



Module 6

Managing Large Classes

Approaches to Language Teaching: Extension

Video Length: Approximately 11 Minutes
Notes to the Trainer

For best results, have participants go through the readings for this module prior to viewing the video. As you work through this module, use pairs or groups whenever you think it might be effective. After each group activity, debrief the answers and use them for further discussion of various points. Refer back to the main points when appropriate. It is important that teachers apply the concepts in the module to their own classrooms and situations. The goal of this module is to have participants begin thinking about alternative management techniques that they might use in their large classes. These techniques should build in more individualization of learning and more learner practice than they may presently be using.

See Appendix A for additional handouts that can be used for general observation and discussion tasks with any of the modules.

Before Viewing

Tell participants to think about a large airport or train station or public market area. They can even draw a rough diagram of the layout of such a place. Many people come through such centers every day. Have participants form groups and discuss the following questions, writing down their ideas.

1. How are such places physically organized? In your experience, are they effective at moving large numbers of people quickly? Do they encourage people to communicate with each other?
2. How is information about navigating through these places communicated, both at the group and at the individual level?
3. Is there a set of logistics that are common to such situations? If so, list some. If not, list some that you think might be useful.
4. Is there an airport or railway station or marketplace culture? If so, what are some characteristics of it that contribute to successful travel? If not, is there a way such a thing could be established to facilitate travel? What would be its characteristics?
5. What are some typical traveler behaviors that facilitate travel or working / shopping in a marketplace? What are some problematic behaviors (e.g. navigation, disturbing others, etc.)? What are some of the consequences of each of these types of behaviors?

Debrief

Now imagine a classroom of 50-75 students. Do you think some of the answers to the above questions might apply to that situation? Explain your answer. Try to use specific examples.

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Preview Vocabulary

Terms	Definitions
Agenda	A list of classroom activities for that day, usually written on the blackboard in the order that the activities will be covered.
Classroom logistics	Practical arrangements needed to make the classroom operate successfully, e.g., attendance, homework collection, paper distribution and collection, student movement, etc.
Classroom management	All aspects of the classroom the teacher may have some influence over, e.g., physical arrangement of space, student motivation, teaching approach, lesson plans, disciplinary techniques, etc.
Consequences	Results of an event or a behavior. In the classroom, it usually refers to the results of negative behavior.
Consistency	Always reacting the same way, or applying rules and expectations in the same way for all students at all times.
Diagnostic tests	Tests given at any time during the term, frequently at the beginning, in order to determine student strengths and weaknesses. Results provide help in planning future lessons.
Established framework	The predictable organization of the classroom and lessons.
Facilitate	To make easier; help something to happen more smoothly.
Identifier	Something that gives a name or an identity to individuals. In a classroom, this can be a name tag, name cards on desks, group names, etc.
Labeling	Classifying people (students) into categories, using incomplete information. Calling a student "stupid" or "lazy" is labeling.
Lesson plan template	A form or outline that busy teachers can use for planning all of their lessons. The form is general enough that it can be adapted to the specific needs of each class.
Pedagogy	Teaching approaches, methods, materials, and techniques.
Peer reinforcement	Feedback from friends or other students in the class that supports positive behavior and/or learning.
Proactive vs. reactive	In this module, proactive teacher behaviors are those that anticipate student behaviors and reactions and plan the classroom to avoid problems. Student behavior then tends to be more positive and constructive than negative. Reactive behaviors are those that react to student behavior after a problem develops.
Sockeye salmon	A large fish with reddish meat.

Now start the video. Listen to the introduction. Complete the guided observation and reflection tasks for each of the video segments. The next part of the manual is for trainees and is available on separate pages for ease of copying.

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Module 6, Managing Large Classes

Introduction, Expanded Narrative

As class sizes grow in classrooms around the world, educators are looking at several questions:

1. Do large classes affect student learning?
2. Do large classes affect an instructor's ability to teach?
3. In general, how do large classes affect the quality of education?

There are many problems with large classes (40-75 students), including:

- Managing a large class well requires good planning, but teachers often don't have time for the kind of planning needed.
- Teachers find it difficult to establish rapport with students.
- Teachers find it difficult to monitor student work, so learners may get little individual attention or feedback to help them improve.
- Proficiency and ability level vary a good deal within the class. Weaker students often get left behind.
- Maintaining control and providing effective discipline may be difficult.
- Students may get little opportunity for actual language production and practice.

Answering the three questions above may or may not help reduce class sizes. Meanwhile, the problems are there. Teachers need to know what pedagogical techniques and classroom management practices can be used to maximize the amount of student learning in large classes. The development of effective learning in classes that size often depends more on classroom management skills and a short list of pedagogical techniques than on any one particular approach to teaching.

Module Focus

This module will cover three areas of teacher behavior that are needed to deal with the problems listed above:

- Pedagogical planning.
- Classroom learning systems.
- Dealing with student behavior, or discipline management.

Pedagogical planning refers to advance and overall planning of the curriculum and planned application of deliberate teacher behaviors that can facilitate learning.

Classroom learning systems are clear routines, expectations, and physical arrangements the teacher can set up to save time; enable learners to know what is expected of them, thus adding to their feelings of security; and ensure the smooth running of the class and classroom activities.

Discipline management refers to a fair and even-handed system of discipline. Students are clearly told what behavior is expected and what the consequences of negative behavior will be. A teacher using discipline management is firm but shows respect for the individual, endeavoring to discover the reasons behind negative behavior. That teacher is, above all, consistent in her treatment of students and application of behavioral rules. Discipline management is most effective when behavioral expectations are part of a school-wide system.

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Video Segment #1, Pedagogical Planning

[Read before viewing.]

Some things to look for:

- Teacher behaviors.
- Examples of planning.

In this segment, it is important to listen closely to the narrative and to notice which suggested behaviors are pictured. Watch the segment at least twice.

1. As you listen to the narrative, list as many of the teacher suggestions (planning techniques and teacher behaviors) as you can.
2. The second time through the segment, put a check after the things on your list that you see being done in the classrooms pictured. Also notice and make notes about student behaviors. View the video segments as many times as necessary until you feel satisfied with the detail of your observations and notes.

Reflection

[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. Compare your notes and observations with one or more people. Make additions and changes to your list, as needed.
2. What did you notice about student reactions and behaviors in the classrooms pictured? Were they very similar to your own classes? Different? In what ways?
3. Look at each item and consider the following:
 - a. Is this something you do in your teaching situation now?
 - b. Is it something with which you agree? If yes, how could you do it in our situation? If no, why not?
 - c. Is this something you would like to do but can't? Why? Is there an alternative solution?
 - d. How might your students react to this teacher behavior the first time you try it? How can you prepare them in advance for the change?
4. Choose one item from 3 above and brainstorm ways that you might be able to use this technique. Step outside the way things are done now. Try to look at the situation as an outsider. What might be possible? Hold these ideas for the *Now You Try It—An Action Plan* section on page 62.

See Module 14 on Reflective Teaching for more ideas on documenting class events, introducing change, and improving practices over time.

Video Segment #2, Classroom Learning Systems: Observation Guide

[Read before viewing.]

In this segment, it is once again important to listen closely to the narrative and to notice which ideas from the narrative are pictured. Watch the segment at least twice. Notice these aspects:

- Physical organization of classroom space.
- Student movement.
- Class routines and teacher behaviors.
- Training of students.

1. List the different ways desks, chairs, equipment, and materials are placed in the room.
2. Notice the pattern of student movement and how it relates to class activity.

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3. The second time through, list different classroom routines and teacher behaviors pictured. There were routines for student oral response, for keeping the classroom neat, for beginning and ending an activity, for moving in and out of the room, and for letting students know what activities will be done that day. Notice how teachers individualized feedback.

4. Pay attention to the techniques being explained by the teachers themselves and to how two teachers, one with younger learners and one with high school learners, assign responsibilities to students. In addition, listen to what one of them says about training students as part of management.

Reflection

[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. In groups, compare your observations about the physical organization of classroom space. What did you notice about the different set-ups? Were any of them like your classroom? Discuss the pros and cons of the different types of organization in relation to some of the points you heard in the narrative. In what ways could your classrooms be physically modified on a temporary or permanent basis (think in terms of both small scale and larger scale changes, and incremental changes over time)?

2. What student movement did you see? In what ways was movement related to classroom activity? How did one teacher move the class from the classroom to the lab efficiently?

3. Comment on the following.

a. Compare your lists of classroom routines, adding to your own from others'. How effective did you think each was for its purpose? What were some additional situations mentioned in the narrative that could be done more efficiently through established routines?

b. How did two of the teachers individualize feedback? What was the routine called that one of them used to ensure that all students got individual attention every 2 or 3 days?

c. Discuss your own techniques and explain to your group why you use them. Then discuss which routines you saw that might be effective in your own class and how you might use or adapt them to your situation.

4. What responsibilities did the very young learners have in their work areas? How did one teacher give students responsibility for the information in group work? What did the teacher of very young learners say about training her students? When did she do this training? What did she say she made clear to the students?

Video Segment #3, Student Behavior (Discipline): Observation Guide

[Read before viewing.]

Before you watch the segment, divide a sheet of paper into the following parts, allowing plenty of space for note-taking:

1. Pedagogical Basis or Assumptions
2. Teacher Planning
3. Recommended Teacher Roles (Behaviors)
4. Other?

As you listen to the narrative and observe the classes, put the ideas that you hear and see into one of the four categories above. If you have a question about something or have another category on which you would like to focus, use the "Other" space. As a special focus item, pay particular attention to what is handwritten and drawn on the orange poster. What does it mean? Who do you think created it?

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Reflection

[Read and answer after viewing.]

1. Compare your notes with others in your group. Add any you missed and discuss why you categorized the items as you did. Then, one member of each group can walk around to other groups to see if there are other points from the tape that you may have missed.
2. Next, add your own ideas and behaviors related to discipline (and/or those of teachers you have had or observed) under each of the categories.
3. In your groups, share and write down discipline problems you have and have seen in your school. Use the categorized information to discuss ways you might deal with those problems.

Summary Discussion

1. Revisit the ideas you have written down for each of the three video segments. Do they appear to be interrelated? Explain your answer.
2. After viewing this module, do you think you will try to use some of these techniques and activities in your class? Why or why not? If yes, which ones will you try? Create a personalized list of items that you would like to try in your own classes. You can carry these ideas forward to the next *Action Plan* activity.

Now You Try It—An Action Plan

Step 1

You can read some of the articles on the topic of managing large classes (see Module 6 Readings A and B plus the List of Additional Readings and Resources below). Using the video, you have seen a few examples and ideas from other teachers' classes.

Now, think about your own classes and how you could use some of the techniques listed to:

- Use planning time efficiently.
- Establish rapport with students.
- Monitor individual student work.
- Provide individual attention or feedback to help students improve.
- Deal with differences in proficiency and ability level.
- Provide opportunity for actual language production and practice.
- Maintain control and provide discipline in a way that puts the focus on learning.

Talk about your ideas with others in your group. Put the items on the list above in order of importance to you.

Step 2

By yourself or with a peer, design a portion of a lesson that includes the use one or more of the techniques and activities that you ranked most highly on your list.

Step 3

Share your plan with others in your group. Explain what activities would come before and after your segment. Get their ideas and feedback. How will you measure its success? How will you know what item(s) need further changes?

Step 4

Rewrite your design, as needed. Try it with your class. If you are not teaching, ask the trainer or another experienced teacher for feedback.

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Answer Key to Module 6, Managing Large Classes

Here are some suggested directions for answers to the questions for this module. Actual answers may vary depending on local context and the kinds of experience that viewers bring to the task of interpreting and applying video and text concepts.

Module 6, Video Segment #1, Pedagogical Planning

Narrator's list of teacher suggestions:

- Give diagnostic tests at the beginning in order to discover each student's strengths and needs. This one is imperative, but then all the others start with "We can." Should this one too? We can give diagnostic tests... Or put all the ones into the imperative.
- Help students set their own learning goals and develop learning strategies that work well for them.
- Think of students as having a range of abilities and as "works in progress." We can avoid labeling such as, "That student is smart. That one is stupid. That one never listens."
- Individualize interactions as much as possible. We can learn student names or use student identifiers such as name cards, so students feel important and feel that we know them.
- Create a plan that allows us to give individual attention to a particular set of students each day. We can rotate, so that over 2-3 days, each student or student group gets some individual attention.
- Work with administrators and fellow teachers to regularly update the curriculum to meet student needs.
- Encourage student responsibility and independence by allowing them freedom within the established framework to make choices, to help with classroom logistics, and to help each other.

Module 6, Video Segment #2, Classroom Learning Systems

Narrator's list of suggestions for routines and classroom logistics for students:

- Move smoothly from one activity to another;
- Shift in and out of group work quickly;
- Self-check and peer-check student work.

For teachers:

- Keep explanations and directions clear and brief.
- Set up routines for classroom logistics such as attendance, homework correction, paper distribution and collection, work completed, and so on.
- Post the day's agenda on the board at the beginning of class.
- Create purposeful activities that keep learners on task. You can have additional self-directed activities available for students who finish early.
- Give learners responsibility for choosing and doing individual projects in a group they have chosen.
- Display student work and projects.
- Use any available aides or volunteer help effectively.

1. The physical organization of classroom space varied according to age, room size, available resources, and the activities. We saw examples where desks were grouped in clusters instead of rows. We also saw learning stations, or learning areas, in the rooms, used for different purposes.

2. Students stood up for activities such as chants and for work at learning stations. The very young learners also used hand and arm movements as part of the song they were singing. One teacher moved the class from the classroom to the lab efficiently by calling on tables (larks, eagles, etc.) rather than letting the whole class rush to the front of the class.

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3. Teachers individualized feedback by checking in with different pairs and small groups.
4. The very young learners were responsible for staying on task and cleaning up their own work areas. The teacher said that she does this training at the start of the school year. She made her expectations and the rules clear to the students. She was consistent so that students would always know what to expect.

Video Segment #3, Student Behavior (Discipline)

Narrator's list of teacher suggestions:

- Be proactive rather than reactive. We can establish clear rules and expectations and then follow them for all students. We can even let students establish their own agreed-on classroom conduct guides. Consistency is crucial. Again, every point starts with "We can" except this first one. Can it be changed to "We can be proactive...?"
- Post class rules and behavior expectations on the wall in both the first and second language.
- Use reward systems and peer reinforcement so that the whole class works toward common behavioral goals.
- Establish consequences for inappropriate behavior and, when needed, apply those consequences in a fair and matter-of-fact manner. To the extent that it seems reasonable, we can postpone individual discipline matters until after class in order to save class time for learning.
- Build into lesson plans both purposeful activities and other opportunities for students to get up and move around the classroom.
- Try to discover the reason for behavior in cases where there are consistent student discipline problems.
- Work with administrators and colleagues to determine the extent to which school-wide behavior models can be put into practice and followed by all.

Some suggestions for points that could appear in the chart:

1. Pedagogical Basis or Assumptions
 - It is a responsibility of authority to use it wisely, selectively, and fairly.
 - For discipline to be effective, all students must be treated equitably.
 - All students have the potential to grow and make positive changes.
 - If we respect our students, they will respect us.
 - Humiliating students makes it difficult for them to learn or want to learn.
 - There is usually a reason for negative behaviors. If we look to find the reason(s), we may be better able to manage them.
2. Planning
 - Work with colleagues and school administrators to set up a widely "advertised" code of behavior that all students are expected to follow.
 - Be proactive (plan ahead) rather than reactive (try to fix problems after they occur). Tell students clearly what behavior is expected. Discuss classroom rules and post them on the wall. Students can even help you decide what those rules should be.
 - Build into lessons plans purposeful activities that can help to keep learners focused, on task, and motivated.
 - Build into lesson plans opportunities for movement around the classroom.
 - Along with the rules, establish consequences for negative behavior that everyone knows and understands.

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- When appropriate, let students participate in setting behavioral goals and class rules or agreements.
3. Recommended Teacher Roles (Behaviors)
- Follow the rules consistently.
 - Use rewards for positive behavior.
 - Use peer reinforcement, getting everyone involved in creating and realizing behavioral goals.
 - Try to discover the reason for negative behavior in cases where it happens on an ongoing basis.
 - Apply discipline consistently and fairly.
 - If possible, postpone dealing with discipline problems until after class.

One that is important but not in the video:

- Avoid taking student behavior personally. Always deal with behavior problems in a calm manner, using established codes of behavior, rather than reacting angrily.

4. Other: Answers will vary according to individual observations.

Notes on the special focus item, the orange poster:

The orange poster was part of a school-wide behavior code in this primary school. One point in the code was to “Show Respect.” The poster reminded students of behaviors that were evidence of respect.

Things You See (picture of an eye)	Things You Hear (picture of an ear)
People being nice. Helping each other. Making others happy. Raising your hand to talk.	Encouraging each other. Being quiet when working. Listening to the teacher.

Are there other things you think belong on a chart such as this one?

