

**Strategies for Teaching Large Classes**  
**Writing and Teaching Retreat, August 27, 2015**

**Perspective—What is a large class at Middlebury? Statistics from fall semester, 2014 (supplied by Provost’s Office)**

# of students in class	# of class sections
2-9	108
10-19	233
20-29	90
30-39	50
40-49	20
50-99	10
100+	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>511</b>

**Perspective—From Ken Bain’s *What the Best College Teachers Do* (2004), p. 109**

“People tend to learn most effectively (in ways that make a sustained, substantial, and positive influence on the way they act, think, or feel) when (1) they are trying to solve problems (intellectual, physical, artistic, practical, or abstract); (2) they are able to do so in a challenging yet supportive environment in which they can feel a sense of control over their own education; (3) they can work collaboratively with other learners to grapple with the problems; (4) they believe that their work will be considered fairly and honestly; and (5) they can try, fail, and receive feedback from expert learners in advance of and separate from any judgment of their efforts.”

**Further Resources on Teaching Large Classes:**

The Vanderbilt Center for Teaching has developed a first-class set of guides on a number of topics related to teaching-- <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/>

The University of Michigan’s Center for Research on Learning and Teaching is considered one of the strongest in the country—  
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsllc>

You can find many practical tips from this guide developed by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte—  
<http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/large-classes/large-class-handbook>

Carleton College is one of the few liberal arts colleges that offers advice to instructors of large classes—  
<http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/earlycareer/teaching/LargeClasses.html>

**Recorded Examples:**

For Michael Sandel’s full lecture— <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBdfcR-8hEY> (and check out some discussion of the lecture at <http://www.bestteachersinstitute.org/id115.html>)

For the clip by Eric Mazur—  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wont2v\\_LZ1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wont2v_LZ1E)