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**A Reflective Inquire into Teaching Large Classes in Computer Science: the study case of a Cloud Computing Course**

A large body of literature affirms that the design of Teaching and Learning Activities (TLA) for large classes could be problematic. Often, large classes restrict the possibilities for activities that engage and activate students, like class discussions, debates, feedback lectures, jigsaws, only to mention few. Moreover, for the instructor is difficult to establish an emotional relationship with the students.

This study analyzes *what research say about teaching methods for large classes* and then discusses *how these methods are applicable for a specific subject*, that is Cloud Computing[[1]](#footnote-1). This research work presents the reflective inquiry of the authors on the large size class problem. Indeed, the author deals with the challenge of designing active teaching activities for a class of 128 students after having taught, for three years, the same course to a class of less than 60 students. In the first part of the paper are identified the main factors that influence teaching large classes and is summarized the state-of-the-art about active teaching methods for large classes (a snowballing literature review approach is used). Then, in the second part of the paper, the study case (i.e. a large class of the “Master of Science in Computer Science” program) is described and analyzed against the main factors that influence teaching large classes. Then, is provided a discussion about the active teaching methods implemented, what teaching methods could be used in the future and what teaching methods are not appropriate. In the second part of the paper the investigation is conducted using a mix of intrinsic case study research methodology and technical action research. Indeed, the goal of this research is to analyze and discuss what active teaching methods work in the large class using reflective inquiry (“what works”).

1. Cloud computing is a model for enabling ubiquitous, convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)