strategies (interviewing techniques, conflict management, etc.). If possible, participate in a role-play yourself before trying one in class. Essentially, a role-play is a form of interactive case study where the experience of participating in the role-play is the basis for further discussion.
  + **Procedure**
    - Get scenarios and characters for role-plays from news stories, history books, generic business situations, or by writing them yourself from scratch.
    - Explain why you are using a role-play to cover course material.
    - Describe the background context or setting to the role-play.
    - Give roles to “players”: hand them a card with a brief description of the character they’re playing, their point of view, characteristics, etc.
    - For groups with more students than possible roles, you can either assign “observer” tasks to non-players (e.g., taking notes on a particular player), or assign identical roles to sub­groups of students (e.g., one student can play a city council member, and a sub-group of four or five students can play a homeowners’ coalition).
    - Ask for volunteers for certain roles or observers: you may use this as one way to allot bonus points to students.
    - Allow a few minutes for students to prepare for their roles.
    - After 10-15 minutes, end the role-play.
  + **Function in the class**: Debrief and discuss the role-play. Use players’ perceptions and observers’ notes to lead into discussion of course material. Pay special attention to conflicts, ambiguities, etc.
* Christophe Bas (Electrical Engineering) breaks his students into small groups for a first-day quiz that tests their understanding of key concepts from the prerequisite course as well as common mistakes made by students in the previous semester. Then he asks groups to volunteer answers, which the rest of the class must defend (even if they disagree). Eventually, the correct answers emerge, but the point of the exercise is to break the ice and get students talking. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* The Mock Jury – “There are many areas where biology intersects the law: DNA fingerprinting, carcinogens, reproductive issues, to name a few. To get ready for such an activity, I’ll tell the class to form themselves into six-person juries. This is easiest done with three students in one row, and three in front of them. They’ll have to bunch up to do this, so unless the class is packed, there will be a little space between the juries. I then give them the “scientific” part of the presentation, a summary of the facts of the case, the prosecution and defense arguments, then turn it over to the “juries.” This activity usually requires more than a minute; depending on the case, they can come to some kind of closure in three to five minutes. I explain to them that juries must come to a unanimous conclusion, or else be hung. I also tell them that they have to keep their voices down, or there’ll be chaos.

Once the case goes to the “juries,” I’ll walk the aisles, eavesdropping and asking the occasional question. They get a couple of time alerts, then I tell them they have one minute to come to a conclusion. I’ll then ask the “foreperson” of the jury to stand, and I’ll go around the room asking for verdicts. If I’ve done a good job, the guilty verdicts will just about match the not-guilties, or in a civil case, the plaintiffs will win about as often as the defendants. This presents an ideal opportunity to then ask what additional information might have caused the juries to come to verdicts that were more similar.” (Heppner, 2007)

* Millionaire game – have students try out for a chance to be one of 4 or 5 to play “Who wants to be an A student?” Details on how can be found in (Heppner, 2007)

# Group Report-Back Methods

When you ask small groups of students to work together, how can you get them to report back to the large group without taking a lot of time and boring many? Here are some ideas…

### Jigsaw Report-back

For use when you have a variety of discussion topics such as readings. If, for example you have a variety of reading assignments, assign one reading to a group, another reading to another group – these groups are their ‘expert’ group. Have them discuss the topic. Then, have students from each of the expert groups join into ‘jigsaw’ groups to discuss how the articles fit together.

### Buzz groups

After the group work, rather than reporting back to the whole group, combine small groups into medium sized to discuss and combine ideas. This can be extended by progressively doubling the group size. These larger groups can report back to the whole group in a plenary session.

This technique allows ideas to unfold gradually and allows students to think for themselves before bringing their ideas back to the whole group. However as the groups increase in size the nature of the discussion task may need to be changed to prevent boredom.

### Limited reporting

have a limited number of groups do a brief report-back to the class but have all groups turn in a list that is then compiled and distributed.

### Plenary Method

A spokesperson from each small group reports to the whole group.

In Paired Sharing, two or three small groups combine to compare and discuss their work. The "Carousel" or "Gallery Walk" technique can also be used for reporting back.

### Gallery Walk

Ask your students to walk around the room and read/look at the posters. Hand out a sheet with some questions such as

* What are some of the similarities you see across the different posters, especially in terms of the question,
* How does science fit into my life?” What are some of the differences?
* What are some of the surprising ideas on the different posters?
* Did you learn anything new?
* What are some of the changes you would make to your group’s poster now that you have seen the other posters? Why?

### Group Walk

Each group should rotate to the next station where they will read the new topic/concept/question and what others have written about it, discuss it with their group, and add new information.  Students can also write questions about things that other groups wrote (existing answers/notes about the topic/question).

### Timed report

Use a timer with an alarm to de-personalize the time keeping and ensure consistency. If you do that, try to set it up to sound a warning with a minute to go as well as the final bell.

### Round Robin Report

Take just **one** new topic from each group and go round them a few times until everything has been said.

### Carousel Walk

Post a number of different questions posted around the room on easel paper. Participants are divided into small groups and assigned a starting point to begin the brainstorming process. After a few minutes of brainstorming as a small group, they move on to the next question and repeat the brainstorming process. This continues until all groups have had the opportunity to brainstorm around each question. Participants can then go around more quickly viewing each other’s responses. (http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/hrd/actionresearchstudies/toolbox/Brainstorming.pdf)

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# Full class discussions

* Video: (about 7 mins) (Brooke, 2011b) – “When you include large group discussion in your lecture during the first day of class, you set a precedent for future discussions. Learn how to facilitate productive discussions by using positive reinforcement and establishing a non-threatening environment. Also, discover how to overcome the physical challenges of large class discussions.”
* Use a brainstorming activity – set the ground rule that ALL ideas, including off-the-wall ones, are acceptable, do not critique responses, add all to the board. (“Facilitating Effective Discussions,” n.d.)
* When asking a question, give students a few minutes to think about their answer, perhaps writing them down, before asking for responses. This gives students a chance to think and prepare their thoughts and opens the discussion to include those who are more deliberate in their thinking.
* Ask a controversial question for group debate. Give students 5 minutes to discuss within their group. Set a time limit for the debate. Some options:
  + Ask parts of the room to take different sides
  + Ask people on different sides to move to an area of the room
  + Ask a section of the room to be undecided and ask probing questions

# Encouraging participation

* Provide a web-based series of questions that students answer before class or use HotSeat during class.
  + Instructors can use students’ responses to format or customize your lecture.
  + Students can use the exercises to review any prerequisite knowledge – so questions could be about the reading or assignments that are completed before class or questions could be as simple as ‘what do you not understand?’
* Use HotSeat to ask students questions during class and gather their answers. These can be ‘voted’ on by classmates and then the instructor can use these answers to guide the lecture.
* Pose a problem and ask students to think-pair-share, then one group member to post on HotSeat
* Find easy ways to acknowledge/reward those who participate in class. For example, pass coded index cards to those who ask or answer a question; the student signs and turns in the card to get credit. Some participants post participation questions to their course Web site before class and give bonus points to those who answer correctly in lecture. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Participation points: I tell the class at the beginning of the semester that I'm going to collect participation points, and if they end up one or two points below a grade-line at the end of the semester, these points can put them over. I give points for any kind of participation, such as asking a question out loud in front of the whole class or answering a question that I ask. I want to get them talking. In a class of 170 students, there's a certain reluctance to speak up in front of so many people. It's surprisingly easy to keep track of who said what. If they speak out in class, they come down at the end of the period and give me a little piece of paper with their name on it. I simply take these papers back to my office and put a red dot by each name on my grade sheet. This method also helps me get to know who's who, which means the next time they raise their hands, I can call on them by name. That makes a big difference in the general feeling of a large class. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* "Gotcha!": I tell the class at the beginning of the semester that I'm going to make a mistake each day, and whoever detects the mistake first and shouts "Gotcha!" gets a candy bar. This technique works well. In fact, I always carry a spare candy bar because sometimes students will catch me making an unintentional mistake in addition to the one I've planned. I especially like to use "Gotcha" when I've warned them about a common mistake. For example, we talk about solving problems and the necessity of balancing the equation in order to get the right answer. But it's very easy for students to work with an equation and not check first to see whether it's balanced. So I present a problem and then start to solve it without first balancing the equation. Some students will pick up on it, and the students who don't kick themselves because it's so obvious. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* The Candy Bar Quiz: The idea is to show them part of a question and let them get ready to think about the answer. Then show them the final part of the question. The first student to shout "I've got it" and correctly explain the answer to the class gets a candy bar. I use this strategy to show them the quick and dirty way to get an answer as opposed to grinding through some long complicated calculation. Because the candy bar quiz can be figured out in your head, it encourages students to think conceptually instead of relying on formulas. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Call for a vote. Ask for a show of hands: "How many of you believe this?" Then select someone from each side to justify his or her response. These polls get everyone involved, despite the fact that the majority never get to speak to the entire class. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Ask for volunteers to make short presentations and lead the discussion for a change. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)
* Participation is easier in large classes if you have a "target" section for each lecture that gives its feedback in written comments to a representative who synthesizes them for the class to hear. (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)

# Encouraging questions

* Responses such as "I'm glad you asked that" or "That's a good question" will encourage students to continue asking questions. (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
* If appropriate, you might bring a question raised during office hours or after class into the classroom and mention the student's name, for example, "Ann asked me an interesting question about . . . ". (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
* Nonverbal responses such as smiling or nodding can also indicate your support of student questions. (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
* When asking students questions, it is important to allow enough time--at least five to ten seconds--for them to consider their response. (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
* A question-answer box set up in the classroom or lab or outside the professor's office allows students to raise questions outside of the classroom. Students can sign their questions or submit them anonymously. The professor responds to the questions during class. (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
  + Extra credit can be given to students who sign their names and whose questions are answered during class. (You may have to seed the process by putting a question in yourself and commenting on it as a student had submitted it.) (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
* Another way to personalize feedback is to invite students of a particular subgroup, e.g., "Let's hear from someone who lives on campus or someone majoring in science". (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)
* In courses in which problem-solving is important, such as those in math or science, you might ask students to write any problems they have had difficulty solving on the board before class begins (and perhaps before you arrive). At the beginning of class, the instructor solves the problem. (“Large Classes: A Teaching Guide: Personalizing the Large Class,” 2012)

# Student feedback

Purposes of short feedback:

* These can be anonymous and give you feedback on how clearly the concepts came across
* These can be used to begin discussion for the next class
* If names are on the papers, they can be used for attendance or as an assignment

Short-feedback methods:

* One-sentence summary - students answer the questions “Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why?” (WDWWWWHW) about a given topic and then creates a single informative, grammatical, and long summary sentence (T. Angelo & Cross, 2012)
* One-minute paper– prompt the students with a question such as “what were the two most important concepts today?” “Summarize our discussion today”, etc.
* Muddiest point – ask students to write down the one point they are unclear on
* Questions – ask students to write down 1 or 2 questions about the topic
* Answers – ask students to answer 1-2 questions that you ask
* Learning Audit – Ask the following 3 questions:
  + What can you do now that you couldn't do this time last week?
  + What do you know now that you didn't know this time last week?
  + What could you teach someone to know or do that you couldn't teach them this time last week? (Brookfield, n.d.)
* Handout a Classroom Critical Incident Questionnaire – these ask students to anonymously identify their level of engagement (Brookfield, n.d.)

Longer feedback methods

* SCID (Small Group Instructional Diagnosis – for more valid and honest feedback - (“Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID),” n.d.)

# Other alternatives to the lecture

* Role play (5 minutes) – give a case study to several students and ask them to prepare to role play these for the next class. Ask for volunteers. Select students you feel will not mind acting in front of everyone.
* Ask for volunteers to walk thru examples that you would normally do yourself – give a few points for the volunteers to encourage them

# Large Classes: Limiting the Chaos

The following is from (“Large Classes: Limiting the Chaos,” n.d.)

Here are some tips on how to set a positive classroom atmosphere and limit disruptions from the first day of class:

* **Signal the beginning of the class clearly and consistently.** To limit disruptions, you need to set the proper quiet atmosphere before you begin your class. In a clear, loud voice, say “Good morning!” or “We’re going to start now!” and use the same cue throughout the term to gain students’ attention. Do not start lecturing while students are talking.
* **Communicate your ground rules for the course on the first day.** Discuss your expectations for the students in the first lecture. Tell them your policies on classroom disruptions such as talking in class or arriving late. Provide a brief rationale for your rules, focusing more on students showing respect for other students.
* **Alternatively, spend the first class having the students collaboratively develop the ground rules for the course**. Encourage them to envision a classroom environment that will be most conducive to their learning. Ask them, too, to think through behaviours that might undermine their classmates' learning, and how those behaviours should be addressed or managed by the instructor or by the rest of the class. Try to get them to see the ground rules as a social contract whose aim is to support their mutual learning.
* **Put the ground rules in your course outline.** Since the outline is a contract you make with the class, it is an appropriate place to put your expectations for the course. It also gives you an impartial document to return to should you need a way to reinforce your rules.
* **Give students a non-disruptive outlet for expressing their concerns.** Consider placing an “exit” box at the back of the room for students’ questions, ideas, suggestions, and concerns, and respond to them on a regular basis. An anonymous online drop box or survey can be used in the same way to gather students’ questions, ideas, suggestions, and concerns.
* **Consider giving a professionalism grade.** In smaller classes, it may be possible to grade students on their level of professionalism – are they on time, prepared for class, respectful of other students, etc.?

If students are disrupting your class, here are some possible ways to handle them:

* **Ask the students if they have a question.** Sometimes talking during class is legitimate; students have missed a key definition or number and need clarification from someone sitting nearby.
* **Move closer to the disruptive students.** Your proximity may signal to them that they are interrupting the class.
* **Make a general statement to the class about the disruption.** If you do not feel comfortable singling people out, you can indicate to the class in general that the disruption level is too high and remind them of the ground rules you set on day one.
* **Use an active learning activity.** Try a think-pair-share where you have students turn to the person next to them to discuss a problem or question. This will break up the flow of the class and help to re-capture students’ attention. It will also give you an opportunity to approach the disruptive students and discuss your concern with them.
* **Ask those who consistently disrupt the class to see you after class.** This will give you an opportunity to air your concerns outside of class and indicate your displeasure with the students’ behaviour without embarrassing them in front of the class.
* **Ask the disruptive students to leave.** If you feel there is no other recourse, you are within your rights to ask students to leave the room. You may also choose to leave.
* **Designate a specific part of the classroom for laptop users.** Many students prefer to take class notes using a laptop, but the keyboard tapping can distract other students. Creating a "laptop zone" at the back of the classroom and a "non laptop zone" at the front can help allay this problem.

Other general tips to help large classes run smoothly include:

* **Start and end classes on time.** This helps to create an atmosphere of respect for students’ time and yours.
* **Avoid giving cues that class is ending.** If you say “One more point and then we can go,” it is likely that students will start packing their bags before you are finished. Moreover, to help prevent students from packing up and leaving early, make it a habit to spend the last two or three minutes of the class re-iterating the three most important points or ideas of that day's class.
* **Move around the classroom.** Try to keep students involved and attentive by moving throughout the classroom.
* **Look and sound confident.** Arrive at class prepared and handle yourself professionally at all times to indicate that you are in charge.
* **Make sure everyone can hear.** Learn to project your voice effectively, encourage students to speak up loudly, and if necessary repeat student questions and responses for those who may not have heard.
* **Admit when you can’t answer a question, offer to find the answer, and then report back next class.** Avoid getting bogged down in material about which you are unsure.

## Sample Conduct Statement for Course Outlines:

|  |
| --- |
| **A Word about Conduct in Large Classes**  This is a large class but you are not a small part of it! To make our time together as valuable as possible, we both have to work hard at it. The following basic principles may give us some guidelines:   1. Every student has the right to learn as well as the responsibility not to deprive others of their right to learn. 2. Every student is accountable for his or her own actions.   In order for you to get the most out of this class, please consider the following:   * Attend all scheduled classes and arrive on time. Late arrivals and early departures are very disruptive and violate the first basic principle. * Please do not schedule other activities during this class time. I will try to make class as interesting and informative as possible, but I can’t learn the material for you. * Please let me know immediately if you have a problem that is preventing you from performing satisfactorily in this class.   I am looking forward to working with you this term. |

(“Large Classes: Limiting the Chaos,” n.d.)

# Outside of class

* Assign students to study group
* Provide an email address so students can send you questions, but be sure to give them an estimated response time “I do not read email over the weekend” or “I will reply within 24 hours” etc.
* Build a Blackboard course to hold your syllabus, assignment descriptions, handouts, announcements, important dates, grades and announcements. This can also be used to encourage discussions.
* Create some different assignments: “Assign group or individual field research--e.g., "Find an on-campus example of a kind of tree / architectural style/etc." Make it fun for students, and help them find resources readily at hand.” (“Teaching Large Classes,” n.d.)

# What else should I know?

* Cheating - (“Large Class Teaching,” 2011)
* Proctor Pool at Purdue - (“Information for faculty - Proctor Pool,” n.d.)
* Review the CIE pages for other services such as test scoring, workshops, global learning, etc. - http://www.purdue.edu/cie/index.html
* Establishing rapport: Personal Interaction and Learning - (Fleming, n.d.)
* A series of ideas about working with large classes - (Herr, 1989)
* Classroom assessment techniques (commonly called 50 CATS) - (T. Angelo & Cross, 2012)

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