

# FACULTY TIPSHEET

## Teaching Large Classes

Teaching large classes can be challenging. Here are some tips for managing these classes.

- 1. Mix-up instructional practices.** While didactic instruction is a primary instructional strategy in large settings, students learn best when different instructional modalities are used. Active learning includes reading course material, listening to lectures, discussion, and active engagement. Consider using a “bookend approach” (Smith, 2000), where students are presented with an engagement activity (i.e., advanced organizing) followed by alternating lecture and discussion.
- 2. Use technology.** Smartphones, Twitter, and classroom response systems can be great tools for promoting discussion and engagement. [Polleverywhere.com](http://Polleverywhere.com) and [Socrative.com](http://Socrative.com) are tools for classroom engagement. On Twitter, you can create a unique hashtag that students can use to tweet about specific topics.
- 3. It's in the syllabus!** Think of your syllabus as the road map for your course. It should include clear expectations, course objectives, course policies and procedures, student and teacher expectations, and a detailed outline of the course. Consult the “Teaching at UNL” Canvas course for information on how to build your syllabus.
- 4. Communicate consistently.** Consider using Canvas for email communication with your students so that everything will be automatically archived. Make yourself available to students during office hours and remind students that your office hours are for them.
- 5. Take a team approach.** Use your teaching assistants, colleagues, and advanced students as an instructional team. Use multiple approaches, guest lecturers, and facilitative discussions to create a classroom climate of active learning.

## RESOURCES

- “Going Deeper: Formal Small-Group Learning in Large Classes” by Karl A. Smith [go.unl.edu/q3av](http://go.unl.edu/q3av)
- “Teaching LARGE Classes” from the University of Texas at Austin [go.unl.edu/aw0j](http://go.unl.edu/aw0j)
- “Teaching at UNL” Canvas course [canvas.unl.edu/courses/51131](http://canvas.unl.edu/courses/51131)

*From the Center for Transformative Teaching*

- “An ingenious, low-tech approach to supporting verbal participation in large classes” [go.unl.edu/fbmu](http://go.unl.edu/fbmu)
- “Techniques for Large Enrollment Courses” [go.unl.edu/i7jc](http://go.unl.edu/i7jc)
- “Fresh Voices on Large Enrollment Courses” [go.unl.edu/0bck](http://go.unl.edu/0bck)
- Additional video resources and recommended readings [go.unl.edu/ry5a](http://go.unl.edu/ry5a)