

Learning From Lecturers' Experiences of Teaching Large Undergraduate Classes in a South African University

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses experiences of lecturers in a South African university, of teaching large undergraduate classes and lessons therefrom regarding the teaching thereof. Through individual face-to-face interviews, the researcher generated data from a convenience sample of 28 lecturers across nine departments who volunteered to participate. Data were analysed through thematic analysis. The study found that most lecturers struggled with and disliked large classes. They lacked material support, had big tutorial groups and were unable to connect with individual students. Some relied on very traditional and basic teaching approaches while others exploited richer and more modern technologies. Two perspectives about large classes emerged: they were here to stay and needed to be managed better; and class sizes needed to be reduced. The researcher concludes that depending on the approaches lecturers used, most classes seemed to be experiencing only surface learning. Deep learning is difficult but not impossible in large classes.