Towards Better Teaching

UWindsor GATA Network

A Handbook for Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Windsor

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A Handbook for Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Windsor
Version 1

http://uwindsor.ca/gatahandbook

Edited By:
Melanie Santarossa

GATA Network Development Team:
Betsy Keating, Network Coordinator
Candace Nast, Digital Outreach Coordinator
Melanie Santarossa, Handbook Editor

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Foreword

It is an honour to introduce the GATA Handbook, a resource to support graduate (GAs) and undergraduate teaching assistants (TAs) in their teaching development. I have worked with many of the contributors, speaking with them about their passion for teaching and learning, attending interactive workshops, observing their teaching in the classroom, and even co-teaching. The GATA Handbook is one of the inaugural projects of the GATA Network at the University of Windsor. Developed by Betsy Keating, Candace Nast, and Melanie Santarossa, under the supervision of Michael Potter, it is a cooperative effort between the School of Graduate Studies and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. As the Director of Teaching and Learning, I have had the joy of watching this new Network grow, developed *by* GAs and TAs *for* GAs and TAs.

It feels like it was not very long ago that I was starting as a graduate teaching assistant. I was terrified—most of the students were very close to my age, and in fact, my roommate was in the class. Trying to seem older, I dressed up in a skirt and high heels. Since I normally wore ripped jeans, dressing-up actually made me feel uncomfortable and uneasy rather than older. I remember standing at the front of the tutorial group and asking "Any questions?" There was a resounding silence, which I immediately filled. I thought maybe the students hadn't understood the professor, and so I repeated what had been covered in the lecture. I never did get any questions or discussions. Overall, that first tutorial was not a success. There had to be a better way to teach!

Luckily for me, there was a Centre for Teaching and Learning at my university. Over the following years, I took every course they offered, and discovered a large body of literature. I started to try out different ways to get students asking questions, and ways to feel more comfortable in front of a class. It was amazing to me that there were very simple things I could do to help students with their learning. I found to my surprise that I loved teaching, and enjoyed experimenting with my teaching to make it better. At times, I did feel a bit isolated, until I built a network of people, and discovered a mentor who could help me. Almost 20 years later in my teaching, I have continually developed and drawn on a growing network of colleagues. Teaching is something that is a joy, a struggle, and a continual challenge—because learning is about change.

This GATA Handbook is a resource that will provide a foundation for GAs and TAs. Over the years, we hope that some of the new readers will in turn contribute to the Handbook, sharing their experiences and integrating effective practices in continuing scholarly development.

Erika Kustra
Director, Teaching and Learning Development
Centre for Teaching and Learning
University of Windsor

Preface

It is indeed a great pleasure to write this Preface to *Towards Better Teaching: A Handbook for Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching Assistants at the University of Windsor*. This comprehensive guide to effective teaching practices in higher education recognizes the vital importance of the role teaching assistants play in the creation of an environment truly centred on learning in our undergraduate programs across campus.

The University of Windsor is paying increasing attention to improving the quality of instruction and the quality of the student experience in our environment. The process and the publication of this Handbook is an excellent example of this fundamental commitment for many reasons. The exceptional editorial and publishing accomplishment resulting in the Handbook was made possible by a grant from the Strategic Priority Fund, tangible recognition by the senior academic administration of the central importance of professional development for Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning has assumed a key role in the process of taking teaching seriously at the University of Windsor over the last five years. In the case of the Handbook initiative, the CTL would like to emphasize the fruitful collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and, in particular, Dean Jim Frank. Graduate Studies has recognized the importance of providing tangible support for the teaching experience of Windsor's graduate students.

I would like to situate the publication of this Handbook in the broader context of what I might describe as the movement to take teaching seriously in our milieu. The CTL has expanded its many programs and participation increases, the current Strategic Plan commits to educational change, and a new Peer Consultation Network promises to engage faulty across campus in a grass roots movement to improve and document teaching effectiveness.

I thank the many contributors—faculty, staff, and graduate assistants—to *Towards Better Teaching*. Teaching is a dynamic process, and this Handbook promises to have a positive impact on the cycle of pedagogical experience both for the novice and for the seasoned professor. And the Handbook itself is designed so as to incorporate changes and additions over time. This feature is most fitting, because the Handbook, like teachers at all levels, has to be seen as evolutionary: we are all works in progress.

W. Alan Wright
Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
University of Windsor

The GATA Network Development Team

The GATA Network is a joint project supported by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The Network is a university wide system of peer mentorship and resource sharing supporting graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants (GAs and TAs) working towards improving educational practice.

GAs and TAs are often asked to perform teaching tasks without having received any training in pedagogical theory and practice. They find themselves in an on-the-job-training situation, with serious responsibilities, very little time, and varying degrees of assistance with the *training* part. The goal of the GATA Network is to support GAs and TAs with the teaching skills and knowledge aspect of their professional development.

The Network Team offers resources and mentoring to GAs and TAs specific to their departmental needs and expectations. The Team can help GAs and TAs find teaching assistants with more experience who are willing to assist them by facilitating meetings, discussion groups, and workshops about teaching and learning.

GAs and TAs at any level of experience are welcome to connect with the broader Network online by accessing resources and participating in the Network's various venues.

The Blog, *Towards Better Teaching*, has regular postings about issues faced by teaching assistants, as well as some postings on the lighter side: http://uwindsor.ca/BetterTeaching.

The Network also has a Facebook page: http://facebook.com/GATAnetwork, a Twitter account: http://twitter.com/GATAnetwork, and a YouTube channel: http://youtube.com/GATAnetwork.

GAs and TAs can join the conversation by adding comments, tweets, suggesting helpful resources, or even by writing a guest post. The GATA Network Team can be reached at gata@uwindsor.ca.

Betsy Keating
GATA Network Coordinator
University of Windsor

Acknowledgments

The GATA Network would like to thank all those who contributed their time and knowledge by writing articles for *Towards Better Teaching: A Handbook for Undergraduate and Graduate Students at the University of Windsor*. Your insights, advice, narratives, and expertise will be most welcome and appreciated by the teaching assistants who will use the Handbook to develop and/or improve their pedagogical practice.

The GATA Network Team also extends their appreciation to Dr. Alan Wright, Vice-Provost of Teaching & Learning for his willingness to join our list of contributors by writing the preface for the Handbook.

A special thank-you to Dr. Erika Kustra, Director of Teaching & Learning Development and Professor Michael K. Potter, Teaching & Learning Specialist, who patiently listened to our ideas and provided encouragement and direction throughout the process of producing the Handbook.

Lastly many thanks to Sharpie Sandbox, our resident Webcomic artist, who eagerly provided imaginative illustrations for each of the Handbook chapter headings.

This Handbook could not have happened without the vision of the Centre for Teaching and Learning and The Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Melanie Santarossa
GATA Handbook Editor

List of Contributors

Gina Alb
Secretary to the Director
Centre for Career Education
University of Windsor

Guy Allen
Manager, IT Training, Administration, &
Communications
Information Technology Services
University of Windsor

Jessica Penwell Barnett
PhD Candidate
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, &
Criminology
University of Windsor

Danielle Bechard
Senior Mentor (former)
Department of History
University of Windsor

Julia Colella
MEd Candidate, Faculty of Education
Assistant Coordinator,
Foundations of Academic Writing, Faculty
of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Windsor

Dan Edelstein
Data Centre Manager
Leddy Library
University of Windsor

Svetlana Georgieva
Administrative Secretary
Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Windsor

Danielle Istl
Academic Integrity Officer
University of Windsor

Heidi LM Jacobs
Information Literacy Librarian
Leddy Library
University of Windsor

Betsy Keating
GATA Network Coordinator, Faculty of
Graduate Studies
Doctoral Student, Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

Erika Kustra
Director, Teaching & Learning
Development
Centre for Teaching and Learning
University of Windsor

Erica Lyons
Research & Administrative Assistant
Intelligent Manufacturing Systems (IMS)
Centre
University of Windsor

Candace Nast
GATA Network Digital Outreach
Coordinator, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Sessional Professor, Women's Studies
University of Windsor

Michael K. Potter
Teaching & Learning Specialist, University
Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program
Administrator
Centre for Teaching and Learning
University of Windsor

Holy Renaud
MEd Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

Glenn Rideout
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

Karen Roland
Experiential Learning Specialist
Faculty of Education
University of Windsor

Antonio Rossini
Associate Professor of Italian Studies,
Department of Modern Languages
Director, Humanities Research Group
University of Windsor

Melanie Santarossa
GATA Handbook Editor, Faculty of
Graduate Studies
Research Assistant, Humanities Research
Group
University of Windsor

Sharpie Sandbox
Local Webcomic Artist
University of Windsor

Shawna Scott
MA Candidate, Child Clinical Psychology
Department of Psychology
University of Windsor

Gemma Smyth
Assistant Professor & Academic Clinic
Director
Faculty of Law
University of Windsor

Kristi Thompson
Data Librarian
Leddy Library
University of Windsor

Roderick Turton
Senior Mentor (former)
Drama in Education and Community
University of Windsor

Christine Quaglia
Disability Advisor & Technical Consultant
Educational Development Centre/Student
Disability Services
University of Windsor

Mita Williams
User Interface and User Experience Librarian
Acting Head, Access Services Department
Leddy Library
University of Windsor

Alan Wright
Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning
University of Windsor
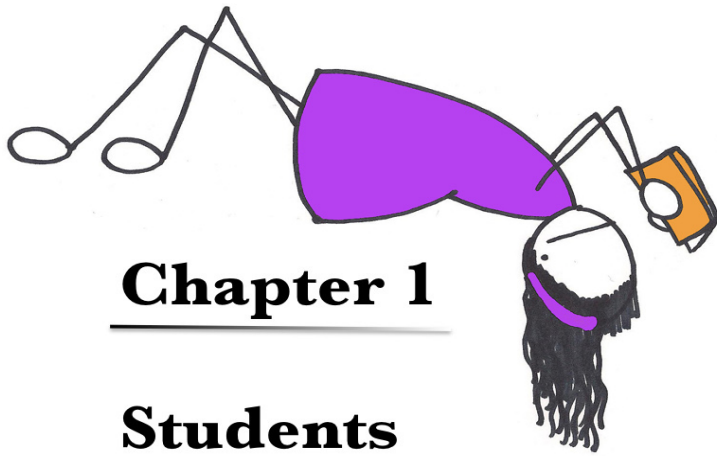
Chapter 1

Students

Getting to Know Your Students

Antonio Rossini

Whether you have 20 or 200 students it is important to get to know them. Here are some suggestions to make the process of getting to know your students an easy and enjoyable one.

Students' names: Remembering the students' names (up to 100) may be very laborious and time-consuming but it certainly conveys a threefold message: one of respect (you are showing them that you are taking the time to learn their names), and one of inclusiveness and a learner-centred teaching style.

Icebreakers: Yes, many of your students might hesitate to participate in such activities (at first). However, icebreakers are an easy way to match a face to a name and to learn a little bit about the people who populate your classroom, seminar, laboratory, or tutorial.

Group work: Sometimes dividing your students into smaller groups in class, gives you a chance to walk around the room and start up a conversation with *each of them*.

> **TIP**
>
> Students tend to be predictable in their seating choices. Try to sketch out the seating plan of your classroom as a way to memorize the names of your students.

Office hours: Try to find ways to *welcome* your students to your office hours so they see their attendance at office hours more as an invitation to a conversation and less as a mandatory component to the course. This one-on-one conversation will help you to better help them with their studies and will give you the chance to get to know them.

Involve students: Involve students in as much as their area of expertise is involved. If you are discussing a topic with historical significance and you have a student or two completing a M.A. in History, why not ask for their insights? This proves to your students that you see them as scholars and that you are teaching them to put themselves in the conversation with the scholarship they are studying.

End of year potlucks: If the size of your class allows, try having an end-of-term potluck. It provides a comfortable atmosphere for you to mingle with your students, and it is an enjoyable way to complete your semester together.

Depending on the size of your class, you may find some of these aforementioned suggestions more helpful to you than others. In any case, when you approach your students with the respect and attentiveness they deserve, you will find that your experience together is a memorable one.

Chapter 2

Preparing to Teach

It's Your First Day

Melanie Santarossa

What Kind of Teacher Will You Be?

The second you walk into that classroom, tutorial, laboratory, or seminar on the first day of classes you begin your teaching identity. It's perfectly normal to feel first day jitters even when you *are* the teacher.

Here are some tips that might just help you to calm your nerves:
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Prepare any materials you need for the class the night before.
- Prior to classes, meet with those GAs and TAs who taught the course before you, so that you can use their expertise to improve your practice.
- Set up an appointment to speak with your supervisor or graduate secretary.
- Look over the class roster, and practice the names that you feel are difficult to pronounce.
- Find the classroom you will be teaching in a few days before classes start to ensure you will not be late on the first day.

> " It's perfectly normal to feel first day jitters even when you *are* the teacher. "

You Can Never Be Too Prepared

To make sure that your semester will be off to a good start, it's worth asking your supervisor or graduate secretary the following questions:
1. What are the pre-requisites for the course? Is this course open to non-majors? What is the usual student demographic (First year? Mature students? Second-language learners?)
2. When are the classes? Am I to attend each class?
3. For how many students will I be responsible?
4. Do I have to hold office hours? How many hours a week? What do I cover during this time?
5. What are my responsibilities during class? (Do I lecture? lead discussion? take notes? lead labs?)
6. Do you have any suggestions on how I should approach my lectures, lab notes, or discussion groups?
7. Is there an online component to the course?
8. Are there any materials or resources that I can read to prepare for the course?
9. What is the departmental policy for late papers? Plagiarism? Chronic absence? How should I address these instances in-person?
10. What should I do, or whom should I contact if I will be absent?
11. Will I be evaluated? If so, by whom? How often? Will I receive feedback to improve?

Academic Integrity and You

Danielle Istl

As a Graduate Assistant or Teaching Assistant, you have a unique position on campus. You are at all times a student of the University, but you are also an employee of the University. The duties of your employment are varied, depending on the needs of the professor with whom you work. Your may mark tests and assignments, assist students with labs and homework, hold office hours, proctor exams, assist in research, or engage in a combination of these activities. Because of the nature of your duties, you are in a position of trust and responsibility. You may be privy to confidential information, and you are expected to uphold the standards of the University with respect to that information. In short, you often stand in the shoes of a professor.

The Academic Integrity Office (AIO) values the assistance of GAs and TAs as it relates to preventing academic dishonesty, role-modeling appropriate behaviours, reporting academic misconduct, and providing evidence during investigations. Therefore, you have a very important role to play in this process. You are an integral part of maintaining academic honesty on campus.

"" You are an integral part of maintaining academic honesty. ""

FYI

The Academic Integrity Officer, Danielle Istl, or the AIO Assistant, Maureen Friest, are always available for any questions or concerns you may have on any academic-integrity related issue:

In person: 201/203 Assumption University Building
By phone: 519.253.3000 extension 3929
Via email: istld@uwindsor.ca or mfriest@uwindsor.ca.

Each September GAs and TAs are required to participate in an Orientation workshop offered by the Faculty of Graduate Studies in which academic integrity is discussed. At that workshop, you will learn more about your role as it relates to academic honesty, how best to deal with problematic student behaviours, how to avoid misconduct allegations yourself, and what the University's expectations are in the event your assistance is sought by others who wish to cheat or you suspect students under your supervision of cheating.

The AIO website has a page dedicated to GAs and TAs, which you can access at http://www.uwindsor.ca/aio, under the "Information for Students" link. This includes not only access to the GA/TA Orientation PowerPoint presentation (if you missed the orientation or to refresh your memory), but also access to a recent workshop delivered to GAs, TAs, and professors called "Exam Security and Cheating Prevention: A Guide for Invigilators." The PowerPoint supporting this workshop includes more detailed information on the finer points of Senate Policy E3: Rules of Conduct for Examinations, which will assist you in learning how best to invigilate exams. If you missed the opportunity to attend this workshop or are new to the job, you are strongly encouraged to visit the AIO website and have a look at this presentation, as well as other available resources that may help you become the best GA or TA you can be!

Senate Policy E3, with which every invigilator should become familiar, is available on the AIO website under "Relevant Bylaws and Policies" or on the Senate Office website (http://www.uwindsor.ca/senate) under "Bylaws and Policies." The AIO website also includes a "Frequently Asked Questions" page for GAs and TAs, which is designed to answer some common questions. If you have any questions that are not covered there, be sure to let the AIO know.

Finally, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with and refer your students to the AIO brochure, which can be found on the AIO homepage. Alternatively, feel free to visit the AIO to pick up print copies for distribution and to keep in your campus office.

Finding Resources

Betsy Keating

G As and TAs are often hired to perform duties for which they have little or no training. As a student, you may have written excellent papers, but writing does not automatically teach you how to create rubrics for grading the papers of other students. You have received feedback on your own work, but are you familiar with the pedagogy behind writing comments that will support student learning? You may have participated in labs, but you may not be familiar with the best practices for creating effective lesson plans for lab sessions. You have probably participated in class discussions; do you know how to prepare for leading a discussion?

As GAs and TAs you will be expected to pick up the knowledge and skills you need while you are already on the job. Finding resources to help you quickly develop the necessary skills for your job can be daunting and time-consuming. Where do you begin?

People

Remember that people who perform these tasks are all around you. Find mentors with whom you feel comfortable discussing issues around teaching. Most of your professors have been in your position earlier in their careers. There are probably other GAs or TAs in your department who have had similar experiences. If you do not know who they are, ask the departmental secretary.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has experts who welcome questions from GAs and TAs and will be happy to help you. The CTL holds workshops throughout the year on teaching and learning issues. Check out the GATAcademy held each year just before the Fall term begins. There, you will find sessions by faculty members or experienced GAs and TAs on various issues having to do with GA or TA skills. The GATA Network is another source for finding peer-mentors and setting up workshops within departments.

Reading

It is not always easy to fit workshops into your schedule. Make a point of attending them when you can, but there are other resources within reach. The Leddy Library has a selection of books and journals on teaching in Higher Education, as well as some specifically geared towards GAs and TAs. The CTL also has a small resource library, and members of the CTL or the GATA Network can recommend a selection of short readings geared to your needs. Contact the CTL: ctl@uwindsor.ca or the GATA Network: gata@uwindsor.ca.

Online

The CTL's website can act as a gateway for anyone who wants to read more about teaching and learning. The "Links and Resources" page has links to articles and sites with helpful suggestions, as well as and information about the research on teaching and learning. The "GATA" page

(under "University Teaching") has information about workshops and events for GAs and TAs, as well as various services offered by the CTL, GA/TA awards, courses, and certificate programs.

The GATA Network has a Blog with regular postings about issues faced by Teaching Assistants, as well as some postings on the lighter side: http://uwindsor.ca/BetterTeaching.

The Network also has a Facebook page: http://facebook.com/GATAnetwork; a Twitter account: http://twitter.com/GATAnetwork; and a YouTube channel: http://youtube.com/GATAnetwork.

Beyond the University of Windsor, there are thousands of resources to be found through links to other Teaching and Learning Centres and Associations. For example, The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) has an extensive network of linked information. Beginning your search here: http://www.stlhe.ca/en/links/teaching_centre.php, and here: http://www.stlhe.ca/en/links/other_higher_ed.php, you can follow link after link to find the specific information that interests you.

To get started, here are a few links that may interest you:

Good Practice: Information by topic from the CTL at Queen's University: http://www.queensu.ca/ctl/goodpractice/help/index.html

Teaching Tips Index from The University of Hawaii: http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm

Faculty Focus: A collection of articles and posts by topic: http://www.facultyfocus.com/

The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

Tomorrow's Professor: http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/postings.php

The nature of a Resources section is that it must be updated frequently. We hope you will let the GATA Network know if you discover information in the Handbook that needs to be updated, or when you discover a resource that can be added to these pages. Contact us at gata@uwindsor.ca.

Services for Graduate Students from Leddy Library

Mita Williams

Borrowing Library Material from Leddy

Your UWinCard is your library card, and with it, you are able to borrow library materials, access scholarly research from off-campus, and enjoy many other Leddy Library services to support your teaching, research and learning needs.

As a graduate student, you are able to borrow up to 50 items from the Leddy Library at a time, with up to 25 of such items for a loan period of a semester. You are able to renew your library materials online or by phone, up to three times in a row. As graduate students, you also have the ability to borrow up to 3 bound volumes from our Serials Collections for short-term loan.

Borrowing Library Material from the World's Other Great Libraries

If the Leddy Library does not have the reading material that you are looking for, you can order the book, thesis, or article using our Interlibrary Loan Service called RACER. The RACER system allows you to fill out a form with the details of the book or article you are requesting. You can also have the bibliographic details of the request form automatically populated if you can find the item in question from a search within RACER. RACER items usually arrive within ten working days of ordering.

You can also borrow material directly from almost all of the other university libraries in Canada with your UWinCard (although the University of Toronto has an additional fee for such borrowing). If you bring Leddy Library-prepared documentation, you can borrow up to three items from Wayne State University and Michigan State University through the INFOPASS program.

Making class material available through Course Reserve

The Course Reserve collection is comprised of high demand materials selected by instructors for use by students registered in specific courses. Course Reserve readings can be in either print or digital form, and they may be items from the Leddy Library's collection or from your own personal library. Scanned or photocopied material can only be added to our course reserves collection if the material falls under the Copyright Act of Canada.

Study Carrels for Graduate Students

The Leddy Library does offer study carrels for Graduate Students, but there is always a waiting list for these highly coveted private carrels. Add your name to the list by visiting the Leddy Library Circulation Desk.

What Is the CTL and What Can It Do For You As a GA or TA?

Nick Baker

Introduction

The Centre for Teaching and Learning is the unit on campus that can help you with all things related to any form of teaching you might be doing. GAs and TAs *teach* in a wide variety of contexts: from lab support to tutorials, seminars, discussion classes, lectures, marking, monitoring online courses, field trips…you name it, GAs and TAs are probably involved in some way. In fact, you are often the public face of the University and the first port of call for most students. This means that it is critically important that you have the support you need to be able to do this crucial job and enhance the experience of the students at the University of Windsor.

> ❝The Centre for Teaching and Learning is the unit on campus that can help you with all things related to any form of teaching you might be doing.❞

We can all remember GAs or TAs who were *so* nervous that they couldn't get a word out, or worse, just didn't seem to want to be there. You probably remember getting an assignment back from a GA who gave a mark and no feedback, or the feedback that was there didn't help you improve. You probably remember thinking that some were just in it for the money, and you hopefully also remember thinking that when you become a GA or TA, you want to act differently!

Pan forward a few years; you are now a GA/TA yourself, and the harsh reality is that you find yourself doing the same things your instructors and GAs did to you! What happened? For many people, it is probably just that you haven't experienced anything different, and you have not received the support you need to be a better teacher. Fortunately, that's where the CTL comes in! We provide a variety of **FREE** programs and approaches to support you to be the best teachers you can be.

Support specifically for GAs/TAs

The CTL offers a number of different approaches for helping you enhance your teaching. Some of these are just for GAs/TAs, or those thinking of becoming GAs/TAs at some point, while others are for the broader teaching community, but encourage GAs/TAs to become involved. The major forms of GA/TA focused support are listed below and we would encourage you to make use of any or all of them during your time here—hey, what have you got to lose, right?

Personal One-on-One Support

We offer individual, one-on-one consultations with GAs/TAs about their teaching. Are you having problems in your classes, or maybe you want to try something different, and you need someone off whom to bounce ideas? We are available to meet with you and discuss anything related to teaching in all its forms!

What if you want to know how you are doing as a teacher? Or perhaps you want to know what your students think of you. One way to find out is to invite us into your classroom (whatever that might be!) to either observe you in action, or facilitate collection of feedback from your students. We will then provide you with confidential written and verbal feedback on your teaching strengths and things on which to work. *Hint: This is something that looks very good to a potential employer down the track.*

We can also help you with the development of a teaching dossier. Whether you're applying for a sessional position or elsewhere, or just about to take the leap into the bold world of work after graduate studies, we can provide advice, mentoring, and support to assist you to develop a fantastic teaching dossier.

Specific GA/TA Events and Awards

There are also several events and awards specifically for GAs and TAs with which the CTL is involved. Some of the major ones are listed below:

The GATA Network

The GATA Network Development Team works with GAs and TAs across campus, introducing them to mentors and resources they will need to improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills. They use social media including Twitter and Facebook to help GAs/TAs connect to the resources they need, and they also publish a blog on all things teaching—*Towards Better Teaching*.

GATAcademy

The GATAcademy is an event just for GAs/TAs or people wanting to become GAs/TAs. It is an active learning, workshop-driven event facilitated by the CTL, but all the workshops are facilitated by current or past GAs and TAs who can give you a perspective from the people on the ground. Topics in the past have included GA/TA professionalism, marking/grading, facilitating discussions, surviving the first day, lecturing, mentoring and tutoring, and running labs. The GATAcademy has been steadily growing and is now available for GAs/TAs in FASS and Science and Engineering, with the aim to increase the number of faculties involved. The GATAcademy runs annually in September.

GATA Learning Communities

There are a number of learning communities (groups of people with similar interests and challenges who come together to share and problem-solve) on campus that are open to GAs/TAs, and there is usually one specifically for GAs/TAs that starts up at the beginning of the academic year and meets bi-weekly to discuss issues and share experiences and advice.

GATA Awards

The GATA Awards are a rigorous set of awards designed to recognize and honour exemplary GAs/TAs who contribute to a positive, learning-centred environment at the University of Windsor. They aim to inspire and motivate GAs and TAs to be the best teachers they can possibly be and to help them reach their potential in educational practice and leadership. Award winners are publicly recognised and celebrated and serve as examples or role models for other GAs/TAs and faculty. There are two categories of awards with up to three recipients in each annually: *The GA/TA Award Educational Practice*, and *The GA/TA Award for Educational Leadership.*

Other events open to GAs/TAs

There are a wide range of other events and resources that, while not specifically for GAs/TAs, are relevant and welcoming to GAs/TAs who want to be involved. The activities include:

Teaching Dossier Academy

The Teaching Dossier Academy (TDA) is an annual event held over the course of a week in June. The event includes workshops, personal working time, and one-on-one mentoring. At the end of the week, you will have a draft-teaching dossier that can be used for applying for jobs and as the start of the record of your teaching journey.

Summer Series on Teaching and Learning

The Summer Series on Teaching and Learning is a week-long mini-conference, offering 8-10 workshops and events, themed around strategic priorities in teaching and learning. It is free and open to all staff and students of the University. Many people tell us it is the perfect way to re-energise themselves about their teaching before the start of classes, and there are a growing number of GAs and TAs who attend the events to pick up practical hints and tips they may be able to use in their own teaching.

CTL Seminar Series

The CTL coordinates a seminar series throughout the year on topics related to improving teaching. A good proportion of the attendees for these free events are GAs and TAs, and there are always opportunities for them to interact, network, and learn from all participants. The workshops are facilitated by CTL staff, visiting fellows from all around the world, University of Windsor staff, and other visitors. As with the Summer Series, these are themed around strategic priorities in teaching and learning for the University.

The University Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program

Do you want to become a professor some day? You're probably going to have to teach at some point. If you want to do that in the UK or some other countries like Australia and New Zealand, you will need to have a teaching qualification. Even if you plan to stay in North America, there is a good chance that the universities or colleges you apply to will look very favourably on candidates who have demonstrated their commitment to

teaching by undertaking formal training in university teaching. The University Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program is the only such certificate in North America accredited by SEDA, an international professional development body based in the UK. The UTC Program has three certificate levels, with each certificate usually completed over the course of a year. The UTC program is designed to help you develop as a scholarly teacher engaged in evidence-based, theoretically grounded teaching. The program currently has two 3-credit graduate courses that can be taken for credit in many graduate programs across the University (check with your program coordinator), and four non-credit half-courses. See the CTL's website for more information on this program and how to register: http://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl

Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW)

We like acronyms at the CTL, and this is no exception. ISWs are an intensive 3-day workshop event held a few times throughout the year. They are very limited in size (no more than 12 participants) and involve workshops on practical teaching and learning issues in the mornings, followed by micro-teaching sessions in the afternoon in small groups (3-4). The afternoon sessions are recorded, and you get a copy of your teaching session, plus intensive feedback from your peers and the facilitators. You also get a certificate at the completion of the program. ISWs are open to anyone at the University, and the diversity of participants is a strength of the program. Many people who complete ISWs tell us it changes their lives, so why not check out what all the fuss is about?

Educational Technology Support and Development

The CTL also has a team of dedicated professionals who can give you support in just about any area related to educational technologies, from the classroom AV to video conferencing, media production, and online learning (CLEW). The CTL also facilitates training in using our online learning tool, CLEW, and audience response systems (Clickers).

Windsor-Oakland Teaching and Learning Conference

Each year in May, Windsor and Oakland (US) Universities coordinate a teaching and learning conference on a rotating basis, with the conference held at Windsor on alternate years. Attendance is fully subsidised by the respective universities for faculty and students, and it is a great way for you to dip your toes into the field of higher education, to network, to see what is happening locally in terms of education research, and to get some practical tips for your own teaching. The conference organizers encourage GAs and TAs to not only register and attend, but to submit papers and posters for the conference. It is a very friendly and collegial conference and a good place to start if you think you might want to continue on the path of scholarly teaching.

Resources

There are a range of resources available to you in the CTL if you visit us in the first three floors of Lambton Tower. From GATA Network Coordinators and multimedia labs and studios in the

basement to the CTL library, teaching dossier collection, informational pamphlets on our programs, and educational development staff on the 2nd floor, you will no doubt find a wealth of resources to make your teaching life easier and more fulfilling! The CTL website (www.uwindsor.ca/ctl) also has a large number of resources in which you might be interested, from past workshop materials to information on upcoming events, courses, conferences, literature, and general links to teaching resources.

Whatever it is you are looking for in the world of teaching and learning, the friendly and experienced staff in the CTL can probably help you. We look forward to seeing GAs and TAs in our many events throughout the year.

Designing Lesson Plans

Melanie Santarossa

I love lesson planning. But if you had asked me how I felt about lesson planning during my first semester teaching as a graduate instructor, I would have responded with "Aarrgh!" or an equivalent sentiment. *How much time do I allot for each activity? What if I talk too much? What if I don't talk enough? What if we run out of things to do before the end of class time?* These were only a sample of the questions that plagued me.

Luckily, I had a very supportive supervisor who took the time to offer loads of advice on preparing a good lesson plan. His insights got me through the first two weeks or so of classes, until I could find my lesson planning groove, and locate the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

As one of the members of the GATA Network Development Team, I have come into contact with undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants who have expressed the same fear over lesson planning that I once harboured. To relieve their worries (that might also be your own) and to pay it forward, I have included a Lesson Planning Template (courtesy of the CTL) on the following page of this Handbook, which has helped me tremendously in my teaching experience, and now that I have a good sense of how I like to plan my lessons, I have adopted my own template.

If you find that the template does not meet your needs or teaching style, feel free to contact the Centre for Teaching and Learning http://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl or the GATA Network http://gata@uwindsor.ca to ask about where you can find other great templates on lesson planning. Good luck!

LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Course:

Title:

Date:

Preparation:	Materials:

Bridge-in:	

Learning Outcomes:	Domain of Learning:

Pre-Assessment:

Participatory Learning:

Time	Learner Activities	Instructor Activities	Lesson Aid/Materials

Post-Assessment:

Summary/Conclusion:

Suggestion: *plan the lesson in this order – Learning Outcome, Post-test, Learner Activities, Instructor Activities, Bridge-In, Pre-test, Conclusion*

What is Information Literacy and Why Does it Matter to Our Students?

Heidi LM Jacobs

In an era when our students are bombarded with information from a myriad of sources (both reliable and unreliable) it's crucial that our students are well-prepared to navigate this complex and ever-changing information world both for their studies at university and for the lives they lead outside of classrooms.

For these reasons, when we at the library talk with students about information and research—what it is, how to approach it, what to look for and what to be cautious about—we talk about information literacy. Information literacy is, in its most basic definition, the ability to "recognize when information is needed along with the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (American Library Association).

As you work with students doing research, you will likely be helping students navigate these kinds of information literacy components:

- Determining the extent of information needed (what kind of information does a student need to complete an assignment?)
- Accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently (how does a student find or retrieve that information?)
- Evaluating information and its sources critically (is this resource appropriate for the assignment? Is it reliable, current, and authoritative?)
- Incorporating selected information into one's knowledge base (how does this information work with other sources of information students have read or knowledge students already have?)
- Using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose (how can students use the information to achieve the goals of the assignment?)
- Understanding the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access, and use information ethically and legally (how can students avoid plagiarism or copyright issues and cite their information properly?)

> **TIP**
>
> While you may not be a librarian, your role as a GA or TA provides you with the opportunity to model effective research techniques.
>
> Take advantage of your class time by showcasing the tricks you have learned to navigate the information superhighway you have encountered in your studies.
>
> When students observe how you have learned to research effectively, they may be more prone to follow your advice to visit the library.

For many undergraduates, assignments that involve scholarly research are often overwhelming, confusing, and frustrating. As TAs and GAs you will often be the go-to person for undergraduate students' questions and frustrations about research. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

> **You are not on your own**. Leddy Library has subject specialists who have expertise in your area of study and would be happy to meet with you to show you the best tools and resources for your students' assignments. Meeting with your subject specialist at the beginning of the semester will prepare you for any questions you might encounter. You can also direct your students to your subject specialist.

> **Your students are not on their own**. Leddy Library has 2 Reference Help Centers and an Online Reference service staffed with friendly, helpful library staff who are well trained to answer just about any question your students might have.

> **We can come to you**. We regularly come to classes and offer sessions on research strategies for specific assignments. If you or your professor would be interested in such a session, contact your subject specialist.

Thinking about information literacy in your work with students is important not only because it helps them with their academic work but because the critical thinking skills they develop will help them in the lives they lead outside of classrooms. As the UNESCO and IFLA written "Alexandria Proclamation" states,

> Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations. Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all.

When we talk with our students about research, we need to understand that by providing our students with opportunities to engage with information literacy, we are offering them opportunities to develop skills and capabilities that will have a wide-ranging impact on their learning and their lives.

Information to Assist Instructors in Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Christine Quaglia

The University of Windsor strives to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for students with disabilities. Instructors play an important role in fostering an environment that enables students with disabilities to realize their potential.

This document was adapted from Student Disability Services' "Information to Assist Faculty in Accommodating Students with Disabilities (Instructor's Handbook)" available online at: www.uwindsor.ca/disability. This adaptation was done in an effort to provide Graduate and Teaching Assistants with essential information about accommodating students with disabilities in the classroom and to aid in the development of best teaching practices.

Please note: This information will not typically pertain to those not acting as instructors. Legislation and matters of confidentiality prohibit certain information being disclosed to anyone not directly involved with the student and his/her academic pursuits.

That being said, those who are responsible for marking may have interactions with students where information is disclosed to them regarding the possible presence of a disability. In the event that does occur, sections that relate to the "Referral Process" or "Students Experiencing Difficulty" may be of benefit for you to review. However, it is always best to, confidentially, consult either with an Advisor in Student Disability Services, or, with the course instructor.

We hope that all Graduate and Teaching Assistants find the following information useful and wish you every success in your endeavours.

Institutional Obligations - Shared Responsibility

Post-secondary institutions are required to take a proactive approach in addressing disability related issues and in establishing policies and programs that are inclusive for students with disabilities. All members of the University of Windsor community have a shared responsibility to accommodate students with disabilities whose needs have been duly assessed by Student Disability Services.

In fulfilling the duty to accommodate students with disabilities, the needs of each student with a disability must be individually assessed to determine appropriate accommodations. Not all students with the same disability will have the same needs, and the accommodations available to each student are highly individualized and specific to that student. The University has a responsibility (through Student Disability Services) to notify those instructing the course of the specific accommodations to which a student is entitled, and to work with instructors to ensure that the rights of the student are met and that the integrity of the course remains intact.

The Role of Student Disability Services

Student Disability Services (SDS) is responsible for the coordination of academic accommodations and support services for students with disabilities registered at the University of Windsor. Some of our functions include:

- Evaluating the appropriateness of student documentation provided by qualified health practitioners
- Evaluating accommodation requests or needs on an individual basis while maintaining academic standards
- Liaising with faculty, departments, and other student services to ensure that students' needs are met
- Facilitating the resolution of problems or misunderstandings as they arise between students and faculty/departments
- Providing information about disabilities, policies, and procedures pertaining to students with disabilities to faculty and the University community
- Providing a variety of support services for students with disabilities such as one-on-one learning support, note taking, adaptive equipment loans, sign language interpretation, screening, and referral for LD/ADHD assessment etc.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems, and support mechanisms designed to accommodate functional challenges posed by an individual's disability. The purpose of accommodation is to allow students to perform the essential requirements of their courses or programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

An appropriate accommodation minimizes the barriers caused by the disability. Meeting our shared *duty to accommodate* ensures that students have a fair and equal opportunity to learn and to demonstrate that learning in a way that respects individual learning styles, differences, and needs.

Accommodations are highly individualized and are determined on a case-by-case basis, based on the specific individual needs and recommendations included in each student's documentation.

- o Classroom accommodations are adjustments provided to ensure that students with disabilities have fair and equal access to the curriculum and an opportunity to process classroom information in a way that respects and addresses differences in learning styles, strengths, and needs.

- o Examination accommodations are adjustments to standard exam conditions that lessen the impact of the disability without fundamentally altering the nature or security of the examination or providing unfair advantage.

Referral Process

Many students arrive at university with disabilities that may have gone undiagnosed or have not sought support, as the student may have found other ways to manage and cope. If you, as an instructor, suspect that students are having academic difficulty as a result of disability, please encourage them to contact Student Disability Services to arrange for an intake appointment.

Student Disability Services
University of Windsor
Dillon Hall (Lower Level)
401 Sunset Avenue
Windsor, Ontario, Canada N9B 3P4
PH: 519-253-3000 ext.: 3288 / FAX: 519-973-7095
TTY: (519) 973-7091
disability@uwindsor.ca

Syllabus Statement

Instructors are invited to include the following statement in their course outlines, as a means for ensuring that students (particularly new students) are aware of the process for self-identification and accommodation. There is no obligation on the part of instructors to accommodate students who have not registered with Student Disability Services and provided a "Letter of Accommodations."

"Students with disabilities who require academic accommodations in this course must contact an Advisor in Student Disability Services (SDS) to complete SDS Registration and receive the necessary Letters of Accommodation. After registering with Student Disability Services, you must present your Letter of Accommodation and discuss your needs with me as early in the term as possible. Please note that deadlines for the submission of documentation and completed forms to Student Disability Services are available on their website: http://www.uwindsor.ca/disability

Other Services Available from Student Disability Services

In addition to the provision/coordination of classroom and testing accommodations, Student Disability Services provides a variety of services and supports to students with documented disabilities (including: learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, acquired brain injuries, vision, hearing, and mobility impairments, chronic medical conditions, and psychiatric issues), who have registered with SDS. These services and supports are intended to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities fully into the fabric of the University of Windsor and to help minimize the impact of a disability on individual learning and academic performance.

Available SDS Services include:

Faculty Presentations: Student Disability Services Advisors are available to deliver presentations to faculties across campus. Presentations provide an overview of the role of

SDS, an exploration of the principles of accommodation, and the responsibilities of faculty, SDS staff, and students with disabilities in the facilitation of academic accommodations. In addition, the presentations highlight best practices for working with students who have disabilities and how all parties can effectively work together to help remove barriers and increase access to learning. Presentations are designed to foster discussion of issues instructors may encounter when working with students with disabilities and which practical strategies can be used to ensure that the duty to accommodate is fulfilled and the academic integrity of the institution is maintained.

Advising: Student Disability Services Advisors provide one-on-one support and facilitate necessary academic accommodations, which may help to minimize the impact of a disability on learning and academic performance. In addition, SDS Advisors assist students in adjusting to the demands of university life by developing the skills and strategies necessary for academic success. Advisors also work with students to develop independence and self-advocacy skills and provide input on how to develop networks of support by utilizing other student and academic support services available throughout campus.

Learning Strategist: The SDS Learning Strategist works with students to assist them in understanding their psychoeducational assessments and to then develop strategies for improving memory, note taking, reading, studying, and exam taking, in order to enhance academic performance and meet educational goals. Collaboration between the Learning Strategist and student is encouraged, so as to assist students with learning disabilities identify their needs and prioritize their academic goals. Students are encouraged to connect the strategies utilized during LS sessions to their existing learning styles and personal patterns of cognitive strengths and weaknesses. The Learning Strategist is also available to consult with faculty to ensure that the diverse learning needs of students are met.

LD and ADHD Coaching: The LD and ADHD Coaches work with students with learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders to improve time management and organizational skills. In addition, the coaches work with students to develop motivation, set appropriate and realistic goals, improve follow through, and prepare for tests and exams. Students with learning disabilities can also work specifically with the LD Coach to learn academic strategies and techniques designed to maximize their learning potential.

Assistive Technology Consultation and Equipment Loan: Assistive technology is meant to enable students with disabilities to compensate for educational barriers imposed by a disability. SDS Advisors work with students to help determine which assistive technologies may be the most beneficial in minimizing the impact of a disability. An Assistive Technologist and Technical Consultant are available to discuss technology needs with students and the types of technology, which may best enhance individual learning and performance. Training for effective utilization of various types of software, including Dragon Naturally Speaking, is also available. Technology is available to students registered with SDS through the Learning Annex and, for short-term loan, through the Student Disability Services office. Equipment available for loan includes tape and digital recorders, FM systems, and PDAs.

Text Conversion to Alternate Format: Students registered with SDS may require that books and articles be transcribed into various types of alternate format as part of their accommodations. Types of alternate format include (but are not limited to): tape, Braille, and PDF. Once a request for alternate format has been made by a student's Advisor, the information is passed on to Document Imaging, which must be provided with proof of purchase before converting the requested material. The process to convert texts can take several weeks; therefore, students are encouraged to meet with Advisors and determine accommodations as early as possible.

Once accommodations are determined, students can check their required reading lists through the University Bookstore, where lists are, typically, available about a month prior to the beginning of the semester.

The Learning Annex: A private computer lab, which makes up-to-date assistive technology readily available to students registered with Students Disability Services. The Annex houses computers connected to the World Wide Web and the Leddy Library Voyager system. Some computers are placed on height-adjustable desks with separate keyboard height adjustment for wheelchair accessibility. Computer programs for accessibility include Zoom Text Extra, Kurzweil 3000, Kurzweil 1000, Dragon NaturallySpeaking, and Jaws. CCTVs are available for enlarging text, and the latest office productivity software, mathematics, and statistics programs are also available on all computers. The Annex can also provide a quiet study space for students. The Leddy Library is home to The Annex, which is in Room G104 on the basement floor of the main building.

Student Responsibilities in the Accommodation Process

While the duty to accommodate is a shared responsibility, student engagement in that process is critical to its success. Beginning with self-identification to the Student Disability Services office through to self-advocacy in the classroom, student involvement in the accommodation process is vital to ensuring that students are able to reach their full potential in the post-secondary environment.

The following steps are designed to assist students in meeting their responsibilities in the accommodation process. As an instructor, you are encouraged, as much as possible, to review these steps with your students and make a reasonable effort to ensure that they are adhering to them.

1) **Early each term**, students must meet with their SDS Advisor to discuss accommodation needs and get their "Letters of Accommodation."

2) **At the beginning of each term**, students are responsible for initiating contact with you to discuss their accommodation needs as specified in their "Letter of Accommodation," and to obtain your signature. It is a common practice for instructors to include a statement in their course outlines inviting students with disabilities to identify their needs for accommodation. We recommend that students meet their instructors during scheduled office hours, so they can discuss their needs in a safe and confidential space.

3) Students must return their signed "Instructor Signature Sheet" to Student Disability Services by published deadlines, which are usually the **last day to drop courses** in each term, in order to receive accommodation for formally scheduled exams. Students who are authorized to write tests/exams with Student Disability Services are also required to submit a completed exam schedule to the SDS Exam Coordinator by published deadlines. It is the responsibility of the student to formally schedule all tests/exams, which are being written with SDS (including re-scheduled tests/exams).

4) **Students are responsible for confirming that accommodation arrangements have been made with the Exam Coordinator in Student Disability Services.** Instructors will receive an e-mail reminder from the Exam Coordinator several days in advance of the exam, confirming that a student in their class is in fact writing the exam with SDS.

Confidentiality

Student Disability Services has a human rights obligation to maintain confidentiality. Some students may feel at ease discussing the nature of their disability and need for accommodations with their instructors, while others may not. If students feel comfortable disclosing, they has a right to do so; however, SDS staff have an obligation to not disclose information without the student's specific written permission.

As an instructor, you also have an obligation to respect the confidentiality of students with disabilities who are receiving academic accommodations. Students with disabilities, especially those with non-visible disabilities (e.g. learning disabilities, psychiatric, medical disabilities) may feel apprehensive about being identified in front of their peers, because of the negative social stigma attached to their disability. SDS Advisors recommend to students that they discuss their needs and concerns during their instructors' scheduled office hours in order to ensure privacy.

Universal Instructional Design: General Information

This section is designed to assist instructors when designing their courses and to act as a means by which they can develop best teaching practices. Familiarity with the principles of Universal Instructional Design are meant to assist instructors to develop teaching methods that will make learning accessible, not only to students with disabilities, but to a multiplicity of learners in the classroom environment.

Universal Instructional Design (UID) (also known as Universal Design for Learning or Universal Design of Instruction) represents a set of emerging initiatives, principles, guidelines, and projects that promote and work toward inclusive and equitable access to learning. Diversity of learners in today's classrooms requires flexibility and resourcefulness of the curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom set-up. UID initiatives work towards concrete solutions that would meet such demands through the development and delivery of learner-centered models and approaches to learning.

UID follows in the footsteps of Universal Design in architecture that resulted in now standard accessibility features such as ramps, automatic doors, switches, curb cuts, etc. Even though designed to accommodate persons with physical disabilities, increased accessibility also proved beneficial in numerous ways to other populations. By the same token, UID works to make learning accessible and to accommodate every student regardless of his or her learning style, preferences, or deficits. Once again, even though initially envisioned to allow persons with sensory and learning disabilities equitable access to education, UID applications will most certainly provide all learners with better tools and opportunities for learning.

Universal in UID does not stand for a one-size-fits-all model. To the contrary, UID acknowledges and values the unique learning strengths and weaknesses each student brings into the classroom. In simple terms, UID's main principle is flexibility of curriculum, course design and delivery, and teaching and evaluation methods. As an integral component of UID, technology is used to allow for such flexibility in all stages of the learning process: acquisition of information, engagement with the material, and expression of knowledge.

This flexibility is already applied on an individual basis by creative teachers cognizant of the learner diversity in their classroom. In this sense, UID principles have long been in use, but more and more this approach to teaching and learning surfaces as a necessity rather than an individual choice. In addition to a large number of students with physical deficits, a rapidly growing population of students identified with learning disabilities presents a challenge to our educational system on many levels. Currently, this challenge is being met through individual classroom and exam accommodations and one-on-one learning support.

UID strives to incorporate the principles behind accommodations and learning support as a standard component of the curriculum and classroom. This perspective is largely supported through the development of new technologies that allow for creativity in teaching methods, alternative means of presentation, and choices for equally effective assessment in the classroom.

ONLINE UID RESOURCES

Universal Instructional Design at the University of Guelph:
www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid

Classroom Observation Checklist - PDF format.

The Seven Questions Toward UID - PDF format.

Centre for Applied Special Technology (CAST) - Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes/

University of New Hampshire - Faculty Resources:
www.unh.edu/disabilityservices/facultyresources.html

Including topics such as: How to make your website accessible, How to meet technological needs of students with disabilities, and Fifty-seven teaching methods.

Queen's University - Accommodation and Instruction Strategies for Instructors:
http://library.queensu.ca/websrs/faculty_guide-Strategies.html

Terminology for Discussing Essential Requirements

These guidelines were adopted from a document produced by the Inter-University Disability Issues Association (I-DIA) to assist disability service professionals in determining essential requirements when recommending reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities at their institutions. The following sections are particularly relevant for instructors when designing and facilitating a course.

Reasonable Accommodations

Refer to modifications or adjustments to a course, program, service, activity, or facility that provide a qualified individual with a disability an equal opportunity to obtain the same benefit, or to attain the same level of achievement, or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as those available to a similarly situated individual without a disability. Postsecondary institutions are obligated to make reasonable accommodations only to the known limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities. They are not obligated to provide accommodations that would fundamentally alter the essential components of a course of study.

Essential Requirements

Essential requirements is a specific term used in human rights legislation, referring to the bona fide requirements of a task or program that cannot be altered without compromising the fundamental nature of the task or program. Determining what is an essential requirement, and what is not, is critical in distinguishing requirements that cannot be accommodated from what can and should be altered.

"Essential" can therefore be defined by two factors:

1. The skill must be demonstrated to meet the objectives of the course; and
2. The skill must be demonstrated in a prescribed manner.

As an instructor you may wish to consider the following questions when determining essential requirements for a course:

Learning Objectives

1. What is the purpose of this course? (Scott and Maniltz, 2000, p. 35).
2. Would elimination of the skill/knowledge/attitude alter the learning objectives of this course/program? (Blacklock, 2001).
3. Is the competency integral to the learning of this course? (Wales, 1997).
4. Does the ability or skill necessarily need to be performed in a prescribed manner? Why?
5. Was this course created to teach any of the skills/knowledge/attitudes? (Blacklock, 2001).
6. Would these accommodations require a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program, service, or activity? (Blacklock, 2001).
7. What is the purpose of the program?

8. What are the outcome variables that are absolutely required of all participants? Why?
     o What academic skills can be demonstrated? How?
     o What percentage of subject area knowledge must be mastered?
     o What specific knowledge, principles or concepts must be mastered?
9. What methods of instruction are non-negotiable and absolutely necessary? Why?
10. What methods of assessing outcome variables are absolutely necessary? Why?

Alternate Method

11. Is there only one way for the skills/knowledge/attitudes to be demonstrated? (Blacklock, 2001)
12. Is there an alternative way to do the same work?

Undue Hardship/Consequences if Accommodated

13. Would there be any significant consequences if this skill were performed at varying levels of competency?
     o Does it put the student or others in danger?
     o Does it make a difference to the field acquisition of unique approaches or philosophies?
     o Does it make a big difference to the student's life or future? (Wales, `1997)
14. Would there be any significant consequences if the skills/knowledge/attitudes were not learned? (Blacklock, 2001)
15. Will accommodating the individual needs pose a risk to personal or public safety?

Skill Analysis

16. Will the student have to transfer the skill to different settings? (i.e., Field placement) (Wales, 1997).
17. Do the students have to be physically able to perform this skill themselves? (Wales, 1997)
18. Do the students need to be cognitively able to perform the skills/knowledge/attitudes themselves? (Blacklock, 2001)
19. What are the acceptable levels of performance on these measures? Why?
20. What pre-existing abilities or skills must all participating students possess?
21. Is there a minimal level of proficiency in these abilities?

Students Experiencing Difficulty

A student experiencing difficulty is one who encounters major obstacles to the successful completion of the academic program. While it is typical for students to experience university as a time of significant stress and change, it can become so severe that it poses a threat to academic progress. Those who interact regularly with students are often in a position to identify students experiencing difficulty and can provide the early intervention that is critical in preventing students from leaving school or demonstrating behaviour that may escalate.

The following guidelines outline various types of students experiencing difficulty, when professional assistance may be appropriate and beneficial, how to make a referral, seek consultation or contact emergency services as needed.

> ### Signs that a Student may be at Risk:
> While the following indicators are important when evaluating a student's need for assistance, it is important to consider everything known about the student in order to avoid over-interpretation of what may be an isolated incident.
>
> 1. **Stated Need for Help**—The content of what is being said is as important as how the need is being expressed, and it is important to be aware of tone of voice, gestures, and expressions.
>
> 2. **Marked Changes in Mood or Behaviour**—Actions inconsistent with a student's typical behaviour may indicate psychological distress, such as: withdrawal from social interaction and academic work, disruptive behaviour, noticeable changes in energy level and personal hygiene, spells of crying, outbursts, and irritability.
>
> 3. **Difficulties Communicating and/or Distortions of Reality**—Irrational conversation, disjointed thoughts or speech, hallucinations, disturbing material in academic assignments, and/or bizarre behaviours may be indicative of severe psychological problems.
>
> 4. **Significant Changes in Personal or Cultural Relationships and Identity**—A traumatic change which impacts an individual's personal relationship and issues of personal, sexual, and cultural identity may result in increased stress and conflict.
>
> 5. **Experience of Violence**—The effects of abuse and assault may be accompanied by extreme stress and conflict, resulting in the need for counselling or other appropriate services.
>
> 6. **Health Concerns**—Acute and chronic health issues may impact a student's progress, his/her ability to fully engage in the university experience, and his/her ability to cope.
>
> 7. **Academic Difficulties**—Students experiencing excessive pressure to succeed and fear of academic failure may find assistance beneficial to their decision-making process.
>
> 8. **Learning Skills Issues**—Difficulties keeping up with course work, inadequate preparation for exams, incapacitating anxiety, or problems with concentration are all issues that require attention and referral to appropriate campus services.

If you are not sure how to approach a student who may be experiencing difficulty or how to handle a situation that has the potential to escalate, seek consultation.

Resources for Consultation include:
- Student Counselling Centre (x 4616) or Student Health Services (x 7002) during regular university hours.
- Community Crisis Centre through Hotel Dieu Hospital (519-973-4435) is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and can dispatch a mobile crisis team to campus.

How to Intervene with Students Experiencing Difficulty:

If you determine it is necessary and appropriate to approach a student of concern, the following suggestions might make the interaction more comfortable for you and helpful to the student:

Listen to the students and give them private, undivided attention. Often, a few minutes of effective listening is sufficient to help a student feel heard and empowered to make appropriate decisions.

Acknowledge the student's concerns and try to communicate by reflecting back the essential message of what the student has shared with you.

Express Concern without generalizing or making assumptions about the students and their behaviour.

Offer Hope, and reassure the students that resources for help are available to them. The purpose of offering hope is to provide enough so that students are able to consult a professional or other appropriate person, not to minimize or solve their problems.

Situations that Require Immediate Referral:

1. Specific References to Suicide
2. Harm to Others (verbal and non-verbal threats, intimidating behaviour, violent acts, and criminal harassment)
3. Drug and Alcohol Abuse
4. Disordered Eating

Steps for Making a Referral:

When it is necessary to make a referral, it is important to emphasize that help is necessary and available and that seeking such help is a sign of courage, good judgment, and appropriate decision making.

> ➢ Being direct, and letting students know your concerns, and recommending clearly and simply that they access assistance
> ➢ Informing students that campus services are free and that counselling is confidential
> ➢ Suggesting that students make an appointment if they appear receptive to receiving help
> ➢ Preparing students for what they might expect should they choose to follow-up on your suggestion

Except in emergencies the option must be left open for the student to accept or refuse. In an emergency contact Campus Police (x 4444) if the student is on campus and Windsor Police if the student is off-campus.

Steps to Making an Appropriate Referral:

1. Listen carefully to students as they describe their situation.
2. Ask students clarifying questions.
3. Offer students your best suggestions, and encourage them to choose the options they wish to pursue.
4. If students appear defensive, point out that seeking assistance is not a sign of failure, give alternatives, leave assistance as an option to be considered later, and follow-up.
5. If students are reluctant, offer to make initial contact yourself or sit with them as they do so; offer to accompany students to an appointment.
6. Research available and suitable materials and resources.
7. Ask, if you are not sure that a particular resource or referral would be appropriate.
8. Ask colleagues and supervisors for help as needed.

Setting Healthy Limits:

When assisting students experiencing difficulty, it is important to know your own limits and to not extend yourself beyond your comfort level. If problems are beyond your scope, it is important to consult with your colleagues, supervisor, and other resources as part of your own self-care.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: A student comes to me with a "Letter of Accommodation." What am I supposed to do with it?

A: As an instructor, it is important that you be *in the loop* regarding the accommodations which are being provided to the student. The student may require classroom accommodations, which you are entitled to know, or for which we may be requesting minimal assistance. If you have questions or concerns about specific accommodation recommendations, you are encouraged to contact the SDS Advisor as indicated on the "Letter of Accommodation." The letter is simply for your information; however, you will be asked by the student to sign an acknowledgement that the letter was delivered to you.

Q: If only some students are getting these accommodations, how is this fair to other students?

A: The rationale for academic accommodation is based on the concept of *equity*. This means levelling the playing field, so that students with disabilities can compete on an equal footing with their non-disabled peers. Therefore, equity necessitates differential treatment. Sometimes, people confuse equity with *equality*, which refers to non-discriminatory (hence similar) treatment on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, sex orientation, or disability. Academic accommodation is intended to allow students to compete equitably, without sacrificing essential course requirements.

Q: If a student requests an accommodation that is not specified on their "Letter of Accommodation" for my course, what should I do?

A: If it is a request that you feel does not compromise the academic standards of your course and that you can easily accommodate, as the instructor, you have the right to grant it. However, it is recommended that you check with the SDS Advisor indicated on the "Letter of Accommodation" to verify that the student has appropriate documentation to support such a request.

Q: I received a "Letter of Accommodation," which states that the student is allowed to make audio recordings of my lectures. Must I comply?

A: We understand that this is a contentious issue for many instructors, which is why the University of Windsor has developed a policy (Senate Policy 5.2.2: Policy on Audio-Recording of Lectures by Students with Disabilities), which clearly spells out the student's responsibilities, while acknowledging the rights and intellectual property of faculty. Students who receive this accommodation are required to sign a policy agreement, which limits their use of the recorded material and clearly outlines the rights of the instructor. If you think that specific circumstances in your lecture indicate against the use of recording devices, you are encouraged to contact the SDS Advisor indicated on the "Letter of Accommodation," who may assist in finding an alternative accommodation that meets the student's need and fulfills the University's duty to accommodate.

Chapter 3

Teaching Strategies
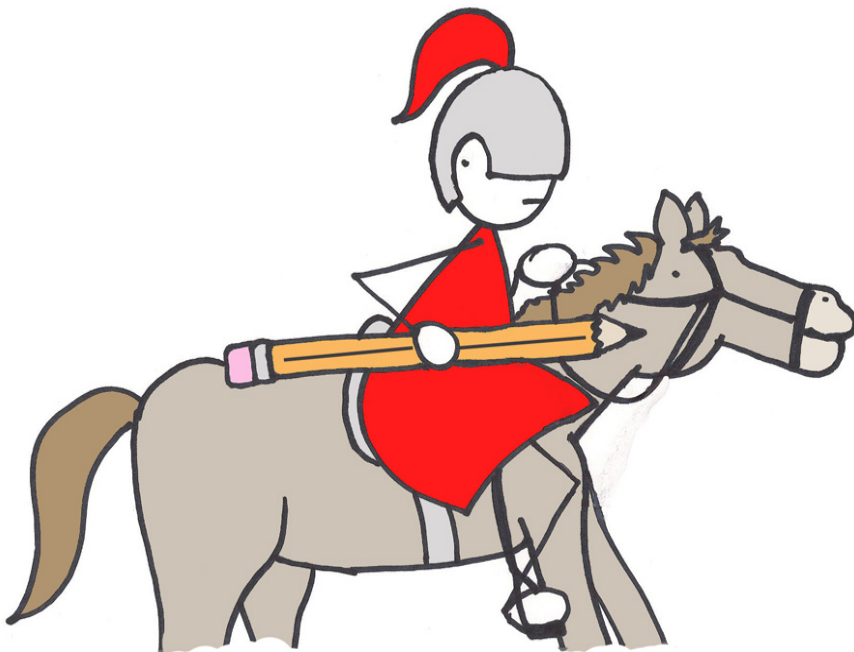
A Smattering o' Teaching Ethics for GAs and TAs

Michael K. Potter

Although there are many different approaches to ethics—philosophical, religious, cultural, professional, personal, and more—all that are defensible in a society requiring people of different creeds to live together share a core set of values, principles, duties, or virtues. In this article we'll be using the term *values* simply because it's the most inclusive; all principles, virtues, and duties express or embody values in some way.

Most of us can agree that the following values are commendable as guides to personal and professional life[1]:

> **Fidelity**—Keeping our promises, speaking honestly, living up to our responsibilities, and maintaining personal integrity.

> **Gratitude**—Recognizing what we owe to others, remaining humble, appreciating what we have, and remembering that we are reliant on others throughout our lives.

> **Non-maleficence**—Avoiding doing harm to others (and ourselves), as well as engaging in acts that increase the quantity or degree of suffering in the world.

> **Beneficence**—Doing things that benefit others (and ourselves), as well as engaging in acts that increase the quantity or degree of happiness or fulfillment in the world.

> **Self-improvement**—Seeking always to become better, not only in terms of our moral qualities, but as practitioners of our disciplines or professions, and as competent people generally.

Each of these values will be recognized by rational people, who are not impaired in some critical way, as good and as worthwhile guides to behaviour. We may disagree, reasonably, about

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[1] This set is drawn primarily from W.D. Ross, who posited the first five as "prima facie duties," duties that most people could recognize as priorities, providing the basis for all other duties. See Ross, W.D. (1930), *The Right and the Good*, Clarendon Press, Oxford and (1939), *The Foundations of Ethics,* Clarendon Press, Oxford.

whether this or that particular action is harmful or not—such disagreements are inevitable—but in the end we can still agree that *if* an action is harmful to someone, it probably shouldn't be done. Moral disagreements tend to be less about whether a certain value is good and more about whether certain behaviours are in line with, or opposed to, values that we can all accept.

You might have noticed already that these values overlap. The boundaries between them are not always clear. Given how fundamental they are to our moral lives, that's to be expected. We recognized them before we had words for them; language can express our rich inner lives only imperfectly, for one thing, and the world of ideas doesn't recognize the sorts of boundaries that we find in the world of objects anyway. Gratitude, for instance, is often also about fidelity—that is, recognizing what we owe to others is a matter of honesty. And self-improvement is a matter of both beneficence and non-maleficence, for by improving ourselves we can bring more good into the world and avoid causing harm through incompetence.

The six values listed above serve as useful guides to our professional lives as researchers, practitioners, and teachers. It's easy enough to predict how they might apply once you see some examples:

Fidelity

- o If we promise to have students' work marked by a certain date, we should honour that promise.
- o We should tell students the truth.
- o If we have agreed to a certain set of responsibilities as part of our GA/TA contracts, we have made an implicit promise, and thus we should not violate those responsibilities.
- o We should try to ensure that the values we hold in our personal lives guide our professional lives as well and vice-versa. To do otherwise would be hypocritical.

Gratitude

- o We should give credit for work or ideas that we have taken from others—such as ways of explaining the critical concepts of our discipline.
- o We should model humility in our work with students, bearing in mind how helpful such examples were to us when we were new undergraduates—when it was easy to slip into arrogance, believing we had things all figured out.
- o We should remember that our work as teachers is always dependent on the work of prior teachers, at every moment intertwined with the work of others teaching our students in the present, and, of course, a preparation for the teachers our students will have in the future.

Non-maleficence

- o As teachers, we have the power to cause great harm to our students, thus increasing not only their suffering but the suffering of those who are affected by their lives. We can do this by teaching them poorly or falsely, releasing them into the world underprepared, ignoring their emotional needs, assessing them with undue harshness or laxity, and/or taking advantage of our power over them, in more ways than we might recognize.

Beneficence
- o Along with the potential for harm, as teachers we also have the power to benefit our students and increase their happiness and fulfillment, along with the happiness of those who are affected by them. We can help them expand the depth and breadth of their understanding, inspire them to challenge themselves and achieve more than they thought possible, come to see why our disciplines and professions are worth valuing, and/or care about things they had never spent a moment's thought on before.
- o Our power to help is at least as great as our power to harm, and it's often worth focusing on this more positive aspect of our work than it is to dwell on negative possibilities.

Self-improvement
- o Considering all the values above, we should seek to improve our theoretical and empirical knowledge of teaching and learning, as well as our skills in teaching and assessment methods, course design, and related matters. In other words, even if we didn't value self-improvement for its own sake, we should value it for its capacity to help us realize the other values we have reviewed.

In all aspects of our lives, including our work as teachers, sometimes these values come into conflict. It's unavoidable. Life is messy, sloppy, a little chaotic. Sometimes, for instance, fidelity and beneficence come into conflict, as when a student who doesn't seem to have understood a word that's been said in class all semester asks you whether he should pursue a career in your discipline. The value of fidelity says you should tell him the truth, but the value of beneficence says you should be kind. *What to do in such cases?*

When values come into conflict, it can be helpful to refer to two capacities that lurk beneath the surface of all values, emotional sensitivities that, in addition to our **rationality**, account for why we have values at all and guide our implementation of those values in practice: **empathy** and **responsibility**.

> " When values come into conflict, it can be helpful to refer to two capacities that lurk beneath the surface of all values, emotional sensitivities that, in addition to our **rationality**, account for why we have values at all and guide our implementation of those values in practice: **empathy** and **responsibility**. "

Empathy is our capacity to experience the world from someone else's perspective, particularly to experience the world *as it is felt* from another's perspective. Primitive forms of empathy are present in very young infants and other social mammals, and our ability to empathize can be intentionally developed as we mature by learning about other people, noting similarities and

differences between our perspectives and theirs, and increasing the power and accuracy of our imaginations.

In the case we're considering, you would need to imagine what it is like to be that student. He has dreams, ambitions, goals. Something about your discipline has excited him. He isn't aware that you are sceptical of his promise in your field, or that you might consider him ill-suited for the challenges he might face. If you disabuse him of his confidence, he will be disappointed, perhaps crushed. It will hurt him.

On the other hand, if he pours himself into pursuing a career that's beyond his ability, he may face even greater disappointment in the future, as well as the loss of time and financial resources that he will not be able to recover. Does the possible harm of letting him believe he should pursue this career outweigh the disappointment he will feel if you tell him the truth now? Perhaps, in which case, it would be good to remember that, in cases like this, being nice is not the same thing as being kind. You would be nice if you encouraged him, dishonestly, by telling him he should pursue this career, but that would be unkind if you are setting him up for a major fall at a later date.

You know what it's like to be disappointed; no doubt you've had many disappointments in your own life. You know how deeply they can hurt. So even if you decided to prioritize the value of fidelity in this case, your reason should lead you to see that there are many ways of telling the truth—that you needn't be cruel to be honest. And your empathy should lead you to see that you can honour the value of beneficence at the same time as the value of fidelity in this case, by finding a *kind* way to tell the student the truth. You could tell him that you're pleased to see how enthusiastic he is about the discipline, then remind him that it can be demanding, so in order to do well in it he'll need to work on his understanding of certain key concepts. That way, you can help him by redirecting his attention to the challenges he still faces without discouraging him or leading him on under false pretences.

Who knows, you may find that with some extra time and a different pedagogical approach, he could end up much more successful than you had predicted. Sometimes we mistake our lack of success in teaching students well for a lack of ability in our students. It's tempting to excuse our own failures by assigning blame to unchangeable features in others, so tempting that, before we decide the problem lies in our students, we should ensure we've tried our very best to help them understand.

Bertrand Russell once wrote, "The good life is the one inspired by love and guided by knowledge."[2] He had in mind the combination of reason and empathy that we have just considered. But he also recognized a *sense of responsibility*, the last underlying capacity that we'll consider.

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[2] Russell, B. (1927), *Why I Am Not a Christian*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, p. 128.

Recommended Readings

If you're interested in learning more about the values and approaches I've brought together in this article, I highly recommend the following sources. You'll notice that some of these don't name a publisher; that's because the original publisher is long gone, and you can get several dozen editions of the books from a range of sources. Actually, those ones you can probably find for free (legally!) here and there across the Internet.

Dewey, John (1908). *Theory of the Moral Life*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Hume, D. (1739-40), *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*.

Hume, D. (1751), *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*.

Johnson, Mark (1993). *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meyers, Diana Tietjen (1994). *Subjection & Subjectivity: Psychoanalytic Feminism & Moral Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.

Noddings, Nel (1984). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Prichard, H.A. (1949/1968). *Moral Obligation: Essays and Lectures*. J.O. Urmson (ed.). Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Ross, W.D. (1930). *The Right and the Good*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Ross, W.D. (1939). *The Foundations of Ethics*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Schopenhauer, A. (1840). *On the Basis of Morality*.

To have a sense of responsibility is to recognize that we can affect what happens in the world around us, and that the roles or positions we occupy place certain demands upon us. As teachers, we must be responsible not only to our students—who are *our responsibility* to the extent that they are our students, but also to our departments, institutions, and disciplines (or professions).

In the case we have been considering, our sense of responsibility should lead us to recognize that we would be remiss in encouraging someone to enter a profession if he was not likely to meet its demands. It would be an act of irresponsibility to the student (who would be set up for failure), the profession or discipline (which would be marred by an incompetent new member), and of course, our departments and institutions (who would be associated with the incompetent new professional and thus suffer reputational harm).

Then again, as we have considered, we would be just as irresponsible if we discouraged the student from pursuing his passion on the *assumption* that he was incapable, unless we ascertained whether his apparent inability was actually contextual and temporary, the by-product of poor teaching or lack of opportunity. We would owe it to the student to try other means of helping him learn first.

Clearly, the mere fact that we have guiding principles and capacities does not rule out the need for judgment in some cases. While the ethical options will in some cases be easy to determine, in other cases you will be faced with several equally appealing (or unappealing) options. In those cases, you must exercise your judgment to the best of your ability, knowing that you may be called upon to defend your decision.

Other cases only appear difficult when we are reluctant to think things through. Consider the perennial problem of GA/TAs dating or having sexual relations with their students. Now that you've been thinking about the six values, plus the underlying capacities of empathy and responsibility, it should be obvious to you that you shouldn't be dating your students, having sexual relations with them, or even flirting with them.

For one, it obviously dishonours the value of fidelity, because your ability to be honest in assessing the work of someone you're sleeping with is bound to be compromised. Even if you don't recognize that, even if you believe your assessment is perfectly objective, others won't be able to trust it. And if your colleagues can't trust your assessment practices, you've harmed the integrity of the department and failed in your responsibilities to all affected parties.

There's also an obvious power imbalance between you and your students, so that your relationship cannot be one of equals. That's a harmful relationship for both parties, actually, because while you have the power to fail the student, the student also has the power to ruin your career. The values of non-maleficence and beneficence are too easily compromised. Best for both of you to avoid the possibility.

Finally, remember back to when you were a new undergraduate student (it wasn't that long ago!), or even a high school student, and how easy it was to become infatuated with your teachers. Empathy should lead you to see how easy it is for students to be manipulated emotionally by their teachers. Even if you're truly a virtuous person who would never consciously manipulate someone, you can do it subconsciously, and the student could fall prey to it just as subconsciously.

Wait until you can be equals.

Talking About *Wikipedia* and Scholarly Research

Heidi LM Jacobs

I t doesn't take long for *Wikipedia* to come up as a topic of conversation when I talk with students and professors about scholarly research. Professors ask me "how can we get students to stop using *Wikipedia*?" and students regularly ask, "I know I'm not supposed to use *Wikipedia*, but I don't know what else there is. Can you suggest something?" These are inter-related questions and ones worth considering together.

When I talk with classes about *Wikipedia* I always ask "How many of you have used *Wikipedia* in the past 48 hours?" and almost every hand in the room (including the professor's) goes up. When I ask "How many of you have had a professor tell you not to use *Wikipedia* in your assignments?" again, almost every hand in the room goes up. I then ask "How many of you have talked in class about why you're not supposed to use *Wikipedia* in your assignments?" At this point, usually only one or two hands go up, and then we, as a class, talk about *Wikipedia*. I ask them what they know about *Wikipedia* and why they think their professors don't want them to use *Wikipedia* as a source. Students mention that *Wikipedia* entries can be written by anyone, that anyone with an Internet connection can go in and make changes, that entries can be unreliable, and that you often never know where information is coming from. I also ask students what they like about *Wikipedia* and they tell me that it's easy to use, it's fast, it's up-to-date, it's actually

> " I know I'm not supposed to use *Wikipedia* but I don't know what else there is. Can you suggest something? "

fairly accurate, and a good starting place for research. Most professors would agree: it is fast, easy to use, up-to-date, fairly accurate and is, most importantly, a good *starting place* for research. The issue with *Wikipedia* isn't its use as a starting place: it's problematic when it becomes the ending place for scholarly research.

By having conversations about *Wikipedia* in these ways, we can then move to discussions of other resources, such as scholarly encyclopedias and reference works, monographs, and articles that allow students to take their research to new levels. Telling students that they must or must not use specific resources without having conversations about why is a missed opportunity: talking about *Wikipedia* is an opportunity to engage them in thinking critically about research and the complex information environments in which they live. I find conversations with students about *Wikipedia* both fascinating and imperative. They're fascinating because students almost always become deeply engaged in discussions about *Wikipedia*, and they have lots of things to say about it. They're imperative because in talking about *Wikipedia*, students talk about the importance of thinking critically about our information sources, whether they're online encyclopedias or library resources.

The Roles of GAs and TAs in Online Learning

Julia Colella & Shawna Scott

How to Become Acquainted With Students in a Virtual World

If you are a GA/TA for an online course, it is important that students feel welcome in this domain. Especially for new students, online courses may be intimidating or overwhelming. You, as the GA/TA, have the ability to ease the students' transition to the online platform. If you are using CLEW, the first way you can become acquainted with students is by posting a welcome message on your Discussion Board. The message can include your name and brief biography, office hours, and E-mail address/policy.

Sample Discussion Board Welcome Message

Hello students,

Welcome to (course name)! I hope that you will enjoy this course and find it helpful towards your academic career here at the University of Windsor. If your last name falls between _____ and _____ then I am your TA for this semester! As your teaching assistant, I am here to offer my assistance in many different ways. Since this course is online-based, some details may seem confusing at first, especially for those who are not comfortable using the Internet. Please feel free to contact me if you need help getting used to how the course is set up. I can be contacted in three major ways:

1) E-mail: My e-mail is _____. This is probably the quickest way of communicating with me. I check this e-mail very frequently and usually never take longer than 24 hours to respond to an e-mail. Please note that when you e-mail me you **MUST** *include the course name or number somewhere in the subject line. It is also recommended that you include the section number (So for this course that would be section _____). Please also include your full name and student ID number in e-mails.* **Do not provide your student ID in discussion posts**. *If you fail to provide this information your e-mail may be deleted (and that comes right from the syllabus which can be found on CLEW). Again, this is your best bet for contacting me.*

2) Office Hour(s): My office hour(s) will be held on (day of the week) from (start and end time of office hour) in room (room number) of (building name). This is a great opportunity to meet me or ask any questions. This time is set aside especially for attending to students' needs. Therefore, I encourage you to come out and ask any questions! If you cannot make this time, please do not hesitate to e-mail me to set up an appointment. (Include a description of the building location). If you need help in locating the office, please e-mail me.

3) Discussion Board: On the CLEW website under "Discussions" you will find that every TA has a discussion board. My board is labelled "_____." Please feel free to create a new topic or reply and ask me any questions here. I will generally check this board daily, but you will probably get a faster reply through E-mail. If your concern is a private matter, it is not recommended that you use this medium to contact me.
I look forward to working with you all this semester. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me!

(Your name)

Communication with Students

In your communication with students, it is vital to remember that you are modeling and setting expectations for professional style. It is advisable that you provide multimodal ways for students to contact you. Not all students will feel comfortable posting on your discussion board, because they know that their classmates may read their messages. In contrast, some students may favour using discussion boards, because they know that their inquiries may help other students as well.

You must be mindful of the *tone* you use in all electronic communication, because you are representing our educational institution while making a comfortable learning environment for others.

Example 1:
Student: "How do I know when the midterm is?"

✗ TA: *You need to check the Syllabus. Read carefully!*

✓ TA: *Please refer to the Syllabus or my CLEW Discussion Board for that information. Feel free to contact me with any further questions.*

Example 2:
Student: "I am trying to start my second assignment, but I really don't get it. Can you help me?"

✗ TA: *Look at the guidelines in MCL for that information. That information has been there for a while now. Follow instructions!!*

✓ TA: *If you are still having trouble understanding the instructions for this assignment, please come see me during my office hour(s). This information can be found on my first Discussion Board post.*

FYI

If you cannot meet your scheduled office hour(s), you must do the following:
1. Inform the instructor.
2. E-mail all of your assigned students.
3. Post your cancellation on your Discussion Board in CLEW.
4. If possible, have someone (fellow GA, secretary, instructor, etc.) post a sign for you on the office door.
5. In your e-mail/postings, you must also tell the students when your rescheduled office hour(s) will take place.

Example 3:
Student: "I can't make your office hours. Can I see you some other time? I really need to meet with you."

✗ TA: *If you can't make my office hour(s), I'm afraid I won't be able to help you.*

✓TA: *That's not a problem. I would be more than happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you. Perhaps you can tell me the times when you will be on campus. In the meantime, feel free to e-mail me any general inquiries.*

Example 4:
Student: "I don't know where I can find the marking scheme that will be used for Assignment 1. Can you tell me?"

✗ TA: *It's on the CLEW site somewhere. Go look it up.*

✓ TA: *Absolutely! You will find the marking scheme on our CLEW site. First, log into our CLEW course site. Next, go to Assignments (left-hand column). From there, click on Assignment 1, and you will find the attached Marking Scheme. I hope this helps. Let me know if you need additional help.*

Keeping Students Connected to the Campus

Many students are not familiar with the resources available to them on campus. Though it may not be a requirement on your GA/TA contract, providing external resources to students will benefit their educational experience.

1) **Campus Lifeline** is a free program to support students. You can make students aware of this program by posting their event(s) on your Discussion Board or in Announcements. http://www.uwindsor.ca/lifeline/academic-support

Here is an example of a Campus Lifeline Announcement:

Campus Lifeline: TAKING THAT FIRST UNIVERSITY EXAM

> *Don't be unprepared for that first set of mid-terms. Campus Lifeline will provide an understanding of what to expect and the opportunity to learn from senior students who will be there to share their experiences.*

Wednesday, October 6 from 3:00 - 3:30 p.m. in the CAW Centre Boardroom (2nd Floor).

If you are unable to attend a scheduled workshop, or if you would like to make an individual appointment for any of the topics listed here, please contact the event organizer.

2) **S.T.E.P.S.** is a free support system for students. If you have a student who is struggling, it may be in the student's best interest to utilize this resource:

http://www.uwindsor.ca/lifeline/steps-fall-2010-workshop-schedule

Inclusive Pedagogy: Building a Community of Learners in Your Classroom

Karen Roland

To effectively engage in the process of learning, students at every age need to feel they belong, and that they are valued within the classroom. To ensure this *learning readiness* I would suggest that there is a need to create a *community* of learners in the classroom. For the purpose of this discussion, inclusive pedagogy is defined in terms of three interrelated principles:

1. The importance of relationship building as foundational to the creation of a respectful and positive culture within the classroom;
2. Student-centred learning as a pedagogical strategy that enhances student choice, engagement, and power in the learning process; and
3. Planning classroom assessment with purpose, in terms of: assessment for learning to understand what students are thinking and know; assessment as learning, a self-assessment process used by students to reflect and monitor their progress; and finally, evidence-based assessment of learning used to make decisions regarding placements, reporting, and/or accreditation.

These principles: relationship building, student-centred learning, and assessment provide the basis for an inclusive pedagogical approach.

Relationship Building

As a teacher, I would suggest that it is essential that your students feel a level of support and commitment from you, so that they are able to do their best work, and thereby, engage in the process of learning. Here are some strategies I have used in the classroom:

Develop a Code of Conduct

Developing a Code of Conduct in your classroom is an effective method to use to promote respect and accountability for classroom behaviour. As Kosnik & Beck (2009) indicate, as the teacher you have to set the tone of the classroom and model genuine respect, inclusive language, and an interest in getting to know all of your students. A Code of Conduct not only helps set the tone for the classroom, but it also encourages ownership and accountability in terms of students' self-regulation, as well as peer interactions. I routinely use this strategy in both classroom and workshop settings, particularly when discussing sensitive issues, and/or where students may have divergent viewpoints. Here is a sample of a Code of Conduct that I have used:

However, even with a Code of Conduct, as the University of Windsor *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching* (2003) suggests, it is very important for the teacher to monitor discriminatory language and behaviour in the classroom and to intervene in communication patterns that may exclude students.

Name cards

Using name cards is a useful strategy to employ during the first few weeks of class to help students in developing relationships with their classmates. I bring cardboard stock paper with me to class along with markers, and ask everyone to make a name *tent* card—I don't give many instructions and let students be creative and express themselves on these name cards. I collect the name cards after each class. At the next class I randomly place the cards around the room facilitating interaction among different classmates. In this way, as the teacher you: a) get students to interact with new members of the class and b) promote community in your classroom rather than the formation of cliques. After a number of classes have been held, and when you feel that students have developed relationships with each other and a sense of community in the classroom, you no longer need the name cards.

Student pair-partnerships

Knight (2007) suggests that an effective method to engage students in peer discussions is to use opportunities for *paired collaboration* in the classroom. Specifically, pairing students alleviates some problems associated with the dynamics of larger working groups—for example, the perennial student leader taking over the discussion and the need to

constantly coax the reluctant student to have a voice in the conversation. She states that pairing often creates a peer-partnership focused on intellectual teamwork, helps those quiet students find their voices, and teaches mutual respect and cooperation.

- o **Setting up pairs:** As the teacher, you must give thought as to how and when to use this strategy. To create a sense of community and to build relationships amongst the classroom students, you may choose to randomly assign pairs (choosing pairs by assigning a number, 1, 2; or, by asking students to turn to their partner on the left, or behind them) or, you can use student name cards as a tool for creating pairings—placing student name cards together purposely before the class starts.
- o **Safety, peer teaching:** Another key aspect of pair-partnerships is what Knight (2007) refers to as the opportunity to problem-solve on a more intimate scale. Pairing may provide students with a sense of safety in which to share their ideas and thoughts, and this often leads to forming a pair-alliance as they work together.

Milling to Music—Facilitating Random Discussion Groups

I have participated in this activity, as well as used it in my classroom. This strategy is an effective method to use when you are seeking to develop broader student relationships throughout the classroom—a community of learners in your classroom. Music is the tool that lets students know when to stop talking, move to another site, and then to regroup.

For example, I have used this strategy in my classroom when discussing a reading in which a number of different tenets were listed as being important for teachers to consider when developing their personal vision for teaching. Each tenet, while different, is important to teaching practice in its own right—therefore, there were no right or wrong answers. Prior to the start of class, I had created signs for each teaching tenet and posted them around the room to create discussion sites. I began the class with a brief discussion asking the students how they would define each of the tenets. I then asked the class to listen to my instructions prior to moving. I explained the steps of the activity to them as follows:

1. I showed them the signs identifying each of the tenet discussions sites posted around the classroom (I posted the signs prior to the class beginning);
2. I asked them to reflect, and in their own minds list their top three tenets in terms of their personal visions for teaching;
3. I explained that I wanted them to get up and go to their 1st top tenet site and discuss with the other students there why they considered this to be the most important tenet to consider when creating a vision for teaching;
4. I explained to the students that I would use music to indicate when they were to move to the next discussion site where their 2nd top tenet was posted, and again discuss with the students there; and
5. This process was completed again for the 3rd top tenet, after which the class reconvened, and a group debriefing was held.

As the teacher, I counted how many students were at each discussion site, and in this way determined for the class a rough estimate of the top three tenets. We discussed this at the

group debriefing. This strategy allows group discussion among many different classroom students. However, it is important to monitor classroom interaction patterns throughout the activity.

Creating Relevance to Student's Lives

This is an important aspect for student engagement in the process of learning—bringing to the forefront of the lesson the relevance of the curriculum to the students' lives. At the University of Windsor we have an incredible asset in our highly diverse student population! The *University of Windsor Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching* (2003) suggests that to promote inclusion and respect in the classroom, the teacher should:

o Provide students with opportunities that encourage diverse views, and that value cultural knowledge;
o Encourage activities in their classroom that require students to develop an understanding of other cultures and norms;
o Whenever possible, break down stereotypes and use language that reverses expectations based on gender, race, ethnicity, etc.; and,
o Avoid asking students from diverse backgrounds to speak only on minority issues, or to give the minority perspective on issues.

Student-Centred Learning

O'Neill and McMahon (2005) suggest that teaching shifts along a student-centered/teacher-centred continuum. They assert that student-centred learning involves a high level of student choice, student activity and a shift of power from "expert teacher to the student learner" (p. 27). These pedagogical strategies promote student centred learning:

1. Students must actively acquire knowledge and skills;
2. Students should develop an awareness of what they are doing, and why they are doing it; there should be a focus on student interaction using tutorials and discussion groups; and, the teacher should also focus on transferrable skills. Rather than learning outcomes focused on covering content, the focus in student-centred teaching is on what the student will be able to do (p. 30).

Here are two examples of student-centered vs. traditional learning outcomes (adapted from O'Neill & McMahon, 2005, p. 30):

Examples of student-centered learning outcomes: *By the end of this unit the student will be able to:*	Examples of traditional learning outcomes: *The content of this unit will cover:*
Recognize and identify the structures of the human limbic system	The structures of the human limbic system
Critique one of Shakespeare's Sonnets	A selection of Shakespeare's Sonnets

Student reflection on learning is a key aspect of student-centred learning. Here is a list of some examples of student-centred learning/teaching methods (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005, p. 31):

- o Pair-partnerships
- o Group discussions
- o Role playing
- o Student presentations
- o Peer teaching/mentoring
- o Fieldwork
- o Student reflections/learning journals
- o Choice of projects
- o Student portfolio
- o Poster presentation

Designing Assessment with Purpose

When developing lessons, it is critical for teachers to consider how they will know if student learning has occurred. In the webcast, *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind* (2006), Dr. Lorna Earl challenges teachers to consider why and what they are assessing—to find out what students know, so that the teacher can make informed instructional decisions. She states that formative assessments, assessment as learning, is used to facilitate learning that requires students to actively engage in self-monitoring their progress, identifying gaps in their learning, and, with guidance and feedback from the teacher, make changes and adjustments in what they understand and know. She indicates that the summative assessment is done for accreditation purposes, and to certify that learning has taken place.

An example of *assessment as learning* I can share has to do with students writing up reflections of their learning based on personal observations during field placements. During the field placement in schools, students (teacher candidates) are provided with observation days as an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the school, the associate teacher, students, and classroom routines. This observation is not passive, and requires that teacher candidates actively become involved in the life of the classroom. To facilitate and guide teacher candidates, they are asked to complete an observation reflection sheet. However, to actively engage students in self-monitoring their progress, they are further asked to complete an Observation Reflection. This assignment asks that teacher candidates, based on their in-school observations, describe from their perspective the following:

1. How the practice of observing the Associate Mentor Teacher, Classroom Students, and the School Community, has informed their teaching practice during this placement.
2. What they would do again, and/or what they would do differently, during their next field placement.
3. Describe how they are using the process of self-reflection to inform their teaching practice and professional development in a positive way.

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (2006), asserts that effective assessment involves:

- o A process of gathering information from a variety of sources that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the course expectations;
- o Teachers providing students with descriptive feedback to guide their efforts; and
- o Evaluation or judging the quality of student work based on *established criteria.*

Furthermore, they indicate that assessment strategies are diverse and may include:

- o Anecdotal records
- o Checklists
- o Rubrics
- o Student conferences
- o Projects
- o Presentations
- o Peer/self assessment
- o Learning journals

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would suggest that linking these principles as part of an inclusive pedagogical approach may positively impact the climate of your classroom to effectively create a *community* of learners. I would characterize this community of learners as a classroom environment where students are engaged and ready to learn, and where students have control of, and are responsible for, their learning.

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Leading Tutorials and Labs

Erica Lyons

The experience of leading your own classroom at a university level as a TA or GA can be very intimidating at first but it is often also a very rewarding experience for both yourself and the students. There are many things that you can do to make sure that your experience leading a classroom runs smoothly. Below, you will find some tips on how to effectively lead a tutorial or lab, in terms of being an effective classroom leader, promoting participation, and presenting material effectively and in an interesting manner.

Getting Comfortable Leading Your Classroom

The first issue that may arise for many GA/TAs is the fear of speaking in front of a room full of attentive, and sometimes not-so-attentive, students. Not everyone can walk up in front of a group of people and confidently and effectively present information. One of the best things to do is be prepared. This means not only being well versed with the course material ahead of time, but also coming to the tutorials/labs with activities or discussions that involve student participation. For example, starting a tutorial or lab with the discussion of a relevant current topic is a great way to ease into the course content. Such a technique will also get students talking and allow you to mediate discussions until you feel comfortable enough to take center stage.

One of the benefits of labs and tutorials is the small class size that allows you to offer a more personalized and interactive learning experience. By creating an overall atmosphere of acceptance and ease of communication, you will feel less intimidated leading the classroom, and students will feel that they are in a forum for hands-on and participatory learning. It is also very important to remember that you will not know everything about every topic included in the range of your subject matter, and if students ask a question you are not confident answering you can always let them know that you do not have the complete correct answer, but that you will look into it and get back them in the next lab/tutorial. Then make sure that you do!

Another way that you can feel comfortable and confident while leading a classroom discussion is to use visual aids. By having a PowerPoint presentation, videos, or any other visuals for students to look at, you can avoid the intensity of having 30 people staring at you, which can create a much less stressful experience for you and a more enjoyable, appealing, and interactive experience for the students.

> " By creating an overall atmosphere of acceptance and ease of communication you will feel less intimidated leading the classroom, and students will feel that they are in a forum for hands on and participatory learning. "

There are many ways to become comfortable with leading a lab or tutorial, and each person will take a different approach. The most important thing to remember is that you need to create a supportive, inquisitive, and stimulating experience that allows students to learn the material effectively and, at the same time, requires students to respect your position as a leader. By respecting the students' opinions and treating their questions and concerns with seriousness and legitimacy, you can maintain an atmosphere of learning and respect.

Promoting Student Interaction and Participation

Now that you have some tips on confidently speaking in front of a classroom, you need to help the students do the same. As tutorials and labs tend to be small it is always ideal to allow the students to become comfortable interacting with one another and with you on a one-on-one level. Given this dynamic, it is best to start off the first tutorial with an icebreaker, often something that is fun and will interest anyone. For example, go around the room and ask each person to state their name, major, and favourite television show. This not only gets all students talking, but it also allows you to remember names better and illustrates that communication is key to your classroom lab/tutorial. It is also a good idea to reiterate that the lab/tutorial is an opportunity for them to ask questions and receive more one-on-one help, in order to better understand course concepts. Participation also allows students to hear and consider other students' viewpoints and to learn from other students.

Keeping it Interesting and Informative

Now that you are standing confidently in front of your students, and they are participating, it is integral to keep their attention and effectively present material. This is where you may benefit from using technology. As this generation of undergraduate students are transfixed with technology and depend upon it, it is a good idea to integrate it in your lab/tutorials. This could range from using YouTube videos to compliment course content to creating classroom blogs or social networking pages to allow students to express themselves.

TIP

Use technology to help boost participation. For example, participation marks could be given for weekly blogs about course content or students could be given assignments that involve the use of online resources. This will allow the students to have a more interesting interactive experience.

A Final Word of Advice

Above all, it is always important to stick to the course material, and to consult the professor for whom you are working, to determine whether your idea about how to conduct the labs/tutorials is aligned with his or her course learning outcomes. Often professors are very inviting when it comes to new and inventive ways to present course content. Always remember that it is ultimately the professor's course and material, and you need to be respectful of that while still creating an effective and interesting learning experience for students.

Becoming More than *Just* A GA/TA: Creating Community in the University Classroom

Danielle Bechard & Rod Turton

Introduction

In order to become a Graduate or Teaching Assistant (GA/TA), you must demonstrate an exceptional level of academic accomplishment. Yet, to go beyond the traditional role of GA/TA and develop a community takes much more. The path to becoming more than *just* a GA/TA is one that requires persistence, determination, focus, and passion. The following article highlights the experiences of undergraduate students from the Mentorship and Learning Program in the Faculty of Arts and Social (FASS) at the University of Windsor and the steps they took to transcend their roles as teaching assistants to become community-building peer mentors.

Background

The Mentorship and Learning program is a 400-level interdisciplinary course in FASS. The goal of this innovative program is to pair first year FASS students with upper-year students to establish a mentee-mentor dynamic. The first semester of Mentorship is devoted to research and elementary training in such areas as feedback, inclusive teaching, and cultural diversity. The following semester is geared toward practical learning, as the students are placed in first year classrooms across FASS. To date, student mentors have been placed in first year History, Drama, Political Science, and General Arts courses. Students continue to develop their skills as they mentor a small group of first year students, under the supervision of their designated professors. Though the majority of students in Mentorship and Learning come from different disciplines, the goal of the program is universal: to develop a sense of community between mentor and mentees, resulting in a memorable and successful learning experience for both parties. Following personal and professional success in the two-semester course, a few students are invited by course instructors to assist with the new mentors the following year, as Teaching Assistants, or in Mentorship terms, *Senior Mentors*.

What's in a Name?

The first day of your GA/TA position may be an overwhelming experience. To make sense of the chaos, it is imperative to learn the names of your students. This can be a challenging venture, but it is crucial to foster a relationship between yourself and the student. In lab settings, when possible, it is also advantageous to encourage students to learn each others' names. This helps to abolish the stigma of being *just a number* as a university student and promotes the idea of student-centric teaching and learning. Suddenly, the student's feeling of anonymity is replaced with a sense of personal connection to the GA/TA and other students, thus providing students with encouragement to attend class.

To accomplish this goal, be creative! If you are afforded tutorial sessions with the students, devote time throughout your first few sessions for student introductions and name-learning

exercises. If you do not have the opportunity to facilitate a lab, email is an excellent way to initiate a relationship with each student, from which you can begin to establish a sense of openness and community. In short, be accessible.

Help! I Need Somebody!

Accessibility is an essential quality of an effective GA/TA. Office hours are not enough. Accessibility means being available to every student, even outside of the classroom. A GA/TA should regularly email students with reminders, suggestions, and encouragement. Take the time to meet with students to give them feedback and ideas, and give them opportunities to discuss personal and academic obstacles with you. It is up to the GA/TA to create a comfortable, approachable environment. This reciprocity allows the students to learn from you in a casual way and also allows you to learn from your students. Remember you are their peer, and they should not be afraid to approach you with difficulties or inquiries. Going the extra mile will contribute to the success of your students: your ultimate goal.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Cameron, B. (1999). *Active Learning*. London, ON: Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Guo, S. & Jamal, Z. (2007).*Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Teaching*. London, ON: Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

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Piccinin, S. (2003). *Feedback: Key to Learning*. London, ON: Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Take a Boring Lesson and Make it Better

After you've established a bond with your students, you can expect them to approach you with questions about the course material. So, know your stuff! Once you have a firm and complete understanding of the readings, assignments, and course outcomes, you can continue to go the extra mile by bringing innovative strategies into your facilitation. Keep in mind that you are not the professor; instead, you are there to shed light when the professor cannot. Develop your own facilitation style, so that you are confident in your role in the classroom, whatever that role may be. If you are allotted lab time with the students, think of ways that you can engage them whilst delivering course content. Get them on their feet, ignite a discussion, use visuals—find some way to put the *fun* back into fundamental learning, and give the students a unique and exciting classroom experience. Cater to your community by recognizing the differentiated learning styles that exist within your group of students, and make use of different tactics, which could appeal to a wide variety of learners.

We're all in this Together

The goal of becoming more than *just* a GA/TA is to create an interpersonal community to enhance the success of the students and GA/TAs alike. It is important to note that learning communities come in all shapes and sizes, each unique with specific goals and aspirations. The practices mentioned here have proven invaluable for both parties, and by creating a community in this way, you can be confident that students will begin to feel kinship with each other and with you, the GA/TA. The atmosphere of the classroom becomes one of comfort, and, within it, even the most timid of

students can find the courage to contribute to discussions or engage in activities. If your community is successful, its influence will carry beyond the final exam.

Now What?

These strategies should help you on your path to becoming an excellent GA/TA. This road is not without obstacles, but with the proper community-building strategies and determination, you shall undoubtedly meet with great success. Luckily, you are not on this road alone. Find past and current GA/TAs with whom to share your successes and struggles. They are all members of your community.

Let's Review

- Learn students' names.
- Make yourself accessible.
- Use creative techniques to engage.
- Be mindful of varying learning styles.
- Make community your goal.
- Find other GA/TAs for support.
- Have fun!

Assisting Students in *Hard* Classes

Jessica Penwell Barnett

What is a *hard* class?

A hard class is any class students perceive as particularly distasteful or difficult, likely suspects include discipline-specific required courses and discipline-specific courses offered to non-majors. Often, these are classes the students have negative feelings about before the first day of class. They are said to be *pointless* or *incomprehensible*, or just plain *anxiety provoking*. Assisting students in such classes can pose particular challenges for you as a GA/TA. If nothing else, they require you to be in good form. Students in these classes are more likely to come to your office hours, contact you with questions, and generally need more support than they would in other courses. The following suggestions are intended to help you assist students in these situations.

Understand your students

The first step to helping students succeed in hard classes is to understand where they're coming from. As a GA/TA you are enviably positioned to help students learn, without being responsible for all the administrative and institutional obligations shouldered by the instructor. While the instructor must balance empathy for students with a host of competing imperatives, you get to just be there for the students. Take advantage of this! Remember what it is like to be new at the higher education game? What were your anxieties (e.g. grades, exams, etc.)? What procedural stuff were you ignorant of then, that seems so obvious now (e.g. paper formatting, citation, etc.)? Put yourself in the learner's shoes.

Implementation

- Take a deep breath. Try not to get frustrated. Don't get callous. Imagine yourself in their positions and try to understand how they came to the decisions they did.
- Assess where your students are. It is important to assess their incoming knowledge because it is possible they lack the basic building blocks you are expecting them to have. Your explanation of new material won't make a lot of sense if it presumes a non-existent grasp of *old* material.
- Explain the logic of the subject. How do things fit together?
- Explain terms gratuitously. Students often find terms confusing because, when they're learning, terms to do not immediately mean something in their heads. They have to actually take time to think about the concept to which that word refers, (and they may be a little fuzzy on that anyway!). Because of this, using one term to explain another, or to explain a process, may leave learners mystified.

Respect your students

You are going to be busy. You are going to have your own anxieties and frustrations as a student. Sometimes it is difficult to treat the students we are assisting with adequate respect when we have

our own lives and busy schedules to deal with. However, it is important to respect them as learners.

Implementation

- Help them understand why they are being asked to do something. Why do they have to cite that way? Why do they have to use a certain term in their response to get full marks?
- If you are actually teaching, for example a lab or tutorial, have a lesson plan. Every time. Do not wing it! What are the objectives for the time? How will you accomplish those objectives in the time given?
- For a clear, general lesson plan template, visit: http://teaching.concordia.ca/resources/lesson-plan-template/
- Answer emails promptly.
- Take adequate time to mark assignments and provide formative feedback. Formative feedback is feedback that can guide future practice, in other words, the changes they could make to perform better (Piccinin, 2003). This can be particularly hard to manage, as marking takes a substantial amount of time. However, students learn more from formative feedback than from a mark. (It will also help you out when students challenge their grades. You will remember, and be able to articulate, why the assigned grade is appropriate.)
- Think about implementing a midterm GA/TA evaluation, especially if you teach. Simply ask students to answer two questions: which aspects of this lab/tutorial are working well? and, what specific changes would make this lab/tutorial more effective? (Kustra & Potter, 2008).

Help your students learn

Student learning is the outcome that justifies your pay. It is also a plus for you in your role as a GA/TA and as a fellow citizen or co-resident of those you're assisting. If you help a student learn, s/he is less likely to request support as frequently as s/he would if they *just can't seem to get it*. In addition, this person will be more well-educated and skilled as s/he moves about the planet you share with him or her. Perhaps you even value learning as a good thing in and of itself. How, then, do we do this?

Implementation

- Confer with the instructor to make sure you are really clear on the quality criteria for an assignment when it is assigned, NOT when you are already marking it. Quality criteria are the things (i.e. use of terminology, proper citation, etc.) that must be in place for a student product (i.e. answer, participation, assignment) to be judged as being of a certain quality (i.e. mark) (Sadler, 2010). Communicate these quality criteria to students. If you are teaching, communicate criteria when assignments are handed out. Try showing an example of an answer with all the quality criteria present and another example that is missing some; this will help students concretely recognize what criteria look like. It is also helpful to mention criteria when teaching relevant

concepts. Whether or not you are teaching, you can provide this information when students email you, even if they don't ask for it.
- Use accessible analogies and examples. People learn new things by making associations with things they already know.
- Try wording explanations multiple ways and repeating them, particularly for concepts that are difficult for students.
- If you teach, try to be high energy. If they don't have good feelings about this class and probably don't want to be here, try to keep them with you, and don't let their disaffection drag the energy level down. That only results in increased inattention and, thus, less learning.
- Tell students about additional resources for learning support. Many students are not aware of the resources that are available.

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Chapter 4

Grading

Grading Tips

Candace Nast

Graduate and undergraduate teaching assistant duties often take the shape of grading, and, believe it or not, there is a way to make the grading task a little easier.

Ideally, assignments were designed based on the course's learning outcomes. This means that the work students have completed aligns with the stated learning objectives. When this is the case, assessment directly measures how well students have mastered the learning outcomes set out at the beginning of the course.

Using a rubric simplifies the task of grading. Rubrics help you maintain grading consistency from the papers graded at the top of the pile right through to the bottom. Using a rubric keeps you focused on the skills being assessed, and, when they are returned, students can see what is expected at each level of mastery. This can help cut down on questions like "what do I have to do to get an A?"

Some professors provide their grading assistants with rubrics, but don't despair if you did not receive one. There are many examples available online or you can create one based on the assignment outline. Try searching online for "rubric + (your discipline) + higher ed" for a template. If those avenues fail, you can always ask one of the skilled staff at the Centre for Teaching and Learning: http://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl or contact the GATA Network Team: gata@uwindsor.ca

Chapter 5

Dilemmas

Conflict Resolution in the University Classroom

Gemma Smyth

Conflict is a part of everyday human interaction in both personal and professional contexts. Because conflict is omnipresent, and because of the increasing numbers of conflict resolution and anti-bullying training in high schools, one might expect conflict competence to be a skill students possess before entering post-secondary education. However, many students, GA/TAs, and indeed professors have not had such training. Regardless, training alone is not a universal remedy: conflict resolution is a necessary skill requiring ongoing awareness, self-reflection, and improvement. Conflict in the classroom can bring with it attendant challenges that, if left unmanaged, can negatively affect the student, the GA/TA, and the professor.

> This short article defines conflict and its development into disputes, addresses some sources and contexts for conflict, and concludes with a set of tips on dealing with conflict involving students.

What is conflict? What is the role of the GA/TA as conflict specialist?

Since conflict can be internal, many conflicts are never voiced. GA/TAs may suspect their students are experiencing conflict, but generally the conflict must turn into a dispute before it manifests publicly. Of course, disputes may occur between two students or more, or between groups. Subject matter and seriousness of conflict may vary widely, but the role of the GA/TA in conflict resolution is usually one of a facilitator and mediator. The GA/TA acts as an impartial party who will use her skills in problem identification, interpersonal communication, and conflict analysis to create a respectful, productive classroom environment. The goal of the GA/TA as conflict specialist need not result in total agreement on all issues. In fact, particularly in a university setting where discussion and disagreement are important parts of intellectual rigour, agreement may not be desirable.

> " The GA or TA acts as an impartial party who will use her skills in problem identification, interpersonal communication, and conflict analysis to create a respectful, productive classroom environment. "

It is also possible the GA/TA herself will become party to a dispute. For example, a student may dispute the assignment of a particular grade or disagree with a statement made during class. In these events, it is easy to slip into the role of a negotiator. While a certain element of negotiation will inevitably occur, ultimately,

facilitation and mediation skills can more appropriately maintain the professional role and leave the final decision-making to the professor.

How does conflict arise in the classroom?

Classroom conflict may arise in many ways, sometimes individually either during office hours or during pre- or post-class conversation, or between the GA/TA and individual students or groups of students. Conflict may also occur between students, between the GA/TA and the professor, or between the professor and the class. Inter-student conflict is usually outside the range of appropriate instructor duties, unless perhaps the conflict is a direct result of an in-class disagreement. GA/TAs often identify conflict between himself or herself and a particularly vocal group of students as the most difficult, especially if the conflict continues from class to class. Regardless of the context, some basic principles are useful in resolving classroom disputes.

Resolving Conflict

The literature on conflict resolution is vast. The following introduces some basic concepts in the field, contextualized using a typical student conflict. For greater depth, references are provided below.

Fisher and Ury's (1991) popular book *Getting to Yes* sets out some useful concepts for everyday conflict resolution. Their model emphasized the importance of an interest-based approach to conflict resolution. Rather than debating issues positionally, with both parties entrenched in their own perspectives, Fisher and Ury posited that negotiators should dig beneath the parties' presenting positions to discover their underlying reasons and motivations—their interests. The authors proposed that parties who negotiate using interests are more likely to find solutions that are not only acceptable, but in fact, those that create value as illustrated in the story below:

> *Two students worked together to complete a project worth a significant portion of their overall mark. Knowing the deadline, Student A planned a family vacation to South Africa the week before the assignment was due. Student B was livid. Obviously, Student A would make a lousy partner. She clearly was not committed if she would leave just as the assignment was due!*

This scenario could easily end in a positional argument about which student cared more about the course or the grade. It could become increasingly personal: perhaps Student B assumes Student A is an over-privileged snob, or perhaps Student A assumes B is a lazy and intractable procrastinator. As often occurs in conflict, the more a party paints a negative portrait of another, the more future behaviours are perceived to align with that portrait, even when the behaviour is benign. Left uninterrupted, this reinforcing attribution can lead to intractable conflict.

What if the students used an interest-based approach?

Consider the following example:

Student A and B met to discuss the situation. Although hurt and angry, they began asking one another the reasons behind their positions. Student B admitted she always worked to a deadline. This meant peaking the day before the assignment was due. She thought a great deal about the work, but only wrote things down shortly before the assignment was due. Student A, however, began an assignment immediately. She always left lots of time for editing and usually handed in assignments early. Leaving for a vacation was not a big deal for her.

This interest-based discussion allows the students to ask "why?" to dig beneath their positions to understand the reasons why their interaction was upsetting. Digging deeper, however, may provide further opportunities for integrative and creative decision-making.

Student A acknowledged her particular approach to the problem. Student B proposed a timeline and division of work. Both amended their approaches slightly to accommodate the other, so a final proofread of the assignment could be done before the deadline. Satisfied, Student B asked Student A where she was heading on vacation. Interestingly, Student B knew that the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commissions might form a worthwhile perspective on their project on global peace building efforts. Student A agreed to interview citizens who had participated in the Commissions and email them to Student B in time for their due date which, due to Student B's excellence with last-minute assignments, was manageable.

While these stories may seem too *neat* for general application, they are in fact microcosms of creative decision-making that occurs daily in many facets of social and political life. For GA/TAs, interest-based decision-making can help with creating solutions to conflict amongst students, in large group discussions, or with other work-related conflicts that arise.

Use of Language

While interest-based problem solving is one useful construct, interpersonal communication is the method by which

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RECOMMENDED READING

Websites:
www.mediate.com
http://www.campus-adr.net/weblog.php
http://www.peacemakers.ca/bibliography/
This website contains conflict resolution bibliographies sub-divided by subject area.

Books:
- Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes*
- Robert Bush and Joseph Folger, *The Promise of Mediation*
- Joe Forehand, *The Hostage at the Table: How Leaders Can Overcome Conflict, Influence Others, and Raise Performance*
- Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication*
- Jennifer Beer, *The Mediator's Handbook*
- Roger Schwartz, *The Skilled Facilitator*

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this construct is realized. Some of the most useful communication techniques include active listening and reframing or rephrasing. Active listening requires not only listening but also the appearance of it, including body posture, eye contact, and avoiding interrupting. Reframing involves rephrasing or restating what the speaker has said, so she knows you have comprehended the content, as well as the emotional intensity or import of her message. Reframing is more than

parroting. In a classroom setting, it can allow the speaker to know you have understood, it allows others in the classroom to understand (or, especially in large classes, simply to hear!) what the student has said. Excellent teachers are able not only to reframe what the students has said, but compare it to what other students have contributed, as well as to the course materials, then use the reframe to posit a question for further discussion. In this way, active listening and reframing are invaluable facilitation skills, particularly for classroom discussion.

Most communication training also notes certain words to avoid. "But" for example, is a word that can invalidate any positive feedback given to a student and, as such, is better replaced with a pause. Also useful is using so-called "I messages" rather than "you messages". Simply, the speaker should avoid telling others what they did or should say, think, or do and, instead, focus on language reflecting the speaker's own experiences or perspectives. Saying "I feel discouraged when I can't understand the material" is much more productive than saying "You are a terrible teacher: you give me bad grades".

Know Your Limits

While student conflict can be effectively managed by the GA/TA, there are limits to what the GA/TA can and should handle. Many of these issues will be established through faculty and department regulations and codes of conduct. Others will be established with the professor. Working out what should be done in cases of high conflict in various contexts can be helpful.

Conflict Prevention

While conflict is inevitable, it can be minimized, managed, and often prevented. Most conflict can be managed using facilitation techniques such as those described above. Many professors use contracts with their students, often regarding conduct in the classroom, signed at the beginning of the year. These *contracts*—usually called *honour codes* in the United States—are treated as serious and enforceable agreements that set classroom and academic standards. These contracts may also be used to establish standards that are not negotiable (i.e. using racist, sexist and other offensive language). The sometimes-difficult job of the GA/TA and the professor is to identify when these lines are crossed and how to handle breaches competently.

In sum, conflict in the classroom is both natural and healthy. Disputes can provide teaching and learning moments that can strengthen students' abilities to manage and resolve conflict in both their personal and professional lives.

Chapter 6

Reflections on Your Teaching

The Graduate Assistant-ship: Professor and Student Perspectives

Glenn Rideout and Holly Renaud

This short chapter addresses the work of GAs and TAs from the perspective of both the professor and the student. Part 1 focuses primarily on the expectations of the professor, and Part 2 focuses primarily on the experiences of the student. The reader may note some overlap and identify some differences in the two interpretations of the role of GA. Since such potential differences may be the turning point on which the success or failure of GA-professor professional relationships hinge, open communication is important. It is strongly recommended that through such communication, expectations and responsibilities in both directions are clearly understood.

The Professor's Expectation

I have employed graduate assistants for several years. I assign these students a variety of tasks associated with tracking student performance and maintaining records. I have a high expectation that GAs will take full responsibility for fulfilling the terms of their contract, as identified initially in the paperwork that is completed at the beginning of the employment period. This usually identifies the rate of pay, the number of hours, and the tasks to be performed. This latter item is usually quite general and allows a fair amount of flexibility regarding the assignment of tasks associated with the professor's particular needs.

Beyond this general statement of responsibilities, during my first or second meeting with the GA, I usually initiate a frank discussion in which I am interested in hearing what the GA's strengths are, as well as identifying particular points that are very important to me. High on this list is promptness. I have learned from experience that it is important to make it clear that I expect a 10am meeting to be at 10am. Also related to time, and having learned from experience, I expect the GA to keep a record of hours worked—it is the GA's responsibility to tell me if I am in danger of exceeding the allotted time per week (usually 10 hours) or per semester if the work schedule is light in some weeks and heavier in others. I expect that the GA will accomplish the task within the time frame identified, and that if a problem arises that might prevent this, that I will know about this ahead of time. I expect that the GA will develop early on an understanding of how my courses work, how their work fits into the master plan of successful course delivery, and how their skills can best facilitate this.

I use regular *check-ins* with my GA, to ensure that we are on track regarding hours used, that semester long tasks that I only see the results of at the end of a semester are on track, and that there are no issues simmering just under the surface. I often ask: "So…how are we doing?" I expect and have received honest feedback in this regard. The intent is to provide the most

positive work experience possible for the GA and to accomplish important tasks related to my own workload.

There are a number of *side* benefits that a GA can reap from such employment. These are not always realized by the GA, since it is only when a professor senses an interest in and a commitment to the work at hand on the part of the GA that these things might materialize. For example, most professors are involved in research projects that may require assistance beyond the scope of the GAship. Often such research initiatives are funded, so professors can pay for additional work in areas not necessarily related to the GA responsibilities. GAs who avail themselves of such opportunities often gain invaluable experience and grow in scholarship (and items for their CV) as a result of such unanticipated opportunities. Of course, professors are under no expectation or obligation to hire GAs as their Research Assistants (RAs) but GAs can position themselves favourably by fulfilling their roles with excellence.

The Graduate Assistant's Experience

Being a Graduate Assistant or Teaching Assistant can be an extremely rewarding experience. I never applied to be a Teaching Assistant during my undergraduate years, and now that I am employed as a Graduate Assistant, I regret not doing this sooner. It has been a wonderful opportunity to network with other students and professors and to add some practical experience to my résumé.

During my short time in this role, I have learned quite a bit. My duties have ranged from collecting, interpreting, and assessing Clicker data, to grading midterms and assignments, to creating a forum through CLEW for students to use to communicate with each other or to submit some of their assignments, to proctoring midterms, to answering students' questions. And I have learned a lot through doing all of this, some with a fair amount of frustration as accompaniment, but all with pleasure and a feeling of accomplishment.

Everyone's experiences as a Graduate or Teaching Assistant will be different, depending on what your professor asks of you, the department in which you work, your previous experiences, and other variables. But I would like to take this opportunity to offer some general advice to anyone new to this role.

> **First, know your subject area.** If your experiences have only been as a student, you will soon come to realize there is a vast difference between sitting at a desk taking notes and either standing at the front of the room to teach a class or preparing material behind the scenes. You do not need to be an expert in the subject, but you should know enough that you feel comfortable. If you're running a lab session, familiarize yourself with the lab setting, the materials you will be using, and the rules or safety precautions of that area.

> **Expect to be challenged.** Students may ask you questions and you may not have the answer. Your professor may ask you to perform a certain duty that you've never attempted. Don't make up an answer on the spot or lie and pretend you're an expert. There's no shame in admitting you don't have all the answers. Try responses like, "That's a good question. I'm not sure of the answer, but I will try to find out for you," or "I don't know the answer. Maybe you could find it and report back to us," or "I'm sorry, but I've

never used this program before. Could you please explain it to me?" Don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions along the way.

Always make time for yourself. If you're a contact person for the students, make sure you set office hours. Try not to check your email too obsessively. You'll drive yourself crazy if you immerse yourself too fully in work. Try to remind yourself that you are only allowed to work so many hours each week. It's also key to remember that your schoolwork comes before your Graduate or Teaching Assistant duties. Your grades and your sanity matter, and your regular coursework will keep you busy enough.

Improve your organizational skills. You'll most likely, if you're anything like me, need to work on your organizational skills. You will probably need to arrange some sort of a schedule to know when your projects, assignments, papers, and exams are due, as well as when your Graduate or Teaching Assistant duties must be completed.

Upgrade your job-related skills. The university provides seminars, lectures, and training opportunities in various software programs. I strongly recommend attending them when your schedule allows it. But if you cannot make it for whatever reason, look at the different organizations on campus that can help you, such as the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

It is vital that you be professional, consistent, and genuine. You carry a great responsibility to help provide your students the best education you can offer. Maintain confidentiality at all times. Be a role model for your students. Be friendly, but maintain a professional distance. Wait until the course in which you are assisting is completed before you go out for that coffee date with a student. Be fair with all students. If they happen to rub you the wrong way on a personal level, ignore it and push down those feelings. You are there in a professional capacity and need to behave as such. Becoming close friends or enemies with any students will lead to awkward situations and/or inconsistent treatment and grading. I also recommend doing as much *blind* grading as you can so that you don't begin to label your students as "A" or "C+" any time you see the name on a piece of paper. This doesn't mean you have to be rude or distant with your students. If they need help, then you should be there to help them. If you genuinely want your students to learn and succeed, they will pick up on that enthusiasm. The opposite is also true.

You need to realize early on that you will make mistakes. No one is perfect. Accept these mistakes, learn from them, and move on. Feel free to laugh at yourself. Accept that the first time you teach a topic or use a new computer program, it might not go well at all. Ask your professor for help, apologize to the students if you confuse them and try again, and always remember there is a support system for you. Most importantly, have fun with it. You probably won't like every single aspect or every single duty, but you have to do what you love and love what you're doing.

What's the Goal?

Candace Nast

How can you be prepared when you walk into the classroom? What can you do ahead of time so that the class runs smoothly? What can you do besides making yourself familiar with the content, preparing open-ended discussion questions or a learning activity to get everyone engaging with the material?

One of the most important ways you can prepare—the thing that will help everything else fall into place—is to know the goal of the class. The course itself will probably have learning outcomes prominently on the syllabus, but has the instructor included clear learning outcomes for each lesson? Quite likely the answer is no. There may be a posted topic, but that's not the same thing.

Ask yourself the following:
- What new knowledge, skill, or understanding should students walk away with at the end of the hour (or whatever time you have with them)?
- What specifically do they need to get from today's lesson?

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY - LEARNING IN ACTION
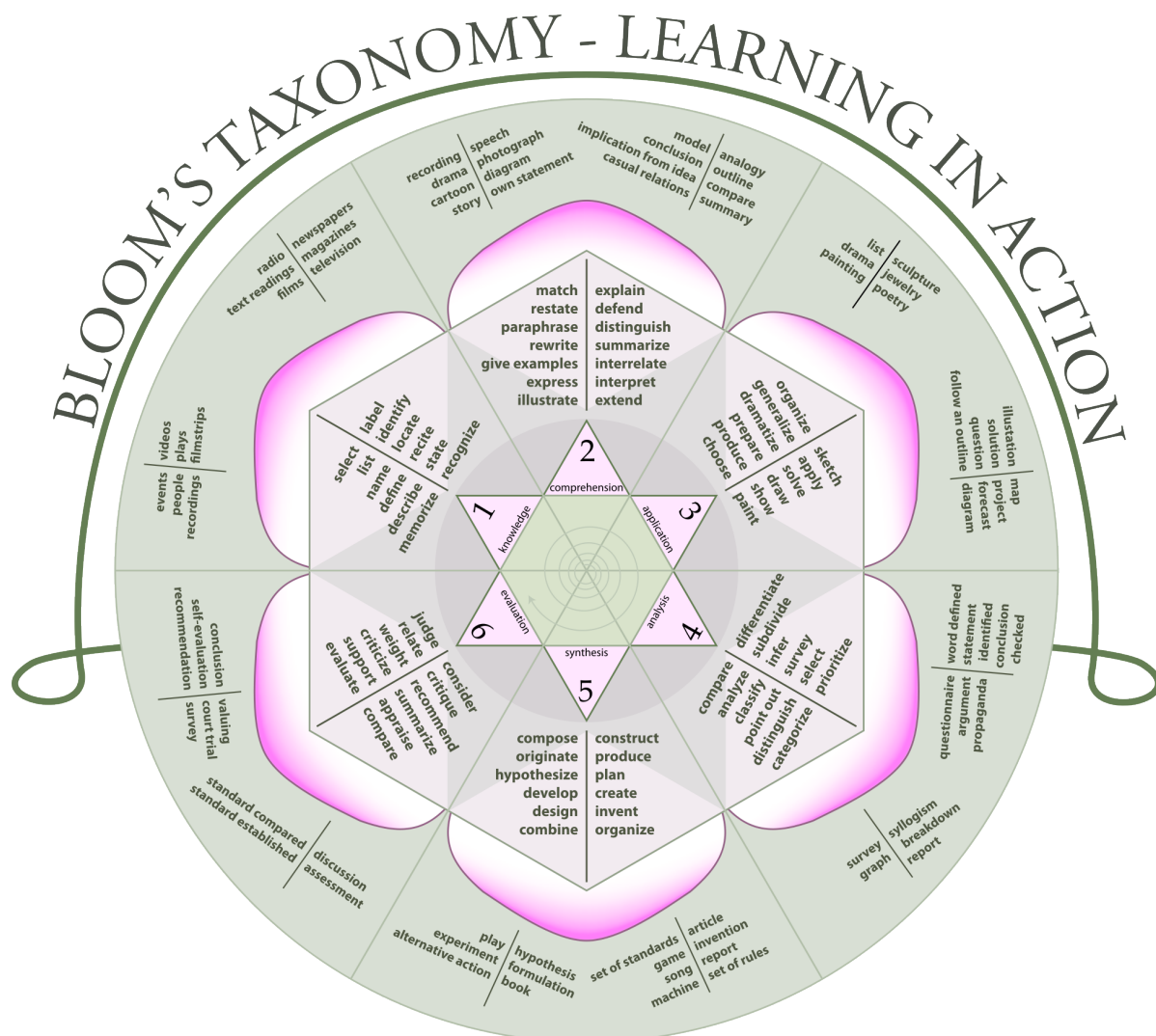
Once you've figured this out (in clear, concise language) you can share the expected learning outcome with your class. They'll know what they're supposed to be learning—and so will you. You'll know how your lesson should end, and once you have an ending, you only need to build a path to that conclusion.

Having a clear objective can help you focus your information or weed out tangential information. Any participatory activity will have a point—because you planned it with a goal.

Learning outcomes should be measurable, and there are tools out there to help you with this. Bloom's Taxonomy is one. Sometimes it's pictured as a rose (as on the previous page), and sometimes it's shown as a pyramid. Depending on what type of learning you're trying to encourage, there are suggested verbs for writing your learning outcomes. Have a look—and then go write some learning outcomes!

The Importance of a Teaching Philosophy

Melanie Santarossa

You may not realize it, but you have a vision when you walk into the classroom. You have an idea of how you would like your students to learn, and in turn, how you hope to teach them. Some GAs and TAs might value transparency in the classroom, or a democratic learning environment. Others might see the students' lives as resources for deciding how and what they should teach, while some GAs and TAs might place a lot of importance on creating a culturally respectful atmosphere. But how do you decide what your teaching space and teaching style are like, especially if you have not had much experience teaching?

> " But how do you decide what your teaching space and teaching style are like, especially if you have not had much experience teaching? "

Enter the teaching philosophy. This very important document, usually 1-2 pages, outlines what your beliefs, values, and visions are as an educator. Now, as you are beginning your career in an academic teaching role, is *the* time to begin to write your teaching philosophy. And be prepared to rewrite this many, many times. The more you teach, the more you learn what works for you, and what doesn't, and your teaching philosophy should reflect these changes.

Here are some simple suggestions that can help you on the road to writing your teaching philosophy:

Try to keep a teaching journal. Write about the activities you are bringing into the classroom, how those work, and what you would like to change. A teaching journal is also a great way to think about what you *should* be bringing into the classroom, based on how your students respond and/or interact to/with your activities. From here, you can easily see a theme to your teaching.

Use mid-course and end-of-term feedback to guide you. Feedback is a great way to see what it is about your class that students take away with them. This will help you to see what students appreciate about your teaching space.

Ask someone you consider a mentor to watch you teach. Having someone sit in on the class can really give you a true glimpse from the back of the classroom (and one you might not receive from feedback). You can even use the Centre for Teaching and Learning staff for this unique perspective, you just have to make an appointment with one of their staff members at a time convenient for both of you.

Asking for Feedback

Candace Nast

Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) is a part of the instructor's classroom, but what about feedback for TAs and GAs? Although evaluating the assistant's contribution to the learning experience isn't part of the standard SET sheet, there's no reason why you can't ask for student feedback in the middle and/or at the end of term.

Getting feedback after a few weeks of class helps you find out what's working and where you can make improvements while there's still time for it to make a difference for the students you're working with now. Putting out fires before they get out of control improves the teaching and learning experience for everyone. However, in order to do this, you need to know where the hot spots are.

> " Getting feedback after a few weeks of class helps you find out what's working and where you can make improvements while there's still time for it to make a difference for the students you're working with now. "

Asking for feedback can take many forms:

- Have a conversation with your students. Schedule it on the class lab or tutorial schedule and ask specific, open-ended questions about the techniques, tools, and other parts of your course.

- Pass out blank sheets of paper, and ask students to anonymously record two things that are working for them in the course (2 Pluses) and one thing they'd like to change (A Wish). This technique is called "Two Pluses and A Wish" (sometimes known as "Three Pluses," depending how much time you have).

- Create a form asking students to check boxes, fill in text areas, or rank their favourite items (readings, activities, etc.) from most to least favourite.

Collecting feedback can give you an idea of where your students are and help you become a more effective teacher. The feedback you receive can also become part of your teaching dossier.

Whatever method you choose to use, be sure to spend time going through the feedback you collect. Pay attention, and consider each item and how it relates to the learning objectives set out for the course. If you'd like to discuss the feedback you've received and look for ways to act on it, you can contact the campus Centre for Teaching and Learning: http://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl

Make a Note

Candace Nast

When it's the end of the term, and you're wrapping up your fall semester contract and getting ready to begin the next, you are at the perfect point in your teaching to reflect back on what you've done and what you've learned from the term.

Consider the following:
- What worked well for you as a TA this time?
- What were some of the highlights of working with your class?
- Did you try a new activity?
- Did you have a discussion that went really well?
- What do you think helped it go so well?

Collecting your ideas before the end of the semester, while they're still fresh, will make things easier for you next year.

This is also a good time to update your teaching dossier and Curriculum Vitae. The easiest way to update these documents is by following a few simple steps:

Try this:
1. Keep a record of the class title and number.
2. Make a note of who your supervisor was.
3. Calculate how many students you worked with.
4. Write out the different tasks, duties, and responsibilities that you had/did.
5. If you collected student feedback, add that too.

It's so much easier to do this reflecting and collecting while the semester is still fresh. And though it may be a bit of additional work on your part, you'll be glad you made the time to do it when you did!

The University Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program: A Unique Opportunity at the University of Windsor

Michael K. Potter

A s an academic, much of your life will be devoted to teaching—lecturing, leading discussions, marking, supervising, designing courses and assessments, and more. Yet few academics have the opportunity to systematically develop their teaching abilities, build a scholarly knowledge base about teaching, reflect on how the various elements of their teaching practices fit together, or actively cultivate a critically informed, teaching persona as disciplinary practitioners teaching from a deeply-rooted academic perspective.

The three certificate levels of the University Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program are intended to address these gaps in academic development. The UTC Program is academic in its scholarly basis, emphasis on critical reflection, and rigorous assessment—yet it is designed to be immediately flexible, adaptive, and practical, encouraging academics to apply what they are currently learning to their work as teachers as they are completing the program.

> " Participating in the University Teaching Certificate (UTC) program has been one of the most valuable experiences I've had as a graduate student. "

All certificates in the UTC Program are founded on several key assumptions:
- That academics of all disciplines can make use of evidence-based, research-informed teaching practices;
- That critical reflection on scholarly information, in combination with cycles of practice and feedback, can improve any teacher's effectiveness;
- That all academics have the potential to become more effective teachers;
- That there are many kinds of effective teaching; and
- That the best teachers draw upon a store of knowledge and skills to adapt to changing circumstances.

Why Should I Complete ANY of these Certificates?

Glad you asked! There are many reasons, but to save time we've listed just a few . . .

1. **Formal recognition**. Those who complete each level of the UTC Program will receive the designated certificate from the Centre for Teaching and Learning, as well as a corresponding certificate accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). Completion of this certificate means you are formally recognized as having completed a practical, well founded, innovative, and high-quality program

accredited within SEDA's internationally recognized framework. The University of Windsor is the first and (so far) only North American University to have a SEDA-recognized certificate program. The program is externally reviewed by SEDA experts every few years.

2. **Strategic and systematic development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.** Completion of the certificate means you have participated in a carefully designed program that is regularly reviewed and revised (internally and externally) to ensure that it meets participant needs.

> " I'm looking forward to taking more courses and workshops in the UTC program. I know I'm picking up essential skills and experience for my future career, but I also enjoy meeting with other graduate students and faculty members who care about teaching. "

3. **Better teaching and learning experiences for you and your students.** As a scholarly teacher of your discipline, you will draw upon empirical and theoretical information to maximize student learning, resulting in better learning experiences for your students—and better teaching experiences for you!

4. **Entry into a scholarly community of practice.** By participating in, and completing, this certificate you join an informal community of practice centred around scholarly teaching. This community provides opportunity for mutual support, resource-sharing, socializing, problem-solving, and collaboration.

5. **Save time and effort.** Learning effective pedagogical strategies means you don't have to waste time dealing with unnecessary problems and creating lessons and assignments that don't achieve their goals. You will be able to use your teaching time wisely, efficiently, and effectively.

6. **Create an excellent teaching dossier.** You will receive the support you need to create a teaching dossier that will impress your evaluators—and, afterwards, tenure and promotion committees.

Who may complete a certificate in the UTC Program?

Potential participants include all academics at the University of Windsor—early career faculty, tenured faculty, sessional instructors, graduate students, and staff who are involved in teaching roles.

The certificates are hierarchical and developmental, which means that you must complete the first before the second, and the second before the third, because they build on each other to maximize and enhance your learning.

How long does it take to complete EACH certificate?

Standard completion time for each certificate is approximately one calendar year (September to August), averaging 5-6 hours per week for most people. You may wish to complete a certificate in two calendar years, in which case the average time needed per week will be around 3 hours.

How do I register?

To be admitted into this certificate level you must submit (to pottermk@uwindsor.ca):

- A CV;
- A letter of application that includes your reasons for applying and a summary of all of your teaching, and prior teaching development, activities;
- If you are a graduate student, a letter or email from your supervisor/advisor.

Your application will be reviewed by the Program Administrator, who will contact you within two weeks, to inform you of the decision. Please note that each level of the program is capped, and they fill up quickly. *If the cap has been reached by the time you register, you will be asked whether you would like a spot on the waiting list for the following year.*

Because available spaces in the program are limited due to constraints of time, finances, and mentors, we may need to prioritize certain applicants from time to time. First preference is given to full-time University of Windsor faculty; second to University of Windsor doctoral candidates, post-doctoral fellows, and sessional instructors; third to others who perform teaching functions at the University of Windsor and Master's candidates; fourth to those who teach at other institutions.

What are the basic elements of each certificate in the UTC Program?

Every certificate in the UTC Program contains the following elements:

Mentoring

Once you have registered, you will be assigned a mentor who will be your primary point of contact while you complete the certificate. Your mentor will contact you to begin the process outlined below. While completing the certificate, you will meet regularly with your mentor to assess progress, identify areas of concern, reflect on what is being learned, and revise strategies as necessary.

Learning Plan

Your mentor will work with you to complete your learning plan—a collection of documents that takes account of your teaching development to date, specifies your personal development goals, and begins the process of strategizing how you can get what you need from the program. The learning plan, which contains baseline documents and strategic documents, helps us ensure that the certificate is relevant to you.

Baseline documents

The baseline documents identify your beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices at entry. They include:

1. A teaching philosophy and statement of what it means to be a teacher of the participant's discipline;
2. A questionnaire about teaching, learning, and the responsibilities of teachers and students to each other, intended to clarify your beliefs and values;
3. A Teaching Goals Inventory (Angelo and Cross 1993);
4. A Teaching Perspectives Inventory; e) the Zinn Philosophies of Adult Education Inventory; f) an Approaches to Teaching Inventory (Prosser and Ginns 2005).

Strategic documents

Strategic documents help you use the program to your advantage. They include:

- A statement of your goals as a participant in the program;
- An identification of possible obstacles you might encounter as you work toward the achievement of those goals; and
- A tentative strategy for the achievement of those goals through completion of program elements and potential obstacles to overcome. This strategy will be periodically reviewed.

Learning Portfolio/Teaching Dossier

Once you've completed all of the courses successfully, a combination learning portfolio/teaching dossier must be submitted to demonstrate that you have satisfactorily achieved each program-level learning outcome. Your dossier will be assessed by two program administrators, who will assess the evidence you have provided against a rubric. The rubric will be made available to you in advance to help you prepare.

In addition to the standard components of a teaching dossier (such as a teaching philosophy, a summary of your teaching experience, etc.), your dossier must include:

1) **Program Documents:**
   a) Your initial learning plan (baseline and strategic documents);
   b) A revised set of baseline documents;
   c) A completed outcome checklist;
   d) An explanation of the relationship between the program-level learning outcomes and the evidence provided *and* reflections on your development over the course of the program, as revealed in the documentation provided.
2) **Evidence that all program-level outcomes and values have been achieved.**
   These may include:
   a) Assignments completed in any or all of the courses;
   b) Lesson plans, assessment tasks, and/or courses developed;
   c) Reflections completed (such as entries from a teaching journal);
   d) Course evaluations;
   e) Any other documentary evidence that you can find.

Your mentor will help you with the dossier preparation process, and will work with you to ensure that your dossier includes all of the necessary components.

Certificate 1: Fundamentals of University Teaching

The first certificate in the UTC Program, Fundamentals of University Teaching is designed to provide academics with the necessities for development as scholarly teachers engaged in evidence-based, theoretically-informed pedagogy and course-design—which makes it useful to any academic in any teaching role, from full-time faculty members to graduate assistants. Those who complete this certificate also receive a SEDA certificate in Supporting Learning.

Two Graduate Credit Courses and One Half-Course

Learning-Centred Teaching in Higher Education: Principles and Practice (36 hours, typically one semester) exposes you to a variety of fundamental ideas and practices in scholarly teaching. You will learn how to find and use scholarly information about teaching and learning and practice planning strategies to deal with common issues and topics. Course content includes active learning methods in large classes, diversity and inclusivity, teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills, case-based teaching, discussion-based teaching, and the use of feedback to support learning. You are expected to adapt what you learn to suit your own disciplinary teaching context.

Course Design for Constructive Alignment (36 hours, typically one semester) introduces you to effective principles and practices regarding syllabus creation, sequencing of course content, cohesion of a course with other courses, identifying what students can be expected to know, predicting time needed for completion of course requirements, creating effective learning outcomes, aligning outcomes with lessons and assessments to support deep learning, and using multiple means to regularly evaluate the quality of the course and teaching. By the end of the course, you should have a well-designed course that your department would be pleased to offer.

You choose one of four half-courses to complete, each of which typically runs for 18 hours over six weeks. These half-courses do not involve any graded work, as they focus on experiential cycles of practice and feedback and the application of particular techniques. The options are:

- ***Leading Effective Discussions***: Learn techniques for successful discussion-based teaching, including facilitation, group dynamics, conflict management, questioning strategies, atmosphere creation, and evaluation of discussion-based learning.
- ***Online Education***: A hybrid course that immerses you in the process of creating pedagogically sound online lessons, sequencing and structuring those lessons to enhance learning, and using available online resources effectively.
- ***Lecturing***: If you must lecture, lecture well! Topics include use of voice and non-verbal cues, structure and sequencing of lecture content, grabbing and holding attention, storytelling, effective use of PowerPoint, and incorporating visual and other aides into your lectures.
- ***E-Teaching the Extra-Curricular***: This course is all about using the University of Windsor's Learning Management System—CLEW—in a way that actually supports learning.

Certificate 2: Theory and Practice of Scholarly Teaching

The second certificate in the UTC Program, Theory and Practice of Scholarly Teaching, will broaden and deepen your cognitive, performative, and affective knowledge of scholarly teaching in the systematic and active manner to which you became accustomed when you completed the first certificate.

This is your opportunity to intentionally build your identity and repertoire as a scholarly teacher of your discipline, reinforce and apply techniques you have learned, and explore the beliefs and values that make you unique and effective. With the support of your mentors, instructors, and colleagues, you will develop as a scholarly teacher. Theory and Practice of Scholarly Teaching provides even deeper engagement with both the academic and practical aspects of the UTC Program. This level is even more practical (through ongoing cyclical teaching observations, strategy, and adaptation) while also more academic (through Inquiry-driven engagement with the beliefs and values integral to your teaching identity, and critical examination of the literature).

Those who complete this level will also receive a SEDA certificate in Learning, Teaching and Assessing.

Two Graduate Credit Courses and Two Half-Courses

The University Teaching Practicum (roughly 72 hours, September to April, biweekly) takes a learning-community approach to teaching development. While enrolled in this course you will be observed in class multiple times by your instructors and colleagues. Each observation will be followed by feedback, including suggestions for improvement. At the biweekly meetings, you will discuss the feedback you've received and plan strategies to build on your strengths and address your challenges. In addition, some meetings will be devoted to address teaching and learning issues, topics, and concerns that have been identified by you and your colleagues—so much of the course content is up to you!

Theory and Philosophy of Scholarly Teaching (36 hours, winter semester, weekly) is your opportunity to dig into the teaching and learning literature and use it to make sense of who you are as a teacher—what you *believe* and *value* about teaching, learning, assessment, students, all of it—and how your identity is realized in your practices. By the end of the course, you should have a strong, defensible conception of why you teach the way you do, why it matters, why your approaches are worth respecting. At the same time, however, you'll also develop an understanding of why those who hold very different beliefs and values regarding teaching believe what they do.

Authentic Assessment (18 hours, fall semester, six weeks) is a half-course intended to help you design assessment tasks that make sense to students and prepare them for the professional and disciplinary worlds they care about. This active-learning experience will give you practical experience with the concepts of authenticity, alignment, validity, fidelity, integrity and more—all adapted to your disciplinary context.
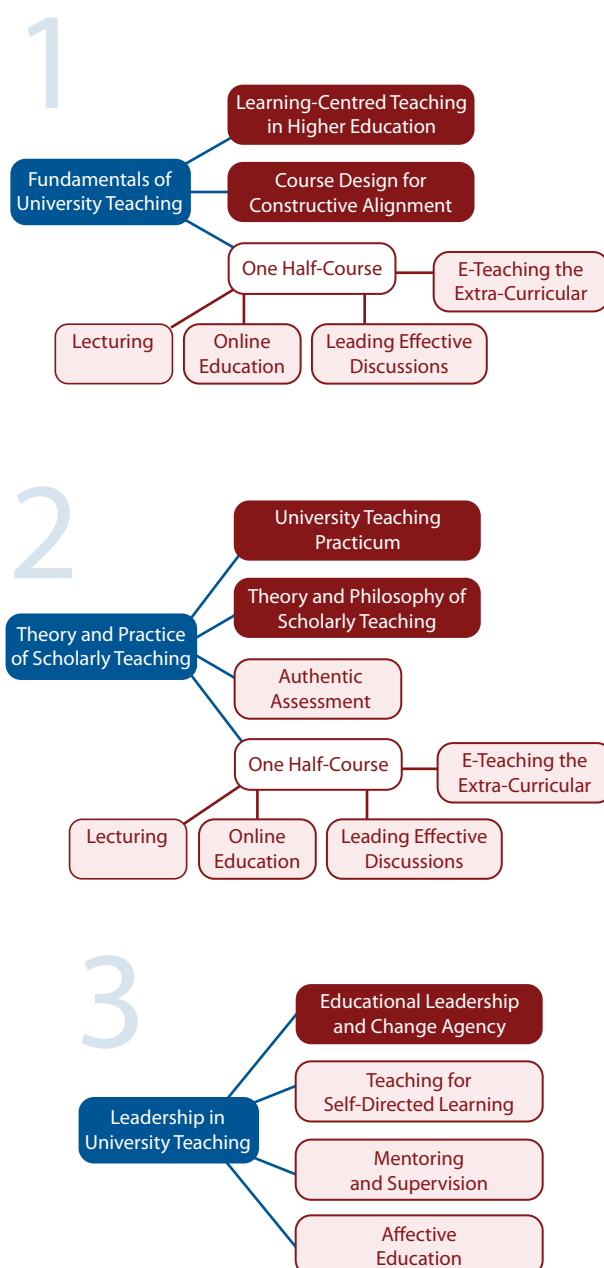
Finally, you get to choose **one of four half-courses** to complete: *Leading Effective Discussions, Lecturing and Presentation, Online Education, or E-Learning the Extra-Curricular.* These options are the same as those for the first certificate.

Certificate 3: Leadership in University Teaching

The third certificate, *Leadership in University Teaching*, is slated to begin in September 2013. More details will be provided closer to its launch date. However, course titles can be found in the following illustration.

The University Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program

The UTC Program includes three independent levels with a certificate of completion for each level

1

Fundamentals of University Teaching
- Learning-Centred Teaching in Higher Education
- Course Design for Constructive Alignment
- One Half-Course
  - E-Teaching the Extra-Curricular
  - Lecturing
  - Online Education
  - Leading Effective Discussions

2

Theory and Practice of Scholarly Teaching
- University Teaching Practicum
- Theory and Philosophy of Scholarly Teaching
- Authentic Assessment
- One Half-Course
  - E-Teaching the Extra-Curricular
  - Lecturing
  - Online Education
  - Leading Effective Discussions

3

Leadership in University Teaching
- Educational Leadership and Change Agency
- Teaching for Self-Directed Learning
- Mentoring and Supervision
- Affective Education

University Teaching Certificate Program: Program-Level Learning Outcomes for the first two certificates

By the end of this program successful participants should be able to . . .	Fundamentals of University Teaching			Theory and Practice of Scholarly Teaching			
	Learning-Centred Teaching in Higher Education	Course Design for Constructive Alignment	Half-Course	University Teaching Practicum	Theory and Philosophy of University Teaching	Authentic Assessment	Half-Course
1 - Draw on multiple teaching strategies, background knowledge, and reflective insight to adapt practice	X	X	X	X		X	X
2- Identify the presuppositions inherent in their teaching practices, change them as needed, justify, and use them to explicitly inform practice		X		X	X		
3 - Evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching and assessment practices, and adapt according to contextual variables and actual outcomes	X	X		X	X	X	
4 - Respond constructively to common issues in post-secondary teaching and learning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5 - Critically reflect, discuss, analyze, and evaluate educational concepts, beliefs, values, practices, issues, orientations, philosophies, strategies and outcomes to guide practice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6 - Find and evaluate scholarly information on teaching and learning and use it to guide practice	X	X		X	X		
7 - Design and use curricula, assignments, and lessons that inspire and support deep learning	X	X	X	X		X	X
8 - Design effective learning outcomes, aligned with learning experiences and assessment	X	X		X		X	
9 - Support student learning by building rapport with students, attending to multiple styles or modes of learning, proactively minimizing non-pedagogical conflict, and otherwise creating learning-centred classroom atmosphere	X	X	X	X			X
10 - Formulate answers to fundamental questions of education, drawing on scholarly theory and information where relevant					X		
11 - Frame and evaluate their teaching practices using a variety of pedagogical orientations, philosophies and theories					X		

University of Windsor GATA Awards

Michael K. Potter

Purpose of the Awards

Both the *GA/TA Award for Educational Practice* and the *GA/TA Award for Educational Leadership* serve the following purposes . . .

- To recognize and honour exemplary GAs and TAs who contribute to a positive, learning-centred, environment at the University of Windsor.
- To inspire GAs and TAs to recognize their potential for excellence in educational practice and leadership and motivate them to transform that potential into reality.
- To publicize examples of excellence in GA/TA educational practice and leadership that can inform the practices of all teachers, while contributing to student and faculty pride in teaching and learning at the University of Windsor.

To achieve these purposes, the *GA/TA Award for Educational Practice* and the *GA/TA Award for Educational Leadership* are each awarded to as many as three individuals per year, depending on the quantity and quality of nominations.

The GA/TA Award for Educational Practice

The **GA/TA Award for Educational Practice** honours a GA or TA (or team of GA/TAs) who has *enhanced, maximized, or deepened student learning* through at least four of the following means:

1. Effectively using scholarly and/or learning-centred strategies, methods, techniques, and learning experiences.
2. Effectively using scholarly and/or learning-centred assessment and feedback strategies, methods, techniques, or models.
3. Incorporating practical, transferable skill development (communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, literacy, numeracy, teamwork, leadership, love of life-long learning) into learning experiences, consistent with the University of Windsor graduate attributes.
4. Modeling high standards and expectations, reliability, availability, integrity, adaptability, respect, honesty, caring, and responsibility as a teacher.
5. Interacting with students in such a way that they feel inspired, motivated, engaged, and critically challenged.
6. Creating or contributing to a positive learning-centred environment for University of Windsor students.

The GA/TA Award for Educational Leadership

The **GA/TA Award for Educational Leadership** honours a GA or TA (or team of GA/TAs) who has *played an active role in shaping or transforming the teaching and learning environment of the University of Windsor*, through at least three of the following means:

1. Initiating, facilitating, or coordinating efforts to improve the teaching and learning environment at the departmental, faculty, or institutional levels. This may include:
   o Leading, individually or in collaboration with others, teaching and learning events at the departmental, faculty, or institutional level—such as open houses, GATAcademy, science fairs, teaching and learning conferences, workshops, seminars, discussion groups, and learning communities.
   o Organizing, creating, or otherwise leading initiatives for pedagogical information-sharing, skill-development, or pedagogical innovation, among GA/TAs at the departmental, faculty, or institutional level—such as a GA/TA guide, wiki, website, journal, or newsletter.
2. Promoting and helping others to implement, scholarly and/or learning-centred strategies, methods, and techniques in instruction, assessment, mentorship, or other forms of teaching.
3. Identifying and solving, by oneself or in collaboration with others, teaching and learning problems at the departmental, faculty, or institutional level.
4. Participating as a student representative in curriculum refinement and development activities at the departmental, faculty, or institutional level.
5. Effectively mentoring other GA/TAs in teaching and learning, while modeling high standards and expectations, reliability, availability, integrity, adaptability, respect, honesty, caring, and responsibility as a teacher.

Nomination Process

Decisions regarding GA/TA Awards are made on the basis of *nomination dossiers*, which are teaching dossiers strategically targeted to demonstrate achievement of the criteria for GA/TA awards. The process of creating a nomination dossier may seem daunting at first glance, but it's a worthwhile endeavour.

Past nominees have told us that the process of creating their dossiers was worth the effort, even if they didn't win—and that's intentional. The process of creating a good nomination dossier inspires and guides reflection on what really matters to you as a teacher, and by requiring you to provide evidence of the effect you've had, it helps you think about your teaching in a more scholarly manner. From another perspective, this process ensures that the award committee can base its decision as much as possible on evidence rather than conjecture.

At any point during the nomination process, you're invited to contact the CTL for help. Just email Michael K. Potter (pottermk@uwindsor.ca) to ask questions or set up an appointment.

STEP ONE:
Determine whether the nominee meets the eligibility criteria

- The nominee must be either:

- o Presently employed as a GA/TA at the University of Windsor, OR
- o Have been employed as a GA/TA at the University of Windsor within 12 months of the call for nominations.
- The nominee has not previously won the award for which he or she is being nominated.
  - o A nominee who has won a *different* award is still eligible.
- If a team is being nominated, ensure that its members truly function as a collaborative, well-integrated team—you will need to demonstrate this in the nomination dossier.

STEP TWO:
Print off and complete the nomination form

- The nominator must be *at least two of the following*:
  - o A past or present student of the GA/TA, OR
  - o A colleague who is well informed of the nominee's teaching excellence or educational leadership, OR
  - o A faculty member who is well informed of the nominee's teaching excellence or educational leadership, OR
  - o A staff member who is well informed of the nominee's teaching excellence or educational leadership.

Completed nomination forms must be signed by:
  - o The nominee,
  - o The nominator(s), AND
  - o A relevant faculty supervisor, department head, or dean.

STEP THREE:
Create a nomination dossier

- *The CTL will be happy to help you with your nomination dossier* by providing advice, showing you models of exemplary dossiers, and providing feedback on drafts. Just contact Michael K. Potter (pottermk@uwindsor.ca) to book an appointment.

- Nomination dossiers *must* be:
  - o No longer than 40 pages, including letters and appendices.
  - o Well-organized and readable
  - o Primarily textual, though where appropriate, a CD or DVD of supplementary material may be included, provided that any video or audio are no more than 15 minutes in length, combined, and are playable on multiple hardware formats using common software.

- Nomination dossiers *must* include the following documents:
  - o The completed **nomination form**
    - o Completed by nominee and nominator(s)
  - o A **cover letter** from the nominating party that explains why the nominee should win the award, providing concrete and relevant examples of what the nominee has done to meet the award criteria, and situating the nominee's work in the context of his/her disciplinary and departmental norms.

- o Completed by nominator(s)
- o A **curriculum vitae** of 2-8 pages, focusing on details regarding one's teaching experience (including, but not limited to, GA/TA work).
  - o Completed by nominee
- o A **teaching philosophy** (no more than 2 pages), explaining the nominee's beliefs and values regarding teaching, how those beliefs and values drive his or her teaching practices, and how he or she has developed as a teacher.
  - o Completed by nominee
- o **Letters** (no more than 2 pages each) that detail how the nominee meets the award criteria by making reference to concrete examples and situating the nominee in his or her disciplinary or departmental context. Letter must be from:
  - o *At least two* current or former students, at least one current or former faculty supervisor, AND
  - o *At least one* GA/TA colleague or staff member, detailing how the nominee meets the award criteria.
  - o Letters should be addressed to "The GA/TA Awards Committee"
  - o No more than *six* such letters in total.
  - o Letters should not be sealed. They should be included in the dossier, signed, with contact information.
- o **Formal and informal feedback** from students, colleagues, faculty or staff regarding the nominee's teaching—such as a summary of student evaluations, classroom observation reports, and unsolicited student letters or emails. These should be organized and summarized rather than presented raw.
  - o Collected and organized by nominee and nominator(s)
- o **Evidence** of:
  - o Reflective and intentional effort to develop teaching knowledge and skills (i.e. through participation in a teaching certificate program, workshops, credit or non-credit courses, seminars, conferences, learning communities, or independent study). Nominees who can relate practical applications of what they learned through such activities will be more impressive.
  - o Achievements relevant to the award criteria, including but not limited to:
    - • Examples of exemplary constructive, written, feedback given to students.
    - • Records of previous teaching awards won.
    - • Samples of materials prepared to aid student learning.
    - • Abstracts of presentations and publications on teaching and learning.
    - • Any other documentary evidence demonstrating that the nominee has had a positive influence on student learning, retention, or degree completion.

STEP FOUR:
Submission

Please note that if you are sharing samples of student work, you must obtain the permission of the student, if possible. If it is not possible to get in touch with the student who completed the work, ensure that there is no identifying information in the work, so the student is as anonymous as possible.

- Complete nomination dossiers must be received by the Centre for Teaching and Learning by 5:00pm on the day nominations close, with *seven copies* of their accompanying dossiers. Photocopies of award dossiers may be made for no cost at the CTL, by appointment. Late nominations will not be accepted.
- Nomination dossiers may be brought to the office of Michael K. Potter (Lambton Tower 2101a) or Marilyn Powley (2107).

Nominators and nominees are encouraged to consult with me for feedback regarding their dossier preparation (pottermk@uwindsor.ca). Model dossiers from past GA/TA Award winners are available for browsing at the CTL.

Selection Process
Nomination dossiers will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of:
- A committee chair from the Centre for Teaching and Learning
  - The committee chair does not have voting privileges, except as a tie-breaker.
- Three faculty members that, as a group, represent a broad range of GA/TA responsibilities.
- Three GA/TAs (past award winners when possible).
  - At least one must be, or have been within the previous 12 months, a graduate assistant.
  - At least one must be, or have been within the previous 12 months, a teaching assistant.

Whenever possible, committee representatives will be drawn from a diverse range of departments and faculties.

Members must inform the rest of the committee of any potential conflicts of interest regarding nominees. Committees will decide how to handle potential conflicts of interest as they arise, and those decisions will be recorded by the committee chair.

After reviewing and discussing each nomination, members of the committee evaluate each dossier using a rubric comprised of the award criteria. A maximum of *three* Educational Practice Awards and *three* Educational Leadership Awards will be awarded each year.

What the Award Entails
Winners will be announced in the Daily News and on the CTL website: http://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl and letters will be sent to each winner's nominators, department head, and faculty dean, in case they wish to follow up with their own form of recognition.

Winners will receive a framed certificate, free registration at the next Windsor/Oakland teaching and learning conference (or similar conference), and a copy of a teaching related book such as Wilbert McKeachie's *Teaching Tips*.

Winners will also be recognized at the annual Celebration of Teaching Excellence, alongside award-winning faculty members.

Brief biographies and photos of all winners, including summaries of the accomplishments that resulted in their awards, will be kept on the CTL website for future recognition and inspiration.

Chapter 7

Resources at the University of Windsor

Academic Data Centre
Kristi Thompson & Dan Edelstein

The Academic Data Centre exists to help faculty and students find and analyze quantitative statistics and data, as well as to support the use of data in teaching.

We would be happy to come in and speak to any classes you may be teaching. Besides simply coming and taking 5 minutes to talk about what services we provide, we can give short presentations to discuss what data sources may be available in a particular subject area. We also do longer workshops on topics like using SPSS and on survey methodology, and we have put together intensive modules to help prepare students for their first data analysis assignment.

In addition, we can do things like create customized data sets for a class to analyze or put up a web page with links to appropriate data sources. And, of course, we help students and faculty with statistical software such as SPSS, SAS, Stata, and R, as well as statistical methods, on a walk-in basis or by appointment in the Academic Data Centre. We also provide one-on-one consultations to help find data and statistics by appointment.

Please tell your students about our services, or come in to use them.

For more information:
Visit: 1104, Leddy Library (next to Williams' Coffee Pub).
Walk-in hours: Monday-Friday, listed on our web page: http://data.uwindsor.ca

Centre for Career Education
Gina Alb

The Centre for Career Education (CCE) contributes to the holistic education of students and complements academic programs of study by supporting a wide range of career-related programs and resources with an emphasis on excellence in learning from experience. We guide students through the career development process, including the exploration of personal workplace preferences and strengths, the development of career competencies, and the construction of a career plan.

Our programs and services include the Volunteer Internship Program; Job Postings (visit https://career.uwindsor.ca); Resume and Cover Letter Critiques; Career Testing; Individual Appointments and workshops (career advising, interview preparation/mock interviews, job search, preparation for Professional/Graduate school applications, and more); and employer events.

Visit our myCareer system available through your student portal to register for events and workshops, book appointments, and review job postings. In addition, myCareer hosts a broad

range of resources related to career planning and job search processes, including Optimal Resume and Optimal Interview—programs, which allow you to build a resume and practice your interview skills. In addition, we coordinate Co-operative Education Programs in Business Administration, Business/Computer Science, Computer Science, Master of Science-Computer Science, Engineering; Kinesiology, and Physics and High Technology/Medical Physics.

For more information:
Email: cce@uwindsor.ca
Visit: Room #111 Dillon Hall
Hours of Operation: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday

IT Services Help Desk

Guy Allen

The IT Services Help Desk is the central point for computing questions on the University of Windsor campus. Whether you are simply looking for general computing information, or have a specific problem or query, call, e-mail, drop by, or visit our website for the latest services and support information.

For more information:
Phone: 253-3000 ext.4440
E-mail: helpdesk@uwindsor.ca
Walk In: Main Floor, University of Computer Centre
Web: http://www.uwindsor.ca/helpdesk
Online Help: http:///www.uwindsor.ca/helpdesk/faq

Help Desk Hours*
Monday-Friday 8:00am-6:00pm

Hours are extended at the beginning of the Fall and Winter semesters. Please visit the Help Desk website at http://www.uwindsor.ca/helpdesk *for additional details.*

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Svetlana Georgieva

The Faculty of Graduate Studies oversees the following matters related to graduate students:
- Graduate admissions
- Graduate scholarships and awards, conference travel funds, Graduate and Teaching Assistantships (GAs and TAs)

In-program matters such as Leaves of Absence, changes of status (part-time/full-time),

- requests for extensions to program time limits, graduate appeals, academic standing issues, Master's/Doctoral committees and external examiners for PhD dissertations, Major papers/theses/dissertations deposit.

For more information:
Visit: Graduate Studies 3rd Floor, Chrysler Hall Tower, 401 Sunset Avenue
Office hours: 8:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Email: gradst@uwindsor.ca
Tel.: (519) 253-3000 ext. 2109
Fax: (519) 971-3667.

Contributor Biographies

Nick Baker
Nick Baker has one of the best jobs in the world as a Teaching and Learning Specialist in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Windsor. He was one of the earliest Visiting Fellows in Educational Development sponsored by the CTL when he visited from Australia in 2008. Nick loved Windsor and it loved him right back, so he returned in 2009 and is now part of the educational development team in the CTL. Nick has degrees in journalism, geography, ecology, and conservation biology, and his postgraduate studies were in wildlife ecology and education (separately!). He has been involved in educational development for 10 years and has a broad range of interests in this field, ranging from field-based and experiential learning to distance education, eLearning, educational technologies, learning space design, and professional development in teaching for GAs/TAs and other early career faculty. His office is Erie 1111— drop in some time!

Jessica Penwell Barnett
Jessica Penwell Barnett is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminology. She received her M.A. from this program in Fall 2009. Her area of research is the social organization of sexuality. Jessica has had a variety of instructional experiences at the University of Windsor, including three terms as a GA for the Intermediate Statistics course offered by the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminology.

Danielle Bechard
Danielle Bechard is a 2011 graduate of the History Department at the University of Windsor. She was first a Mentor, and later a Senior Mentor, in the Mentorship and Learning program in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. She was able to excel in this program when given the opportunity to move beyond the framework of traditional History courses.

Julia Colella
Julia's TAship began in September 2006 when she was a TA for Effective Writing. She is currently a GA in the Faculty of Education. Due to her commitment to the course, she is now the Assistant Coordinator for Foundations of Academic Writing. She obtained her B.A. in Honours Psychology with Thesis and Sociology and continued her studies by completing her B.Ed. Julia is now attending the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education, pursuing her M.Ed in Curriculum Studies with Thesis. Julia is one of the recipients of the 2010 GATA Award for Educational Leadership.

Danielle Istl
Danielle Istl is the Academic Integrity Officer at the University of Windsor, a position she has held for seven years. Her primary responsibilities include academic integrity education, investigating and processing student disciplinary complaints, and serving as counsel for the

University before its internal tribunals. She has delivered numerous workshops on academic integrity issues, plagiarism prevention, and related topics. She received her B.A., B.Ed., and LL.B. from the University of Windsor and her LL.M from Wayne State University in Detroit. She formerly taught at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law in its dual J.D. program with Windsor. She has been involved in professional organizations and events in a number of capacities over the years: as delegate, presenter, invited panellist, organizer, or committee member. In 2007 she co-hosted the Canadian Student Judicial Affairs conference at the University of Windsor. She is also active within the Academic Integrity Council of Ontario.

Heidi LM Jacobs
Heidi Jacobs is an Information Literacy Librarian and the English Literature and History subject specialist at the Leddy Library. Her research focuses on information literacy, pedagogy, literary history, and digital humanities.

Betsy Keating
Betsy Keating is the GATA Network Coordinator. She facilitates connections between undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants and the many resources available to them. Betsy received her M.A. in English Literature and Language form the University of Windsor, where she is now a doctoral student in Education.

Erika Kustra
Dr. Erika Kustra is the Director of Teaching and Learning Development in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Windsor. She has been an Educational Developer for over 12 years, supporting the development of teaching and learning among faculty and teaching assistants.

Erica Lyons
Erica Lyons is a University of Windsor alumnus with a very diverse academic background, having a Bachelor of Commerce, a Master of Arts in History, and a Publishing Certification from Ryerson University. She has presented her graduate research at numerous conferences and continues to have a keen interest in 20th Century American social history. She is currently managing an Engineering research centre for graduate students at the University of Windsor, where she helps students with thesis and article preparation and research needs.

Candace Nast
Candace Nast is the GATA Digital Outreach Coordinator. She's the one behind the GATA Network Facebook Page, the GATA Twitter Account and the GATA Network Blog, connecting GAs and TAs with others in their disciplines and across campus and linking them to online resources about teaching and learning. Candace is also a Sessional Instructor in History and Women's Studies.

Michael K. Potter
Michael K. Potter is a Teaching and Learning Specialist in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of Windsor, where he administers the University Teaching Certificate (UTC) Program. He is also the Chair of the Council of Ontario Educational Developers (COED).

Holly Renaud
Holly Renaud graduated from the University of Windsor in 2009 from the Concurrent Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education, and Early Childhood Education program. She is currently in her first year of the Master's of Education program in the course-based stream with a focus on Curriculum Studies. At the moment, Holly's interests lean toward English Language Learners and how these newcomers to Canada cope with cultural and linguistic changes. Currently, Holly works as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for Dr. Glenn Rideout.

Glenn Rideout
Dr. Rideout is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. He teaches courses in Educational foundations, law, and ethics at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level, his teaching is focussed on topics in Educational policy, administration, and leadership. His recent research interests include beginning teachers' pupil control ideologies and their relationship to philosophical orientations, as well as restorative justice practices in schools.

Karen Roland
Karen Roland is the Experiential Learning Specialist for the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. In this role, Karen consults and collaborates with teacher candidates, faculty, and school partners as an impartial resource to assist in the development of strategies and programming to address equity and social justice issues in teacher education. Karen holds a PhD in Educational Studies, and her areas of research interest include social justice education, restorative justice in education, educational equity, teacher education, diversity, policy, and administration.

Antonio Rossini
Dr. Antonio Rossini holds a Laurea in Lettere Classiche from the Second University of Rome "Tor Vergata", an M.A. and a Ph.D in Italian Studies from the University of Toronto, and a post-doctoral Licentiate in Medieval Studies from the Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies of Toronto. He teaches Italian Language, Culture, Cinema, and Literature courses at the University of Windsor. He has also taught at McMaster University. Currently, Dr. Rossini is the Director of the Humanities Research Group, University of Windsor.

Melanie Santarossa
As the GATA Handbook Editor, Melanie Santarossa is responsible for compiling the GATA teaching and learning Handbook. Melanie is a graduate of the University of Windsor's M.A. English program and is a Research Assistant for the Humanities Research Group, University of Windsor. Melanie is the recipient of the 2011 GATA Award for Educational Practice.

Sharpie Sandbox
Local Webcomic artist and University of Windsor Student, Sharpie Sandbox, routinely and happily contributes to the Center for Teaching and Learning. The comic is frequently influenced by the everyday delights and hardships of higher education and the learning process. Sharpie Sandbox is designed and drawn entirely with Sharpie markers, a testimonial to the humour and creativity that anyone, especially when limited, can create and learn.

Shawna Scott
Shawna was a student in the Honours Developmental Psychology, with Thesis and Minor in Philosophy program at the University of Windsor. As an undergraduate student, she was a TA for Developmental Psychology: Adolescence, and she was also a Head TA for Foundations of Academic Writing. Further, she taught courses for the Faculty of Community Studies at St. Clair College. She is currently a graduate student working towards her M.A. in Child Clinical Psychology while working as a GA in the Department of Psychology. Shawna is one of the recipients of the 2010 GATA Award for Educational Leadership.

Gemma Smyth
Professor Gemma Smyth is Assistant Professor and Academic Clinic Director at the University of Windsor Faculty of Law. Gemma teaches Clinic Seminar, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and manages the Clinic Practice Program. She also researches and writes in the areas of clinic law and dispute resolution. Gemma won teaching and mentorship awards in 2006 and 2009. Prior to joining the Faculty of Law as a faculty member, she was Executive Director of University of Windsor Mediation Services and a mediator for the Ontario government.

Rodrick Turton
Rod Turton is a 2011 graduate of the Drama in Education and Community program at the University of Windsor. Rod grew to adapt his dramatic skills to serve the needs of a multi-disciplinary course as part of the Mentorship and Learning program in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. He excelled in the program, serving as both Mentor and Senior Mentor.

Christine Quaglia
Christine has a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Windsor and works as a Disability Advisor with the Student Disability Services office on campus. She is involved in various initiatives geared toward the de-stigmatization of disabilities and in raising awareness of disability issues that may impact students and their success in university.

Mita Williams
After graduating from McMaster University with an Honours B.Sc in Geography and Environmental Science and acquiring a M.L.I.S from McGill University, Mita Williams was employed in a number of contract positions in public, corporate, non-profit, government, and academic libraries before joining the Leddy Library as Science Librarian in 1999. Mita is currently the User Experience and User Interface Librarian at the Leddy Library, as well as the Acting Head of the Access Services Department.

Alan Wright
Prior to his appointment, Dr. Wright was Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Université du Québec and an associate professor of education at the Lévis Campus. He has a strong record of teaching, research and publication, and has held academic and administrative positions at various Canadian universities, including McGill and Concordia in Montreal, Dalhousie and Mount Saint Vincent in Nova Scotia, and the Université du Québec in Rimouski. Wright is a graduate of Mount Allison University, New Brunswick (BA, English and French Literature); McGill University, Montreal (teaching and MA degrees); and Université de Montréal (PhD). His master's and doctoral studies focused on the collective efforts of school teachers to improve teaching and learning conditions, socio-economic standards, and professional status.