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Class sizes have always been a problem for us in the accounting program at Brooklyn College. Before the pandemic, I had about 35 to 40 students in my in-person introduction classes. Now, I have 45 students in those foundational classes conducted online and 30 in my upper-level auditing class, a writing intensive course; the previous course cap was 25. One of my colleagues has a class of 114.

Learning accounting is like learning a foreign language combined with a new logic system. Students often need a lot of review of concepts and problems, along with individual attention. This is nearly impossible in a large class. To mitigate the problem, I switched to flipped learning where I record the lectures, and during class time students spend time doing exercises and problems.

To make accounting come alive, I've added experiential learning projects. The hours spent organizing and dealing with problems puts me in a mode of constantly walking a tightrope in a state of exhaustion. Yet I plow through, because the students have raved about the projects despite all the logistical difficulties. A TA would be a great help.

The online teaching world makes things worse. At the beginning of COVID, I worked 10- to 14-hour days. In the past, I tried to work out problems with my experiential learning teams at the beginning or end of a live class with the entire team in attendance. Now, I have to deal with multiple emails. I also have to deal with what seems like gazillions of emails about students' technical problems with Blackboard or the book publisher's site. Then there are those students who can't complete assignments on time because of an illness in the family (COVID or non-COVID), connectivity problems, computer issues, work schedules, childcare, etc.

I spend most of my time just managing the work and the issues and less time teaching. I certainly have little time with students. And being with students is why I do this job.

CUNY was founded as a college to teach the children of the working people, yet our class sizes defy good teaching practices. It makes me wonder how much CUNY management really cares about our students.