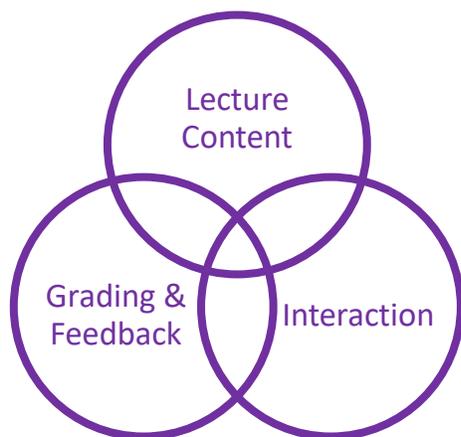


Planning Large Enrollment Online Courses: Considering the Impact of Class Size on Instruction

Many online courses have a cap of around 25 students. What happens if there is no cap, if courses can be over 100 students? How can an instructor manage all the additional grading and feedback? How can they provide a rich learning experience? Large enrollment courses need to be planned intentionally to address the impact of a larger numbers of students.

Interaction is an essential component of an online course. Incorporating discussions and group activities can lead to a vibrant learning environment, with a sense of belonging to a larger community and higher student retention. It often helps to make discussion groups of 10-15 students instead of whole class discussions. Grading holistically with a rubric that targets specific course goals can reduce grading time while providing informative feedback for student learning. Similarly, group activities can take

the place of some individual assignments and can be graded with well-designed rubrics.



Grading and feedback are critical for student learning. Without it they often do not know how to change – to learn. They need feedback on everything they submit. In addition to grading with rubrics as mentioned above, instructors in large enrollment courses can provide class-wide feedback on the most common mistakes and misconceptions through announcements or short video messages.

Individual assignments can target essential skills that each student must master, and short answer tests can assess and provide feedback on other key concepts and applications of course material. The benefit of short answer testing is that it can be auto-graded and it can provide detailed feedback. For example, it is possible to provide feedback for each distractor in a multiple choice question. This feedback can be an explanation or a hint; it can direct students to specific content to review. Of course, that only helps if they can take the test more than once; otherwise, explanations are a better way to provide automated individual correction as needed.

Lecture Content should be provided as a series of short videos (up to ten minutes) that target critical elements that tend to confuse students or that aren't already addressed well in the other content you have provided. These are the areas where students need your expertise. Videos must be posted with closed captions to ensure all students can benefit from them.