

# Journal of Management Education Special Issue

## Call for Papers

### Experiential Learning in Large Classes

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#### Overview

The teaching of large classes has received increased attention in the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning literature, but the study, and delivery, of experiential learning in the context of large classes has received considerably less scrutiny. Most peer-reviewed articles tend to discuss the large class context in relation to the difficulties and problems which emerge from the massification of higher education (Usher and Cervenak 2005) during a time of significant resource restrictions for universities (Ferlie *et al.* 2010). Lund-Dean and Wright (2017) demonstrate how calls for increasingly engaged teaching approaches have coincided with larger class sizes. Although student engagement with large class teaching is discussed, the challenges and opportunities of experiential learning in such contexts is rarely theorized or researched.

The experience of either being a member of a large class (Boland 2011), or teaching or assessing a large class, is often presented as something that is of a lower quality than the smaller class experience. Key thinkers on critically reflexive teaching practice often discuss engaged pedagogy as something that can best happen in small group contexts. Some research has demonstrated that being enrolled in a large class can impact on educational attainment as a result of being precluded from receiving formative feedback (Nicol 2007; Broadbent *et al.* 2018), asking for help and engaging in discussions between faculty research experts (Karabenick 2003; Asikainen *et al.* 2014; Woollacott *et al.* 2014; Li and Pinto-Powell 2017).

Research has also demonstrated that being enrolled in a large class can impact on students in ways that impact on their experience of university-level learning. Students sometimes report feeling anonymous and de-personalised as a result of the lack of opportunities to connect with instructors (Isbell and Cote 2009). Negative experiences in large classes are not, however, limited to students, as faculty exposure to large groups of students has been identified as a key cause of burnout (Watts and Robertson 2011), and high assessment and administrative responsibilities have been associated with poor mental health and even suicide amongst academic staff (Bhardwa 2018; Pells 2018).

The aim of this special issue is to contribute to new understandings of how experiential learning can be used to engage students and faculty, who increasingly find themselves teaching in larger class contexts. Rather than exclusively discussing technological solutions or innovations which aim to address the difficulties which have arisen from teaching very large classes, this special

issue aims to develop new ways of understanding engagement in higher education learning environments.

Although much recent attention has been paid to the shadow-side of experiential learning, the experiences of faculty who teach (and assess) larger groups with fewer resources are rarely considered in the research literature. This has resulted in an absence of theory which could contribute to new understandings of how to enhance experiential learning for large classes. This special issue will consider theories, research and pedagogical and andragogical approaches to the delivery of experiential learning in large-enrolment classrooms.

A number of approaches have been used to mitigate the negative consequences of being a member of a large class. This includes discussions of the pedagogical benefits and assessment of IT (Maringe and Sing 2014; Mtshali *et al.* 2015; Saunders and Hutt 2015; de Arriba 2017; Schaffer *et al.* 2017), MOOCs (Maringe and Sing 2014), lecture capture (Freeman 1998; Owston *et al.* 2011), supplementary media (Saunders and Hutt 2015), student-response systems (Mayer *et al.* 2009; Hancock 2010; Patterson *et al.* 2010; Heaslip *et al.* 2014), peer-teaching and peer-assessment (Asikainen *et al.* 2014), and flipped classrooms (Eichler and Peebles 2016). However, much of the evaluation of such programmes are conducted from the perspective of the *provider* and few include detailed qualitative accounts which explore the nuances of how the mode of assessment has affected the learner and the experience of learning (Cullen and Turnbull 2005).

### **Potential questions and themes for authors to explore**

1. Although approaches such as peer-evaluation, simulations and flipped classrooms may reduce assessment loads for faculty, how do such approaches affect learners in large, diverse classes? What impact do they have on a student's orientation to learning about their subject discipline, their career orientation and even their classmates, instructors or institutions? In other words, what are the unintended consequences (positive and negative) that arise from these approaches?
2. Do political considerations alter educators' approaches to the facilitation of learning in large classrooms? What are the opportunities which arise to guarantee assurance of learning in the large class context? What resources can be deployed to assist faculty to mitigate and overcome deleterious personal and career-related impacts of large-class teaching?
3. Although there are many articles on large class teaching and the issues associated with such, the Social Sciences Citation Index lists fewer than 15 peer-reviewed publications concerning assessment, with none of these related to the domain of business and management education. What can other disciplines (in the sciences, social sciences and arts/humanities) contribute to new understandings of experiential learning in large classes?
4. Conceptually, how can the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning field inform discussions about large class engagement through experiential learning? What don't we know and how can we bridge these gaps?
5. How can experiential learning in larger classes be designed in a way which encourage active learning and student engagement? What are the practical implications of enabling

such engagement for faculty? How can experiential assignments be designed which encourage and promote critical thinking and reflexivity amongst students in large classes?

6. What pedagogical strategies can address the diversity encountered in large classrooms in a way that produces deep learning for students? Can experiential learning in the large, diverse class be used to teach important lessons about the value of diversity in the workplace and society?
7. What do we mean by a large class? In some teaching contexts a class size of 50 is considered large; in others this would be considered a small group. Is there anything to be learnt about the various experiences of large class size which can inform the delivery of experiential learning?
8. Finally, we are open to dissenting voices. This special issue is predicated on the in-principle value of introducing experiential learning to large class teaching. There may be potential contributors who think that this is a misguided endeavour or mission. Submissions which make an empirical or conceptually based argument for this point of view are also encouraged.

Submissions are not restricted to the areas above and submissions are sought across all of the Journal of Management Education's sections: Empirical, Theoretical and Conceptual articles, Essays, Rejoinders, Instructional Innovations, and Instructional Change in Context. As with all JME submissions, papers should be original and not under consideration or submitted to any other publications.

All submissions should follow the requirements outlined on the at: <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/journal-management-education#submission-guidelines>.

Manuscripts may be submitted online via the SageTrack system at: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jome>.

To discuss your article prior to submission, please contact John Cullen ([john.g.cullen@mu.ie](mailto:john.g.cullen@mu.ie)). The submission deadline is **October 31st 2019**, but earlier submissions would be welcome from July 31, 2019 onwards.

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