Journal of Management Education Special Issue: "Experiential Learning in Large Classes"

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 that emerge from the massification of higher education (Usher & Cervenan, 2005) during a time of significant resource restrictions for universities (Ferlie, McGivern, & De Moraes, 2010; Cullen, 2011). 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 have an impact on educational attainment as a result of being precluded from receiving formative feedback (Broadbent, Panadero, & Boud, 2018; Nicol, 2007), asking for help and engaging in discussions between faculty research experts (Asikainen, Virtanen, Postareff, & Heino, 2014; Karabenick, 2003; Li & Pinto-Powell, 2017; Woollacott, Booth, & Cameron, 2014).

Research has also demonstrated that being enrolled in a large class can have an impact on students in ways that impact their experience of university-level learning. Students sometimes report feeling anonymous and depersonalized as a result of the lack of opportunities to connect with instructors (Isbell & 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 & Robertson, 2011), and high assessment and administrative responsibilities have been associated with poor mental health and even suicide among 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 that aim to address the difficulties that 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 that 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 (de Arriba, 2017; Maringe & Sing, 2014; Mtshali, Maistry, & Govender, 2015; Saunders & Hutt, 2015; Schaffer, Young, Ligon, & Chapman, 2017), MOOCs (Maringe & Sing, 2014), lecture capture (Freeman, 1998; Owston, Lupshenyuk, & Wideman, 2011), supplementary media (Saunders & Hutt, 2015), student-response systems (Hancock, 2010; Heaslip, Donovan, & Cullen, 2014; Mayer et al., 2009; Patterson, Kilpatrick, & Woebkenberg, 2010), peer-teaching and peer-assessment (Asikainen et al., 2014), and flipped classrooms (Eichler & Peeples, 2016). However, much of the evaluation of such programs is conducted from the perspective of the *provider* and few include detailed qualitative accounts that explore the nuances of how the mode of assessment has affected the learner and the experience of learning (Cullen & 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 that 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 it, 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 do we not know and how can we bridge these gaps?

5. How can experiential learning in larger classes be designed in a way that encourages active learning and student engagement? What are the practical implications of enabling such engagement for faculty? How can experiential assignments be designed that encourage and promote critical thinking and reflexivity among 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 that 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 endeavor or mission. Submissions that make an empirical or conceptually based argument for this point of view are also encouraged.

Submissions are not restricted to the areas mentioned 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 *Journal of Management Education* submissions, papers should be original and not under consideration or submitted to any other publications.

All submissions should follow the requirements outlined on the journal website 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). The submission deadline is **October 31, 2019**, but earlier submissions would be welcome from July 31, 2019 onwards. The following are the guest editors:

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