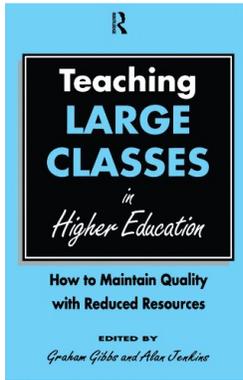


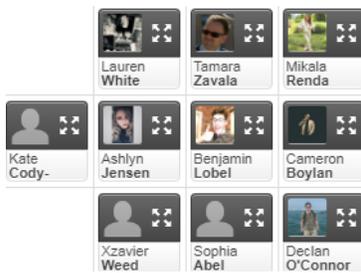
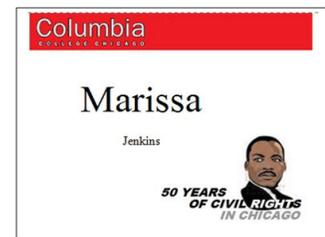
Columbia College Chicago is justly famous for its small class sizes – the average is fewer than 20 students. My writing courses are capped at 15. However, in 2015 when we announced the “Big Chicago” suite of freshman courses, to be taught in auditoriums to class sizes of 100 – I was eager for the challenge. My topic: **“50 Years of Civil Rights in Chicago.”**



Twenty years earlier I'd been invited by the provost to participate with other faculty innovators to jump-start online courses at Columbia, and begin to identify best practices. For my part, the principal tenets were (and are) that online courses should deliver the same learning outcomes as the classroom versions, and the online students' experience should approximate the student experience in the classroom. Auditorium classes, like online classes, may play a key role in the financial challenges facing higher ed. But we don't have to abandon the tactics and techniques of small size classes as we upscale to large class sizes. Students learn from students, if you let them.

What is the small class version of my “Big Chicago”?

- **Each student is assigned** for the semester to a collaboration group, and receives a personalized name tag, color-coded for each tag-team. That is, there's a total of ten teams of ten students each (Reds, Blues, etc.) for each class of 100 students, scaled up or down, with tweaks when necessary.
- Students are on a **first-name basis** with at least nine of their peers beginning with the very first class meeting.
- **They are assigned seats** in three-row clusters, 3-4-3 (or for some aisle seats, 4-2-4)



- **Break-out sessions** pull them into working discussion groups, rather than push them toward the vending machines. Each cluster of students lean forward or swivel back, so they can **caucus without leaving their seats**.
- **The 3-hour session typically includes** at two such breakouts, usually followed by team reports presented onstage by a spokesperson, or by the whole tag team.

(Keep in mind, “Big Chicago” students are all freshmen)

- **Each 10-student team consists of the same proportion** of race and gender, gleaned from college data. A typical class is 2/5 Black, 2/5 White, and 1/5 Other. This affirmative design process, using data provided by census spreadsheets, is my second most labor-intensive chore.

ID Number	Prog Major/ Tit	City	State	Zip	Age	Ethnic	Gender	Race	HS Sch Name
366558	Game Design	Boston	MA	02127-2634	20	WH	M	WH	Univ Massachusetts Boston
366558	Game Design	Boston	MA	02127-2634	20	WH	M	WH	Boston Latin School
361048	Misc	Graylake	IL	60030-1223	18	WH	M	WH	Graylake Central High School
368760	Theatre Design	Franklin Park	IL	60131-2130	18	F	H	BL	East Leyden High School
362409	Fashion Studies	Chicago	IL	60616	18	F	H	BL	Lincoln Park High School
364802	Music Business	Chicago	IL	60619-7316	18	BL	F	BL	North Grand High School
365559	Misc	Chicago	IL	60624-3348	18	AM	F	AM	Lincoln Park High School
365530	Misc	Carroll	CA	90007-1033	18	WH	M	WH	San Diego Academy
365870	Interdisciplinary Doc	Crabtree Twp	PA	19096-4833	18	MJ	F	MJ	Beraca Valley Sr High School
365587	Audio Design and	Lynchwood	IL	60141-1076	18	BL	M	BL	Bloom High School
360223	Misc	Milwaukee	WI	53223-5706	18	BL	F	BL	Messner High School
362989	Illustration	Winneton	IL	60189-0191	18	MJ	F	MJ	Wheaton-Warrenville South HS
359714	Public Relations	Chicago	IL	60618-1213	18	M	H	WH	Van Stuyvenberg Science Ctr
357307	Journalism	Verona	WI	53593-1762	18	WH	F	WH	University Wisconsin Green Bay
357307	Journalism	Verona	WI	53593-1762	18	WH	F	WH	Verona Area High School
366449	Filmaking	Joliet	IL	60431-1521	18	WH	F	WH	Madison Area Tech College
364968	Misc	Evanston	IL	60202-2615	19	WH	F	WH	Plainfield High School Central
361932	Filmaking	Minneapolis	MN	55443-1771	18	BL	M	BL	Evanston Township High School
366329	Dance	Marshfield	WI	54448-8722	18	WH	F	WH	Park Center Senior High School
360939	Dance	Chicago	IL	60641-4301	18	M	H	WH	Marshall High School
360271	Fashion Studies	Aurora	IL	60506-2528	18	BL	F	BL	Saint Patrick High School
366271	Fashion Studies	Aurora	IL	60506-2528	18	BL	F	BL	Washington Community College
365875	Illustration	Chicago	IL	60630-2220	18	F	H	BL	West Aurora Senior High School
361802	Acting	Richmond	VA	23229-4811	18	WH	F	WH	William H. Tall High School
361802	Acting	Richmond	VA	23229-4811	18	WH	F	WH	Yana High School
361802	Acting	Richmond	VA	23229-4811	18	WH	F	WH	Hervey High School

- **Students are graded in part on tag-group participation**
- **Each team of 10 is a class within the class** – students can interact with and learn from other students even in an auditorium.

