Workshop on Teaching Large Classes

Classroom administration, in class practices and directed discussion
Introductions

• Nathalia Holtzman
• Teaching for over 12 years, 7 at QC
  – Bio105 (Intro bio for majors- 280 students)
  – Bio286 (Cell bio-180 students)
  – Bio200(Intro to research- 25 students)
• Plus grad courses
• Research on heart development in zebrafish
Large Class Sized

• What do you see as the advantages?

• What do you see as the disadvantages?
Prep-Work

• Really get to know Blackboard and CUNY First.
  – It is a pain and time consuming but will save you lots of trouble in the end.

Blackboard Essentials Workshops will be held on:
Monday, September 9, 12 noon-1:30 pm, Science Building A223
Wednesday, September 11, 12 noon-1:30 pm, Science Building A223
Register at apps.qc.cuny.edu/workshops
Prep-Work

- Decide on grading entry system and stick with it...
  - It can be blackboard directly or excel
  - This means you must have a clear idea of what the assessments will be and how much each assignment will be worth.
  - This is particularly true for BB where everything is weighted equally once it is in the grade book.
- Combine sections if appropriate.
Other BB Prep-Work

• Post announcements about class expectations well before the first class.
• Post syllabus and your contact info early too.
• Week before classes start, email the class the announcement and ask them to check it.
Syllabus

• Course Description/ Goals/ Objectives
• Required Readings/Books
• Evaluation/Grading Scale
• Course Policies
  – Attendance
  – Missed Assignments
  – Communication Method
    • (e.g., Blackboard; email)
  – Classroom Conduct
  – Exam Policies
  – Students with Disabilities
  – Plagiarism/Academic Honesty
• Class Schedule and Assignments
• BB Quiz on Syllabus before the first day of class then review in class
Check Out the Classroom

• Do you need a mic or remote control?
• Can you walk around while you lecture?
• How will you project your slides? Try it out.
• Can you limit where the students sit in the classroom?
• Is there a whiteboard?
• Can you see a clock?
First Day of Class

• Overcome Anonymity
  – Introduce yourself
  – Know the class (survey?)
  – Have students meet the students next to them

• Consider if you want to have student representatives for the class.

• Setting class expectations
  – Late? Computer? Print out lectures?
  – What is your job and what is their job?
  – Explain your teaching philosophy.
  – How will you ensure fairness? How will testing work?

• The goal is to clearly define the students responsibilities and to make them trust you to help them.
About This Course

- Objectives:
  - Everyone learns something
  - Everyone is treated fairly

- Much of the information that you need is in the *Syllabus* document posted on Blackboard. Read it carefully.

- We will use Blackboard for communication.
  - Quizzes
  - Course updates and announcements
  - Lecture presentations and/or outlines
  - Questions on course materials
  - Discussion Board
Expectations for Success:

**ME:**
- Post information on blackboard in a timely fashion.
- Respond to posts within 24 hours.
- Present the material in a clear and concise manner.
- Guide you to understanding through active teaching.
- You should know what to expect on the test. **WHY?**

**YOU:**
- Prepared for class by reading, thinking and doing before class.
- Check blackboard often.
- Post questions in a timely fashion.
- Participate in class; learn actively.
- You should be prepared for the test. **HOW?**
Knowledge is Power

• The **internet** means that information is at your fingertips --- this does not mean the you don’t need to know anything because you can just look it up.

• You need to know what questions to ask to find the answer you are looking for - you cant look up anything about pneumonia if you don’t know it starts with a P.

• You need to be able to assess the value of information on the net --- you need to separate truth from fiction.

• OUR JOB --- learn the minimal information you need to ask the right questions and critically analyze the answers you find.
How to Do Well in This Course?

• STUDY FROM DAY ONE!!!
  • Have fun --- if you are not having fun, you are in the wrong place.

• Work hard --- there is no substitution for industry.

• Think --- you will not be able to memorize your way through this course.

• Learn the fundamentals --- if you do not learn and are not able to apply the basics, you will have trouble later on.

• Ask questions --- if you had gone through an entire semester without asking any questions, you probably had not learned very much.

• Pool your grey matters --- form study groups, ask each other questions, and explain materials to each other.

• Participate in Discussion Board on Blackboard --- post questions, and try to answer questions others post.
Learning goals

• What are the two main classes of cells and what defines them?

• What do all cell types need to do and how do organelles play a role?
   – Aside: how do bacteria do these things?

• How and why do cells become specialized?

• How are atoms constructed into molecules?
Attendance

• Using the class list from BB or CUNYFirst.
• Put the list in excel and add a column for the students signature.
• Pass this around at the beginning of the first few classes to take attendance.
• (Do check and see if any student who has not signed the list but has used BB).
• Can use the same strategy for tests.
Test Administration

• Get help setting up and collecting test is you can.
• Make 2 or more versions of the test if you are worried but work to make them the similar.
• Check ID’s and make sure that their names are on their test papers. You can have them sign in too.
• Multiple choice vs short answer?
• Get the grades back to the class quickly.
• Post everything on BB and give the students a time limit for getting back to you.
# Black Board Quizzes

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<th>Shorthand Version</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fill in the Blank</td>
<td>FIB</td>
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<tr>
<td>File Response</td>
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<td>Multiple Choice</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th>Shorthand Version</th>
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<td>Jumbled Sentence</td>
<td>JUMBLEDE_SENTENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz Bowl</td>
<td>QUIZ_BOWL</td>
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https://experts.missouristate.edu/display/bb9/Tests%2C+Surveys%2C+and+Pools
Managing TA’s

• Understand the job expectations for the different types of TA’s?
• Do you know what a Grad A is? How many hours are they actually paid to work?
• What are the traditions in your department?
• Can you ask or expect the TA’s to come to the lecture, proctor exams or grade material from the lecture?
• Work to standardize what they teach but HELP THEM by providing a PPT they must present, a word list or even flipping of the class so TA’s come to class prepared.
Engaging Students

- Be fair and firm
- Use humor
- Start the class with clear learning goals
- Keep eye contact and be enthusiastic
- Walk around the room
- Limit laptops to the edge of the room
- Take advantage of technology
- Provide something they can’t get from the book
- Make them work for it (pre-class quizzes)
- Use active/experiential learning strategies
- Limit lecture to 15 minute units if possible
Active Learning Strategies
Coach a team don’t go it alone

• **Student Call Out** – expect students to complete your sentences

• **Audience response systems** – help gauge student understanding of course material and can be anonymous or graded

• **Pause** - gives students time to ask questions to clarify key points or allow students to compare notes in pairs or groups

• **Immediate feedback** (as formative [non-graded] assessment) – insert a multiple choice question on a slide during lecture to assess students’ level of understanding using an audience response system or by a show of hands (use ConcepTest CAT)
ConcepTest CAT

1. Pose question
2. Vote
3. Give brief explanation
4. Majority correct
5. Discuss with neighbors (optional hint)
6. Vote
7. Majority incorrect
8. Give detailed explanation
Active Learning Strategies

• “One-Minute Paper” - ask students to reflect on a topic or respond to a question
• “What was the most important point that I learned today?” or “What two things do we not understand about ____?”
• Technology can be used (e.g., discussion boards, blogs, wikis).
• A challenge in a large class is the time needed for grading and creating rubrics to reduce subjectivity in grading. HAVE CLASSMATES GRADE WORK.

• **Write a quiz/test question** – allows students to critically think about course concepts; post the questions for review or include a few on the exam
Active Learning Strategies

• **“Think-Pair-Share”** – ask students to respond to a topic and then discuss this with a colleague; then ask several pairs to share their responses with the class.

• **Simulations** – have students create a simulation or skit of a classroom concept and demonstrate it to the class.

**Picture Prompt** – show the students a picture or figure from the text. Give the student 5-10 minutes to write the concepts, processes or elements of the image projected.
Tests

• No make-ups
• Have the students decide which is the better test question
• Lots of sample questions on Blackboard from quizzes
• Post answers on Blackboard
• Be willing to have some short answer questions
Managing in Class Behavior

• Provide an example of a class behavior that you are concerned about?
• Or have experience in class and how did you manage it?
Fairness in Large Classes

• What issues do you see around fairness in the classroom and what strategies might you implement to alleviate concerns?
Tech in the Classroom

• Ways to flip the classroom...
• Social media in the classroom...
• Recording your lectures...
• Taking advantages of OCT and CTL...
• Awareness of options like...
Other Useful Links

• http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/SupportPr
• http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/SupportPrograms/CTL/Resources/Pages/technology.aspxograms/CTL/Pages/default.aspx
• http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/for-faculty/teaching-resources/