

**Teaching
at the
University
of Virginia**

Teaching at the University of Virginia

A Handbook for Faculty and Teaching Assistants

Edited by

Marva A. Barnett
Professor and Director, Teaching Resource Center
Department of French

Marjorie S. Lindner
former Graduate Student Associate, TRC
PhD Psychology '93

Sigrid Anderson
Graduate Student Assistant, TRC
Department of English

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FOREWORD



As teachers at an American university whose founder was also one of the founders of American democracy, we speak often of freedom, usually the academic variety. Academic freedom, as it concerns the teacher, enables her or him to express scholarly views no matter how controversial. Academic freedom, as it concerns the student, enables what John Dewey calls “a freed capacity of thought.” It is the freedom that education confers on the educated.

Jefferson argued that education liberates students when he wrote, “Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.” According to Jefferson, to be educated is to be intellectually and morally autonomous. An educated person is freed of the tyranny of received but unexamined knowledge, otherwise known as “indoctrination.” Education teaches how to reason. Reason implies the capacity for intellectual and moral autonomy, and provides a means to resist oppression of any kind.

In this equation, then, the teacher, the one who leads the student to reason, liberates the student’s intellect. The best teachers recognize the gravity of this role and commit thought, time, energy, and effort to the work they do in the classroom. Because the teacher works to instill in students autonomous habits of mind, teaching is a dialogue, even when lecture is its format. Students always have the right to respond to their teachers’ statements, even if the response is not part of the classroom regimen. Students will write you essays and exams, and

they will argue with you mentally and in absentia with others standing in for you.

This dialogical relationship requires much of both teacher and student. Of the teacher, it requires the imagination to anticipate and prepare for student responses, the capacity to entertain points of view different from one’s own, and a largeness of spirit that allows the teacher ultimately to cede control of thought to the student. For, when a lesson is complete, it no longer is the teacher’s sole possession. It has passed into the student’s control and the student’s realm of intellectual responsibility.

Plato’s Socrates, the master of the educational dialogue, points out that “the direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life.” This handbook will help you help students find that direction, locate their intellectual orientations. It will guide you to ways to teach so that your students may discover what they think about what you have taught them. In your work, strive to cultivate your students’ capacity for independent thought so that they will be free to go make a place for themselves in the world. All of us dedicated to academic freedom know that the world will be better for that freedom they have gained in your classroom.

John T. Casteen III
 President
 University of Virginia

INTRODUCTION



To introduce the TRC's new handbook I want to reflect briefly not on the practical issues about teaching contained within its covers, but rather on what the TRC's full name

and mission imply. In mulling over the meaning of the phrase "Teaching Resource Center," I found myself focusing particularly on the word "resource." "Resource" itself came into English from the Latin word *resurgere* ("to rise from a recumbent position"; "to take up arms again"). That etymological connection led me, in turn, to the related French word "source" with its primary meaning, "the point at which subterranean water emerges from its hiddenness and rises to the surface"—thereby enspiriting and refreshing everything that lives by its energy. What specifically, though, do "resource" and "source" have to do with the remarkable work of our TRC at the University of Virginia?

Most concretely, the resources the TRC provides are to be found in the many programs the Center makes available to our faculty: the Teaching Portfolio Workshop, the Teaching Analysis Polls, the Classroom Observation Program, the workshops that begin every semester at U.Va., the work with international TAs on teaching American students, the programming for our Teaching + Technology Initiative Faculty Fellows, and much more. A principal focus of the TRC in orchestrating activities like these is on practical strategies for enhancing teaching performance, making the classroom experience for ourselves and our students more effective, enriching, and stimulating. Another less tangible but equally important

focus of such activities is to encourage us as faculty to talk among ourselves—and especially across disciplines—about what we do as teachers. The TRC stimulates us to formulate our teaching philosophies, and to think more deeply about what we do in the classroom, with as well as for our students.

This brings me to a second resource and source of excellence in teaching recognized and celebrated by the TRC, one that bears on the nature of teaching at a research university. That resource is nothing more or less than the faculty's own love for and engagement with our disciplines, our research or scholarly projects, and our collective commitment to cultivating the life of the mind. The practical strategies for teaching are extremely important. Yet ultimately they will have the best long-term results in enriching our students' lives if they serve a special passion for ideas and intellectual discovery. It is this that has drawn each of us to academic life in the first place, and to teaching at a great research university. Whether we are faculty members or graduate teaching assistants, modeling this passion, together with the intellectual discipline and precise thinking that flow from it, can inspire and enliven students, even if it doesn't go hand-in-hand with polished pedagogical performance. This is an important point to keep in mind in terms of the resources we bring to our students, especially when we walk away from a given class thinking "I didn't think that class went very well." Indeed, teaching as engagement with an academic discipline and as a passion for pushing knowledge forward may not always have the appearance, in the classroom, of great "performance" in a superficial sense. The effective teaching of break-

through ideas may take the form of hesitation, an apparent inconclusiveness, or a lack of clear direction—and these characteristics may seem opposed to ideas about the polished, clever, exciting lecture. Yet most of us, thinking back to our own education, would know that at least some teachers we now regard as the “best” would never have won teaching awards or received acclaim in popularity polls.

One final resource—and source —of excellence in teaching I must mention is our students. Their eagerness, their intellectual curiosity, and their life-experience are incredible gifts to us, and enable us, if we pay attention, to teach at our best. So long as we keep on listening and responding to them, they can inspire us to change and grow both as scholars and as teachers. We are greatly helped in our attention to listening by the good offices of those staff members in the TRC who organize the several kinds of student feedback that help us stay tuned to our students’ needs and aspirations as learners.

As teachers, our goal, it seems to me, is not only to be engaged in learning and practicing pedagogical strategies, though these are important aids to classroom effectiveness. In a more global sense, we need to be continually “re-sourcing”—rising again and again to our calling as teachers— with just the kind of energy I associate with the surge and freshness of natural well-springs. This “re-sourcing” comes to us as we actively participate in the professional discourse that pushes our own intellectual lives and our particular disciplines forward. We also draw great energy for renewal by talking with each other about, and working on, pedagogical strategies of the kind you will find both in this handbook and in the stimulating discussion the TRC’s many programs generate across the Grounds of the University.

Barbara Nolan
Robert C. Taylor Professor of English
Vice Provost for Instructional
Development and Innovation,
July 1994-June 2002

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PREFACE

Through *Teaching at the University of Virginia: A Handbook for Faculty and Teaching Assistants*, accomplished U.Va. professors and TAs share with you, both faculty members and graduate student teaching assistants, some of what they've learned from others and from their own fruitful—and less than fruitful—experiences. We have intermingled philosophy and hands-on advice and have kept our suggestions fairly general, remembering that they will be read by an audience as diverse as engineers, artists, physicists, historians, and psychologists, all with different needs, personalities, student populations, and goals. You should find useful ideas, whether you have taught for years or never before. Although the primary focus is on undergraduate teaching, many *Handbook* recommendations apply to teaching graduate students as well. Please note that telephone numbers and web site addresses were accurate at the time of publication but may have changed since then.

Why a Handbook?

The many instructors' experiences and many researchers' written discourse that have contributed to the preparation of the *Handbook* (some of which appear in our "Further Reading and Videotapes" appendix) confirm that teaching is a skill you can learn and improve, just as you have learned to read analytically, to write, or to speak in public. Certainly, no handbook can substitute for classroom teaching experience. But first-time instructors with a handbook can draw on multifaceted experiences of other teachers; without a handbook, they have their experiences as students and, with luck, a friend, colleague, or supervisor to consult. Even experienced instructors with many successes behind them may benefit from a fresh idea, a new technique, another's perspective.

Although scholarship, research, and teaching are all vital aspects of acquiring and sharing knowledge, graduate study does not always prepare the professional academic equally for all three. Here's how one Harvard professor put it:

Holding forth in a public forum frightens almost everyone who has to face the experience. Veteran actors endure butterflies on opening night, and hardened lawyers find their palms moist before offering summations in big cases. But nobody has better reason to fret than the average college

teacher. Actors and lawyers, after all, are trained to perform before large and sometimes hostile audiences. Professors are trained only as scholars and then thrust in front of the classroom to play the role of teacher. To say that this transition in roles can be a learning experience is to indulge in understatement. (Fraher, in Gullette, 1984, p. 116)

In the hope of subduing butterflies, drying palms, and inspiring more students, we offer a few pointers and encourage you to try them, keep the ones that work for you, and delight in your own teaching style as you cultivate it.

Why Care About Teaching Well?

For a few academics, the call to publish or perish has generated wonder about whether it's really necessary to teach well at all. Why agonize over lecture notes or reread the poem to be discussed on Wednesday? The answer must come from our students, future citizens of the United States and the world. When you read students' reactions to their courses and their *Cavalier Daily* editorials or when you listen to them talk in Pav XI, you learn that teaching affects nearly their entire perception of the course, that a fine teacher can interest them in a subject they never cared about before, that they have changed the course of their lives because a teacher inspired them. Teaching carries with it a serious *responsibility* and, equally importantly, a great *privilege*.

Moreover, as scholars, you are inherently committed to mastering your discipline and to extending knowledge about it. Your personal interest in what you study can excite students to want to learn as much about the subject as they can. By inspiring them to accept the challenges you and your topics pose, you can awaken their curiosity about and respect for scholarship in general.

Research and teaching are for me the yin and yang of academic life. Without research I would not have the confidence needed to create clear explanations of complex phenomena. Without teaching I would not have the necessary practice explaining clearly to stay sharp. Teaching allows us to show students by our example how people go about discovering the hidden regularities that underlie the chaos of everyday life in the physical world.

—Steve Schnatterly, Physics

What Do You Teach Students?

As teachers, you most obviously and easily impart information. But more than simply informing students, you must develop their cognitive abilities, including their power to solve problems, think logically and creatively, analyze, and question. With these skills, your students can grapple with the wide range of personal and moral issues they should encounter in college—central questions of philosophy, politics, science, art, religion—and begin to determine their own convictions. Beyond college, people who think clearly work better and can learn independently throughout their lives.

Along with imparting knowledge and developing thinking skills, you motivate students to want to learn what you teach. What many would call the ideal student, the one who naturally seeks knowledge and examines it and who would do so despite your efforts, is rare. Most college students, whether bright and energetic or discouraged and lethargic, need some motivation from you.

As scholars, you have exciting perspectives to share, so why offer only digested solutions to problems already solved? By sharing the genesis of your ideas, including some of your wrong steps, you promote creativity, insights, and judgment. When teaching and research invigorate each other, each becomes more valuable: what you teach should lead you to further investigation, students' queries should provoke your inquiries, and what you discover through research should enhance students' learning. Chris Christensen, Professor Emeritus at the Harvard Business School, says that there is "magnificence in *all* teaching":

We enjoy the privilege of lifelong learning, a constant link to youth, growth, search, and the world of ideas, and the knowledge that our work has fundamental worth to others. The potential of our daily routines to create impressive results—some of the moment, the most intriguing of the future—makes our work a service of ever-unfolding fulfillment. We are part of something great. (*Education for Judgment*, 1991, p. 34)

Using This Handbook

We write to both experienced and inexperienced faculty members and teaching assistants teaching undergraduates. At the University of Virginia, "TAs" are graduate students teaching in many capacities: as assistants to a professor, as independent instructors in a multi-section or single-section course or lab, as tutors or consultants for problem-solving sessions, and as graders. The "Specific TA Concerns" section highlights the TA's role; we suggest that both TAs and faculty working with TAs read it because TAs' success depends on the care and effort expended not only by TAs but also by the supervising professor.

Recognizing that our audience comes from every discipline, we have emphasized universals and defer to the recommendations of your departmental handbooks and supervisors where they conflict with ours. We have also deliberately kept our remarks brief, opting to give you basic concepts and recommendations; for more details, consult works listed in the "Further Reading" appendix. This handbook will be most helpful if you read individual sections as you need them; to help you navigate through, we offer frequent references to related sections. To help you find the most immediately relevant sections, we have provided a detailed table of contents. References to specific U.Va. offices are explained in Appendix II.

We have taken your comments and suggestions into account as we revised this handbook, and we continue to appreciate your input for future editions. Please feel free to share your insights with us (trc-uva@virginia.edu). Most importantly, remember that we offer our ideas as suggestions, not as requirements, and as a beginning. We hope you go beyond this handbook to discuss your classes with your students and colleagues, to observe other instructors teaching, to experiment with new techniques, and to continue to develop your personal teaching style.

Marva A. Barnett
Marjorie S. Lindner
Sigrid Anderson



I. PREPARING A COURSE

SECTIONS:

Planning for Instruction
 Preparing a Syllabus
 Sharing Teaching
 Working with TAs
 Working with Graders
 Teaching as a Team
 Administration
 Scheduling a Course
 Ordering Textbooks & Supplies
 Creating Packets
 Placing Materials on Reserve
 Reserving Equipment
 The First Day of Class
 Plan the First Day
 Teach the First Day
 Six Ways to Handle Nervousness

Long before walking into your classroom you spend hours thinking, reading, and organizing your course, whether you teach as the sole instructor, as an assistant, or with colleagues. By carefully planning your course, you increase the likelihood that students will grasp what they are to learn, will see clearly individual course elements and their relationships, and will understand what you intend to communicate.

Every class should be an occasion for discovery. It is not possible to achieve that experience for every student every day, but it is possible to provide the opportunity.

—John Jeffries, Law

Planning for Instruction

Before attacking the details of book ordering, scheduling, syllabus design, or equipment reservation, you need to delineate the philosophy behind your course. Begin with these questions and directions:

✧ *What do you expect students to learn?* What concepts and skills will they acquire or extend? How will they better understand relationships among concepts? You must define the course focus and the type of learning you intend in order to select and sequence the content, reading, assignments, and evaluation instruments.

✧ *How will you correlate what you expect students to learn with assignments and evaluations of their work?* If you want students to think critically, for instance, you need to demonstrate critical thinking in your lectures and class discussions, show them the types of thinking necessary to read, comment, and write successfully in your course, and evaluate their ability to demonstrate critical thinking.

✧ *What knowledge and skills are prerequisite to success in your course?* If students enter your course with a preparation different from the one you expect, neither you nor they can gain much. First, define your expectations, preferably in writing. During the first week of the course, spend a few minutes evaluating students' current knowledge (see also "The First Day of Class"). Here are a few pertinent classroom assessment activities (Angelo and Cross, 1993):

- Ask students to write a short paragraph, including their questions, about your subject matter.
- Have them list relevant courses previously taken (be sure you know the content and objectives of prerequisite courses).
- Give a short quiz on both information they should already know and facts they should learn in your course.

What you learn from these activities will suggest whether you need to schedule a few introductory lectures or include a good introduction to assigned readings.

✧ *How will you know whether students are learning throughout the course?* Plan regular assessments of students' progress (see "Evaluating Students' Work," and "Assessing Students' Learning"). In addition, listen closely to students' comments during discussions, talk with students before and after class, and designate some office hours for individual conferences. Just a few minutes' conversation will tell you whether a student is on the right track.



Lisa Woolfork leading a discussion in her "Trauma Theory and African American Literature" course.

Photo by Ana Lucia Escudero, *Corks and Curls*.

✧ *How will you vary your instruction?* Novelty is intrinsically motivating. By offering a variety of activities, you interest students more, keep their attention better, and thus improve their learning. See “Typical Teaching Situations” for ideas you can implement, whatever your primary methodology.

✧ *How will your syllabus show students the focus of your course and indicate how all assignments are connected to that focus?* Students are more likely to realize their potential in a course for which they have a clear map. If they know your goals, they can compare their goals to yours. Share your expectations explicitly through your syllabus and course introduction.

After determining your course focus, consider the following practical questions (with the help of an experienced instructor if you are teaching the course for the first time):

✧ *How many students should you expect?* Class size will influence how much in-class time you need to devote to lectures or discussions. The larger the class, too, the fewer papers and other graded assignments you can handle on your own; if you have an especially large class, ask your department to assign you one or more TAs and/or graders. (See below for guidelines on working with TAs and graders.)

✧ *Is this course for majors and/or minors, or does it attract students from other departments?* Your students’ orientation to your discipline will define in great measure your expectations about students’ work, the need to explain background material, and the tenor of class discussions. On the positive side, you may find discussions taking unexpected—and stimulating—directions as a student from the Architecture School, for example, approaches Shakespeare’s plays or US history without the mediating formulae majors have learned to employ.

✧ *How much work can you reasonably assign for each class?* If you are a graduate student yourself or have been recently teaching graduate courses, you may need to review normal undergraduate requirements. Remember that each student carries about 14 to 17 hours of course credit, probably in diverse disciplines. The usual rule of thumb is two hours of study outside of class for every credit hour carried; thus for a three-credit-hour course, you can typically ask students to spend six hours a week studying and completing assignments.

✧ *How many of your students will never have written a college-level paper?* Not all students take the first-year course in academic writing; of those who do only half take it during their first semester. The first-year writing

course introduces students to academic writing but does not teach them how to write in all disciplines. You may need to devote class time or a series of individual conferences to explaining the conventions of writing within your discipline.

✧ *How will you budget your time?* Not surprisingly, both TAs and faculty members face complex time management difficulties: simultaneously instructors and scholars, advisors, and administrators (if simply of an exam committee or study group), they split their days into myriad, often disparate activities. Time is in fixed supply, but you can improve the situation by examining how you spend your daily 24 hours and by looking at the demands on your time. For help with time management, see Appendix III.

Preparing a Syllabus

Your syllabus serves three basic functions: it organizes your semester in advance, introduces students to course goals, and states requirements clearly and fully. It can protect you from pleas and challenges and support you should a student complain to a chairperson or dean. A syllabus consists of two parts: rules or regulations and a schedule of assignments. In the rules and regulations section, include the following information:

✧ *The course title, its abbreviation, the semester and year.*

✧ *Your name, office location, office telephone number, e-mail address, and course web site, if you have one.* Your home phone is optional: if you choose to announce it, set clear limits (no calls after 10:00 p.m., for instance).

✧ *The names, office locations and office hours of TAs, graders, lab assistants, course supervisors, and so on.*

✧ *Your office hours.* Generally you should hold at least one hour per week for every hour you spend in class. Schedule office hours so that they don’t exactly match a regular course slot; that is, avoid MWF 10:00-11:00 (students with classes at this time can never see you), and choose instead MW 10:30-11:30 and Thursday 1:30-2:30. Schedule extra hours before exams and due dates of major assignments. Make sure your departmental office knows your hours and those of your TAs.

✧ *Required and recommended texts.* Tell students where to buy books and where to find texts on reserve. (See below for details on both.)

✧ *A brief summary of course goals and format.* Such a description is most useful in courses that students may find new and confusing; it helps to explain, for example, the philosophy behind the workshop procedure in

writing courses or the emphasis on authentic language use in German.

✧ *Basis for the final grade.* Note what percent of the grade comes from papers, exams, quizzes, oral presentations, other assigned work, and participation in class discussions. If you require a lab, discussion section, or tutorial, include grades for students' work in the adjunct section in the course grade and explain the relationship. If it is possible to earn a passing grade without taking the final exam, require that all assignments be completed and the final exam taken in order to pass.

✧ *Attendance policy.* Students look to you for a specific statement on attendance requirements. Discussion sections, labs, language courses and studio courses often require consistent attendance and participation for students to practice and demonstrate mastery of necessary skills such as supporting an argument or analyzing a compound. Insist on the level of attendance appropriate to your course. If you are a TA for a course, be sure you know the professor's policy and whether you are expected to set your own.

Even if you teach a section of a multi-sectioned course with standard requirements, you need to establish or make clear a reasonable attendance policy and stick to it. You must also decide whether it is reasonable to penalize students for tardiness or failure to attend a scheduled conference with you. *Record all absences* so that you can support your reasoning should a student protest a poor grade. Do not expect the dean's office or Student Health to verify a student's illness.

Athletes are excused from classes on days when they have out-of-town athletic commitments. Any in-season athletes in your class should give you a letter from the coach listing away-games, including the time of departure. (For instance, students are not excused from a 9:00 a.m. class if their bus leaves at noon.) Remind students that they are responsible for all work assigned in their absence.

✧ *Your policy on late assignments.* How many days late, if any, will you accept an assignment without penalizing it? How much will the grade be reduced? Decide on your policy before the semester begins, confirm it with your supervisor (if any), and hold to it! If you are strict in the beginning, you can later make exceptions in needy cases; if you are irresolute about early incidents, students will take you up on your leniency and submit more late work. You can build flexibility into your system by allowing students to drop their lowest (or non-existent) grade in one or more categories.

✧ *Statement about the Honor Pledge.* Remind students that all work is considered to be pledged. Note any changes to the Honor Pledge your course requires (for

further information, see the Honor Committee website at <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>).

✧ *Any useful resources.* For instance, some students in elementary math courses need math tutorial services; students writing papers can obtain help at the Writing Center (see Appendix IIA for details).

The second part of your syllabus identifies *due dates of assignments and exams*. If you have a fairly simple course plan (e.g., one text chapter per week), you can probably summarize the entire semester. Otherwise, hand out a schedule listing assignments through midterm or at least through the end of the first month. In any case, list the days and times of all hourly and final examinations on your original syllabus. Students need this information in order to manage their time.

Especially if you are teaching the course for the first time, build in a few catch-up days or times for review. You might find that your students need more background lectures than you had anticipated, or a topic you intended for one day's discussion might prove unexpectedly fruitful.

Syllabus Checklist

Does your syllabus contain . . . ?

- Course title, abbreviation, semester, year
- Instructor and TA names
- Office locations, phone numbers, hours
- Web site address, when appropriate
- Texts, materials, reserve readings
- Course objectives
- Criteria for the final grade
- Attendance policy
- Late assignment policy
- Your policy with respect to the Honor Pledge
- Resources for extra help
- Assignments, course calendar

In introductory classes, every day I get to present material that is absolutely new to the students. My approach is essentially, "Did you know . . . ? Isn't that amazing?"

—Dennis Proffitt, Psychology

Sharing Teaching

Working with TAs

The discussion sections, lab courses, and grading that often accompany large lecture courses are normally delegated to graduate student teaching assistants (see also “Specific TA Concerns”). If you are a faculty member preparing a TA-assisted course, you must clarify the role of TAs and graders; if you have more than one assistant, you need to ensure consistent standards within the course. You must make certain that enrollment in TAs’ sections is reasonable: usually not more than 15-20 students per section. You must also decide how much of students’ final grades depends on their work with the TA and how much on their work with you. The TA-taught section should weigh in the final grade proportionately to the amount of time students spend in the section and the amount of work they do there. To help your assistants develop professionally, your obligations are many.

✧ Make sure the department schedules the TAs for your course well in advance. Although TAs do not always need to know months ahead their precise section times (which may depend on last-minute enrollments), they need to know which course they will teach and with whom they will work. Whenever possible, graduate students should be given TA responsibilities in courses close to their academic specialties. To feel confident, TAs must be familiar with course material and with you as the professor in charge.

✧ Hold regular meetings (at least every two weeks) with all TAs to preview upcoming lectures (which TAs normally attend). Integrate TAs’ work with yours, elicit their ideas, and keep tabs on how well students are grasping the material.

✧ If you have more than two or three sections, appoint a “head TA” to take care of most of the day-to-day administrative tasks such as overseeing changing enrollment figures early in the semester, establishing exam-writing committees, and organizing staff meetings. Head TAs normally receive compensation for this extra work with release time from normal teaching loads or additional salary.

✧ Aim for coherence throughout your sections without stifling TAs’ imagination and enthusiasm. Consciously decide how much leeway to give TAs in their discussion sections. On the one hand, students in separate sections are in the same course and should receive the same information. On the other, intelligent, independent graduate students specializing in the discipline need some flexibility.

✧ Discuss with TAs sample assignments, and establish grading and commenting policies. Standardizing otherwise subjective grading reduces much undergraduate student anxiety and complaining. When you receive the first assignment from students, grade some papers together with TAs, perhaps simply by photocopying half a dozen papers, reading and grading them simultaneously, and comparing notes. Only by discussing specifics can you come to some consensus and be sure that your TAs are looking for the same sort of work you are.

✧ Sit in on each TA’s section at least once and discuss the TA’s teaching individually, but be aware of the stress factors involved. Nearly anyone becomes nervous when supervised; this is particularly true when it’s teaching that’s observed (a serious and personal matter for most instructors) and when faculty observe graduate students (their dependents in many ways). To reduce the strain, take notes not of your impressions but simply of what happens during class; with these you can help the TA see what works best and improve where necessary. Most importantly, explain the exact observation procedure to your TAs and seek their suggestions. The Teaching Resource Center can videotape teaching for self-analysis, if you would like to offer TAs this option (see “Analyzing and Improving Your Teaching”).

✧ Encourage TAs to observe each other’s classes, and give them guidelines. You will find some ideas in the consultations section of “Analyzing and Improving Your Teaching.”

✧ Support your TAs in their decisions and grading whenever possible. TAs are diligent professionals who normally follow clear grading guidelines when provided. Students, however, may think they can play you and your TA off one another. Require students to see their respective TAs and then the head TA before bringing questions or complaints to you. Only in grave circumstances should you alter TAs’ comments on a paper or overrule their final grades, and then only after consulting with the TA. At times, however, you may need to ask a TA to explain the reasoning behind a questionable grade or offer a denied make-up exam that a student deserves. You are the final judge in such cases; consult with your departmental chair in unusual circumstances.

✧ All in all, consider yourself a mentor to your TAs. Thoughtfully decide what they can learn from you about the scholarship of research and teaching in your profession. Allow each to teach about twenty minutes of your lecture course, if possible. Respond to their ideas about the course; ask for their reactions to a draft syllabus before you finalize it. By involving TAs in creating and directing a course, you provide practical

experience they will need later as faculty members and can gain in no other way.

The thing I have enjoyed most about teaching a US History survey is a sense of being part of the team. By opening up to what [my TAs] have to say and by building readings around what they suggest, I keep the course new to me.

—Edward Ayers, History

Working with Graders

Unlike TAs, graders don't teach a class; moreover, because students rarely see or know their graders personally, they are more likely to protest grades assigned by graders than those assigned by professors or TAs. Yet graders have an immense responsibility toward your students. To help your graders develop their teaching skills and to reduce complaints and standardize course grading, integrate your graders into your course as much as you reasonably can:

✧ Decide whether graders need to attend your lectures. In most cases, you should have graders attend at least some of the classes so that they can see your perspective.

✧ Make sure your students know who their graders are and how to reach them. Students who can discuss how their work was graded are more likely to have positive feelings about the course.

✧ If your graders are not native speakers of English, make sure they can communicate effectively with students who seek their help.

✧ Get involved in assessing each assignment:

- Review with graders your assignments and expectations *before* students submit their work.
- Review the first submitted assignment with graders *before* they begin grading. Grade a few papers as a group and compare your reactions and grades. Recommend that graders comment and correct in pencil so that the differences between their changes and yours (perhaps necessary at first) will not be obvious to students.
- Clarify how the grading will be divided between you and your graders and who will assign the final grade.

✧ Support your graders and their grading decisions as you would your TAs (see above).



Gary Gallagher and Ed Ayers team teaching the graduate course "Introduction to American History, 1607-1877."

Teaching as a Team

Teaching a course or parts of a course with a colleague can benefit both instructors and students. By watching each other in the classroom and analyzing course progress, instructors learn teaching techniques, gain new perspectives on their disciplines, improve their methods of interacting with students, and experience a renewed sense of collegiality. Students have the benefits of two experts, the opportunity to learn from different teaching styles and, in many cases, the excitement of an interdisciplinary approach. To team teach successfully, work in tandem as much as possible:

✧ Design the syllabus together.

✧ Decide who will teach which topics.

✧ If one colleague teaches only a few classes (is, in fact, really an invited lecturer), decide how you will inform students that they are equally responsible for material presented by each instructor.

✧ Decide how you will settle differences of opinion. If you disagree about a student's grade on the final exam, for instance, do you negotiate a resolution or does one of you have the final say?

✧ Score independently but consult about final grades on any common assignments.

✧ Consult with the department chair to ascertain how the course load will count for each of you. One solution has proved successful for two professors teaching one three-hour course on a regular basis: each year, in an alternating pattern, the course counts as a three-hour course for one instructor and an overload for the other. On the other hand, suppose a three-hour course is divided into two lectures and

discussion sections each week. Then instructors who equally team teach two lectures and two discussion sections per week can each be said to teach the equivalent of a three-hour course.

You will need to divide some responsibilities in advance (and preferably in writing to avoid future confusion). The following questions should help:

- Who orders the books?
- Who coordinates TAs, if any?
- Who guarantees that handouts or new web documents are prepared?
- Whom should students see for a conference or complaint?
- Which class meetings should both instructors attend? To benefit from team teaching, instructors should participate in as many of the colleague's classes as possible.
- Who submits the final grade sheet?

Administration

Scheduling a Course

Decide whether your course should meet three times a week for 50-minute sessions, twice a week for 75-minute sessions, or once a week for 2 1/2 hours. Your department should have a fair, equitable system for assigning course slots, and you need to be flexible in your requests; classroom space is limited, and you will not always be able to schedule courses for your preferred days and times.

The *Course Offering Directory (COD)* (<http://www.virginia.edu/cod/>), distributed by the Registrar's Office and used by students and faculty advisors in planning each semester's course load, lists each course by department. Included are course title and abbreviation, course schedule number, section number, credit hours, scheduled time, location, instructor's name, maximum enrollment, and pre-registration enrollment. The administrative staff in your department may ask you for information to update your department's listing each semester. To verify accuracy, always check your listings as soon as the *COD* appears.

Ordering Textbooks and Supplies

To have textbooks available for your students, you must order them ahead of time: begin early to examine possible textbooks. Most publishers will send you examination copies (see below); also consult with colleagues and web sites at other institutions to discover what they have found most useful, and visit textbook exhibits at professional meetings. At annual textbook

fairs in Newcomb Hall, you can examine various texts and meet helpful salespeople. Learn how much potential textbooks will cost; you may elect to put on reserve books that students won't read in full. After choosing your text(s), request order forms from the University of Virginia Bookstore and from the Student Bookstore; once you have ordered books for a course, you will automatically receive requisition forms when you next offer the course.

Ordering deadlines. Bookstore ordering deadlines ensure sufficient time to acquire used books from U.Va. students and wholesalers, to determine availability of texts ordered, and to process and receive orders. Standard deadlines apply to supplies such as engineering tools, electronic components, dissecting instruments, art supplies: April 1 for summer school; May 1 for fall semester (allowing time to buy back students' used books during exams); and November 1 for spring semester. Usually, the general merchandising department of the bookstore can assemble customized packages of supplies if you like.

If you must send in a last-minute requisition, be ready for delays: delivery can take two to three weeks from some publishers during the peak months of August and January; books can go out-of-stock when demand exceeds production estimates. Also, some companies (albeit minor ones) insist on prepayment before shipping books, resulting in additional delays of one to two weeks.

Enrollment estimates. When ordering texts, estimate enrollment as accurately as possible. Bookstore personnel determine likely enrollment by considering your estimate, course pre-enrollment figures for undergraduate courses, sales history for courses previously offered, and the availability of used texts on Grounds. If you know your course enrollment will be substantially greater than in the past (because, for example, more graduate students were admitted or major/minor requirements were changed), explain the situation on your requisition form.

Availability of books. A few days before classes begin, check bookstore shelves to be sure all your ordered books have arrived. Normally, because of over-enrollment, about ten or fifteen percent of course orders are insufficient. Bookstore staff will reorder only when you so request. Reorders are shipped at regular UPS rates unless you request air mail; if you do so, these charges will be added to the cost of the book.

Desk copies and examination copies. A desk copy is the book used by the course instructor; an examination copy is a book considered ahead of time for possible use in a course. Request an examination copy only of books you seriously think you might use in a course.

(Some companies ask for return of or payment for books not adopted.) To receive desk copies for you and your TAs (if any), write directly to the publisher on your department letterhead; such requests usually receive prompt attention. U.Va. Bookstore will order desk copies if you so request on the original requisition. Desk copies can only be sent to your department. U.Va. Bookstore will also loan you or a TA a desk copy from the shelves if you occasionally need one in a hurry. If so, ask the publisher for a replacement copy immediately. All loaned books must be returned, replaced, or bought.

Creating Packets

When no textbook covers just what you want, just as you want it covered, you may construct a course-specific packet. You can do this either electronically or on paper, as appropriate. You can place course materials on electronic reserve for students to print out through Instructional Toolkit (<http://toolkit.virginia.edu>) (see below). Or you can work with U.Va. Printing Services or an outside firm to make a hard-copy collection that students purchase directly. Follow these tips to make sure your packet is useful, affordable, and available when your students need it:

- ✧ Shop around. Electronic course materials are free, but costs of paper packets can vary. Some local printing services do everything but select your readings, including gathering sources at libraries and obtaining copyright permissions; others are more concerned about keeping costs down. Find the route that best fits your needs and gives your students the best deal.

- ✧ Provide a table of contents. Students keep packets that they find useful.

- ✧ Be creative about your packet's contents. Besides readings, consider including, when appropriate, study guides, graphs, computer-generated information, lecture notes, and practice exams.

- ✧ Don't include more text than students need. Include only the necessary five pages from a twenty-page chapter, thus saving money and expediting securing copyright. Less than one-tenth of a text can often be reproduced without royalty fees.

- ✧ Provide originals whenever possible. The printers can normally do any required reducing or enlarging.

- ✧ Give your originals and secured copyright permission to the printer at least two weeks before you need the packets. Printing services require approxi-

mately seven to ten days to reproduce materials with no copyright delays. When you ask the printing service to secure copyright permission, packet preparation may take more than a month. Permissions fees are normally added to the students' cost of the packet.

- ✧ If you can't submit all the materials early but would like the service to obtain permissions, send the printers as soon as possible a complete table of contents: for each source include title; authors' names; edition, volume, issue, and page numbers; and the copyright holder's name and address.

Placing Materials on Reserve

Most University libraries can reserve books, articles, videotapes, and so on for your course, keeping the material available throughout the semester. Use library order forms to place on reserve both library materials and those you bring in yourself. Reserve items are kept in a central location for students to use, in the library or outside as you designate, for a limited period of time (usually two hours or two days).

With the reserve service, you avoid unnecessary photocopying and make available to everyone optional books and popular books some students might otherwise check out for the entire semester. Individual libraries have different specific reserve policies.

Another option for reserving materials is to have course readings, such as journal articles, book chapters, or homework solutions, scanned electronically by the library as PDF files which students can access and print themselves through Instructional Toolkit. This method also allows instructors to create and manage class home pages and set up class e-mail discussion lists. The library has instructions for getting your toolkit set up and ready to receive electronic course materials at <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/leo/instructfac.html/>. This site also provides information about the University's policy on copying copyrighted materials and the web form for submitting requests to the library for Toolkit materials. A 15-page document is the largest that students can print without excessive delay, so paper reserves are still the best option for smaller classes with many readings that are longer than a few pages.

Take good care of your equipment, and your equipment will take good care of you.

—Duffy Daugherty, Former
Michigan State University
football coach

Reserving Equipment

When planning your course, consider integrating media such as films, slides, video and audiotapes, or computer-assisted instruction. Such different media can intrigue and motivate if used effectively (for ideas, see “Lecture Courses” and “Laboratory Teaching”). Of course, choosing a multimedia approach necessitates reserving appropriate equipment. Each school makes available equipment useful to its specific disciplines (for details, see Appendix IIB). Although reservation policies differ in details, you must normally reserve equipment at least a day in advance. For success with equipment, follow these tips:

- ✧ Be sure you know how to operate the equipment you reserve; audiovisual center staff will be happy to show you.
- ✧ Pick up the equipment well before class to set it up and make sure it works as expected. In advance, preview and cue tapes to starting points.
- ✧ Remember that once you have equipment, you are responsible for its safety; in many cases, you will need to sign an acceptance of liability. Of course, never leave equipment unattended, and be especially careful when taking equipment on and off elevators.
- ✧ If you plan to use a piece of equipment regularly (an overhead projector or microphone, for instance), reserve it for the entire semester, if possible.
- ✧ If you plan to use elaborate equipment frequently, try to schedule your course in a specially equipped classroom or one near the audiovisual center.
- ✧ If your course will require special equipment, such as a screen, moveable desks and chairs, or a seminar table, be sure your departmental facilities coordinator includes your needs in the departmental



Elizabeth Margutti teaching a library course on computer use.

request for classrooms (usually submitted the preceding semester). If you find yourself in a room that lacks a necessary piece of equipment, request that your facilities coordinator order it for you; or request a change to a room appropriately equipped.

Teaching with technology does not necessarily mean using computers in the classroom. The classroom is a place where students and teachers share the work they do outside. Teaching with new technologies involves enhancing both the preparation outside the classroom and the sharing within.

—Kirk Martini,
Architecture and Civil Engineering

The First Day of Class

It’s your first teaching position and you’ve got butterflies in your stomach. Or maybe you’ve been teaching for years, and you’ve still got butterflies. They come because you care about what you’re doing—not to mention the thrill of performing before a group. In fact, the first day of a course is exciting and anxiety-provoking for everyone. How do you take advantage of that excitement, inspire your students, and reduce anxiety? It’s traditional to begin by discussing course requirements and perhaps even to cut the first class short, but is it a good idea? Does such a beginning tell your students why they should become excited about *your* course, or why you spend most of your waking hours studying this discipline? Does it tell them about how you teach or how you’ll approach the subject matter? On the contrary, it tells them only the course outline and how to procure a grade. Here are some techniques to get your course off to a productive and stimulating start.

Plan the First Day

To plan the first day, think about your discipline and why students should be interested in it. Know that students tend to see the first day as a microcosm of the entire course. So, if you will want them eventually to participate, think creatively, work effectively in groups, and so on, incorporate such activities into the first class.

✧ Prepare, as appropriate, a short lecture, discussion questions to raise students’ awareness, or a quick review of information from the previous course in a sequence. If possible, link your topic to students’ daily lives: how a recent news event relates to your history course or why the language you teach appears in American advertisements.

✧ Be ready to summarize and answer questions about the syllabus and course requirements (see “Preparing a Course”).

✧ Decide what you want to learn about your students and how best to discover it. Use small group discussions, individual conversations, information sheets, or games (see Magnan, 1989, for specific ideas). Plan to talk with your students before class to put everyone at ease, and meet them person-to-person, not teacher-to-student. The more you know about your students, the more easily you can communicate with them.

✧ Devise a first assignment.

✧ Visit the assigned room ahead of time, and visualize you and your students in it.

Teach the First Day

Use your plan to teach the first day:

✧ Arrive early. Distribute or write on the board the course title and number and your name as you’d like to be called. Arrange the chairs in an appropriate configuration (a semi-circle, for example), if possible.

✧ Teach a real class the first day. Start on time, and use all of your allotted time, sending a clear message that you take the course seriously. Show why your discipline is exciting; involve students with the course substance from the moment you meet. Your course is more than a bare-bones syllabus and set of requirements!

✧ Get to know your students and tell them something about yourself, your research interests, your background.

- Memorize names from the class list before the first day; in class, attach faces to names.
- Call the roll the first few days, soliciting proper pronunciations and nicknames. Use and learn as many names as possible—go ahead and make mistakes!
- Encourage students to learn each others’ names.
- Have students complete an information card or sheet with name, address, phone number, previous study in your discipline, reasons for taking your course, hobbies, and any other appropriate information.
- Or request for the next class a one-page self-description; you’ll be surprised at what they write and will see how much students want teachers to know them.



Photo by Tom Cogill.

- If you find it hard to learn names, ask students to note a particularly salient identifying feature.
- Take photos or ask permission to have a helper photocopy students’ IDs during class. Since people tend to sit in the same places, you might find it helpful to make a seating chart.
- Study your information sheets between meeting times, and use them to recall participants’ names when they contribute and during roll call. Eventually the faces and names will come together.

✧ Ask for students’ questions and concerns.

✧ Encourage engagement in the course by involving students with the syllabus, rather than simply “going over” it. Ask them to think about and discuss their expectations of the course. Or ask them to read the syllabus and write three questions they have. Or ask them to discuss with a peer what seems most interesting or challenging about the course.

✧ Show what kind of an instructor you are. Consider what students seem to appreciate most in teachers: enthusiasm and willingness to make the course worthwhile, objectivity (what students most often call “fairness”), and a sympathetic attitude toward their problems (McKeachie, 1999). Begin to show your students that you have these characteristics (see also, “Your Multiple Roles”).

A liberal education is at the heart of a civil society, and at the heart of a liberal education is the act of teaching.

—A. Bartlett Giamatti,
Former President, Yale University,
and Former Commissioner,
Major League Baseball

Six Ways to Handle Nervousness

■ Practice

Although practice may not make perfect, doing a presentation out loud several times before the real thing will make you feel more confident, especially if you practice under conditions as close to the actual situation as possible. Make yourself do at least one dry run in front of an audience, even if it's just a friend or spouse.

■ Concentrate on the Ideas

Concentrate on your ideas, not on your own nervousness. Even timid people speak up when it's something they care about. Think about your audience's needs, not your own.

■ Make a Strong Start

You'll be the most nervous at the beginning of the talk, so start with an introduction that will be easy to remember and that will relax you as well as the audience.

■ Visualize

Rehearse for your first presentation by actually visualizing how it will go. Imagine what you'd like to say, how you'd like to say it, and a positive response from the audience. Many athletes use a similar approach by imagining an entire dive or jump, in detail, before they actually do it.

■ Use Audiovisual Aids

Particularly if you have lots of technical information to cover, it can be reassuring to have some of it already written on transparencies or in an outline on the board.

■ Assume a Confident Attitude

To a large extent, you can control your own reaction to sweaty palms or a beating heart. Tell yourself you're "psyched," not nervous. Remember that to an audience nervousness can seem like dynamism or energy. Your attitude will probably determine what the audience thinks.



II. INTERACTING WITH STUDENTS

SECTIONS:

- Teaching the Whole Student
 - Learning Styles
 - Hostile or Harassing Students
- Professionalism
 - Discretion
 - Confidentiality
 - Defining Your Role as a Teacher
- Teaching a Diverse Student Body
- Students with Difficulties
 - Academic Difficulties
 - Personal Difficulties
 - Sexual Harassment or Assault
 - Substance Abuse Problems
 - Discussing Alcohol with Students
- Teaching Students with Disabilities
 - Constraints
 - Accommodations
- Academic / Social Calendar
 - Academic Schedule
 - Add / drop
 - Deadlines
 - Advising and Pre-registration
 - Orientation
 - Final Exams and Grades
 - Slumps
 - Social Events
 - Fraternities and Sororities
 - Foxfield
- Writing Letters of Recommendation

Teaching the Whole Student

If you were to list the adults most influential in your life, most likely several teachers would be near the top: teachers at all levels who taught you to think and motivated you to keep thinking, who helped you define yourself and the world only to show you your need to redefine them, who taught you as a “whole student.” This handbook section aims to help you become a teacher of whole, complex people rather than a simple conveyor of information.

You can teach comprehensively even in a system that can reduce individual students to nine-digit numbers on a multi-page printout. First, recognize that you influence your students not just in terms of grades and future endeavors but also with respect to their attitudes towards learning and perceptions of themselves, their families and the world. The college years are particularly salient in developing one’s adult attitudes and perceptions (see, for example, Perry, 1985). Consider what perspectives you bring to the classroom and how much of yourself you want to make visible without inhibiting your students.

Second, respect each student’s right to formulate and hold a position different from yours or from those of classmates. Even when encouraging students to

adopt a specific theoretical perspective is a legitimate course objective, you should also present unbiased evidence for alternative interpretations. Help students understand why you hold a given position, challenge theirs, encourage them to challenge yours, and lead without preaching; students are more likely to embrace a position they themselves formulate than one you impose on them. Leave the ultimate decision on matters of principle to each individual.

Third, motivate students to enjoy learning beyond what they need to know for the test. Motivation is a complex phenomenon that has received much empirical attention (see Lowman, 1990, for more details). Psychological studies classifying motivation as intrinsic (internal, self-defined, rewarding in and of itself) versus extrinsic (contingent on external reinforcement) have shown that superior performance is more closely associated with intrinsic motivation. Of course, we need grades and other forms of extrinsic motivation, and students often focus on them. Thus, we need to balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and not devalue learning for students by overemphasizing grades and test performance. In fact, asking students to take an active role in learning (for example, having them lead a specific discussion or give a presentation) has been shown to increase the attractiveness of learning. Of course, being excited about what we teach and helping students find ways to make a connection between our discipline, their lives, and the real world also increases their motivation to learn.

Finally, recognize that even when you don’t know your students well (in large lectures, for instance), students feel as though they know you. As they attend your presentations each week, they see how you think and feel about yourself and your discipline, and even how you feel about them in a corporate sort of way. When students perceive you as approachable, many take steps to help you know them better. Fostering this interaction makes you a better instructor in that you know your audience better and consequently care more that they learn well.

*The essence of teaching lies in the living relationship between the teacher and the student. By teaching **history**, I strive to enable students to see that the people they study were, in fact, real, thoughtful, emotional people who were attempting to build a life. By teaching **people**, I hope to help them envision alternative futures for themselves individually and for us collectively.*

—Jenry Morsman, History

Learning Styles

Consider this controversial but thought-provoking declaration:

The single most powerful statement to come out of brain research in the last twenty-five years is this: We are as different from one another on the inside of our heads as we appear to be different from one another on the outside of our heads. . . . Add to that the understanding that the 'world' out 'there' is as much a *projection* from inside our heads as it is a *perception*, and pretty soon you are up against the realization that it is a miracle that we communicate at all. (Fulghum, 1989, pp. 42-43)

You will communicate much more as an instructor if you remember that you see the world and learn in a way quite individual to you; your students learn, process information, and understand the world in equally

individual ways. To reach as many of them as possible, you need to vary your teaching techniques and encourage students to attempt diverse learning strategies.

Those who research learning styles label and describe them in various ways, categorizing differences as left-brained, right-brained, rational, emotional, objective, intuitive, and so on. Our objective here is not to furnish such details but rather to alert you to ways in which students learn differently. The four types of learners listed below are described in purist terms; real people are a mix of styles. Moreover, most college-age students have probably not consciously analyzed their own learning styles and may be in the process of discovering and elaborating them. In your class you will find students with all combinations of learning styles; throughout your course recommend different study techniques and diversify your teaching style to motivate and interest students. For ideas, see the box below.

Some Learning Style Differences:

How to Respond

Visual learners best understand and remember what they see.

- ✧ They often take copious notes in class and write main ideas when studying.
- ✧ They may invent charts and diagrams to learn new information.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ✧ Offer outlines, illustrations, graphs, lists on the board, handouts, a web site.
- ✧ Allow enough time for adequate note-taking.
- ✧ Encourage students to draw or write out information they need to solve a problem, write a paper, or study for an exam.

Auditory learners prefer to hear new ideas and information.

- ✧ In class, they may whisper to themselves or to classmates to remember better.
- ✧ They may shut their eyes during a lecture to concentrate better.
- ✧ To study they may read aloud or repeat material over and over.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ✧ Suggest or assign study groups. Auditory learners can progress better when they have someone with whom to discuss the course.
- ✧ Incorporate tape recordings and films whenever practical.
- ✧ Repeat important points and/or highlight them by your tone of voice or by verbal emphasis.

Tactile learners favor touching objects to feel their shape or texture.

- ✧ Strongly tactile learners often major in subjects that allow them to work with their hands.
- ✧ Those students who favor tactile learning along with other styles learn better when they can physically touch or hold items you are discussing.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ✧ When possible, let students touch artifacts, original documents, and so on.
- ✧ Pass magazines, photographs, coins, etc. around the class to permit a close-up look and feel.

Kinesthetic learners learn best when engaging in a physical activity.

- ✧ They may trace the outline of a geometric form.
- ✧ They may connect certain body movements with specific ideas.
- ✧ The physical act of note-taking may help them remember.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ✧ Encourage students to move into pairs or small groups for classroom discussions.
- ✧ If possible, offer students the chance to operate a piece of equipment or to participate in an experiment.
- ✧ Consider whether you can make a point by having students move around the class. During a debate, have students sit on the side of the room symbolizing their pro or con position. During discussions, have students stand when articulating a point of view or paraphrasing the main idea of a text.
- ✧ Incorporate field trips or site visits when appropriate and possible.

No matter how good your rapport with students, you may find they occasionally frustrate you by lack of preparation, habitual tardiness, whispering during class, inattention, and so on. Whatever the trouble, confront it immediately.

✧ Privately, tell the students involved that you see a difficulty.

✧ Describe it from your point of view, being sure to describe the behavior objectively and avoid labeling the students: for instance, say, “I’ve noticed that you’ve arrived every day five to ten minutes late for the past week,” rather than, “It’s irresponsible to come late to class.”

✧ Ask for the students’ perspective and listen to the response; students may be truly surprised that certain conduct bothers you or may have an excellent reason for it.

Usually when you address problems directly and make clear your desires, students comply with them. Hoping a problem goes away is the surest way to keep it—and raise your blood pressure. If you find yourself in a quandary or if you feel that students are purposely trying to offend you, consult with your supervisor, a colleague, or TRC staff. What you deem offensive (for instance, feet on chair, eating during class, or dressing very casually, especially during hot weather) may not be consciously insolent behavior. Today, American eighteen-year-old students have a generally informal attitude about class attendance, sometimes confusing not only teachers from other countries but also American teachers from different regions, school environments or social backgrounds.

Sometimes, too, you and your students will misunderstand each other. You need to recognize puzzlement and resolve it immediately:

✧ If you realize that you don’t understand a student’s comment or question, be honest and say, “I’m sorry, I don’t understand. Could you please repeat (or rephrase) your remark / question?” Or ask whether another student can rephrase; sometimes you’re not the only one who doesn’t understand. Take the time to find out what the student truly has to say.

✧ If you don’t know the answer to a question, be honest (and earn students’ respect). If the answer is factual, find it before the next meeting. If it requires thought, you might ask students to prepare proposed solutions for the next meeting.

✧ If a question is irrelevant or inappropriate, offer to discuss it after class when you can ask questions to discover what lack of comprehension or attention provoked it.

✧ If students do not understand you because of accents or different expectations, you might clarify your point with one of these techniques:

- Rephrase the information.
- Use examples or an analogy that might relate to students’ experiences.
- Write on the board or screen, or act something out.
- Ask specific questions to discover the source of the misunderstanding.
- If misunderstanding happens more than a few times, figure out how you can be more clear and better organized. A friend, colleague, or TRC staff member can watch you teach or videotape your class so you can analyze classroom interactions (see “Analyzing and Improving Your Teaching”).

✧ Finally, at times you may not know whether your students comprehend you. Students don’t often admit a lack of understanding nor do they respond when you ask if everything is clear. But bewilderment will manifest itself in body language; look for puzzled expressions, lack of response, students’ talking with each other. Make sure you allot plenty of time and opportunities for students’ questions; at the conclusion of important class segments, pause and look around the room to allow students enough time to formulate questions, and



consider using an appropriate classroom assessment technique to gauge students' understanding (see "Evaluating Students' Learning").

The best way to communicate a profound respect for each individual is to assume from the beginning, both implicitly and explicitly, that students are capable of learning and of contributing to each other's learning.

—Bill McAllister, History

Hostile or Harassing Students

Occasionally you may encounter a hostile or aggressive student whose behavior affects the entire class dynamic. This can be particularly problematic for those new to teaching. While you may feel tempted to tolerate distressing behavior in order to create an open environment for discussion, do not simply ignore the situation. Allowing hostile behavior can create an uncomfortable classroom environment that inhibits others from speaking openly. Such behavior includes vulgar or abusive language, sexist and racist remarks, persistent and conscious lack of respect, and/or questioning of your authority.

You should inform the Office of the Dean of Students (924-7133) when a student behaves inappropriately in any way. In addition, you can take suitable steps to control the situation, either at that moment during class or in private. In class, you can help students rephrase remarks to express their ideas without hindering discussion. Encourage other students to respond while continuing to direct the discussion; never allow a debate to escalate beyond control. In private, you can often be more direct, telling the student that his or her behavior has made some students uncomfortable in class. Finally, particularly if your course involves sensitive topics, you can emphasize at the beginning of the course that it is important to be aware of others' experiences.

Professionalism

Professional conduct involves many qualities that we assume you already practice: honesty, fairness, respect for students, dependability, maturity, and so on. But it also requires certain actions specific to the academic setting.

Discretion

Discretion and good judgment must come into play in your relationship with your department, colleagues, and supervisor or chairperson. Be circumspect in your public comments about your department and colleagues. Students frequently ask which TA is the best in

the next course in the sequence or which faculty member is the most interesting or sympathetic. Fight the urge to confide in your students, but tell them the facts: for instance, the instructor's area of specialization or amount of experience. Of course, honest and positive comments are always welcome.

You may not always agree with departmental or course policies or the textbook chosen in a multi-section course; when you have strong feelings, work to change matters rather than complaining to your students. If, as a TA, you believe you should have more input in decisions that affect you, work through your departmental graduate student representatives to make improvements. If, as a faculty member, you believe a departmental committee has set an inappropriate requirement, talk with the chair of the committee rather than complaining to the students or to colleagues.

Confidentiality

In a similar manner, information about your students' work and your evaluation of it should be kept between you, the student, and, when appropriate, the student's academic dean or advisor. Since students can now gain access to their final grades electronically, do not post them publicly. And, although it can be immensely helpful to discuss individual students' situations with colleagues, keep the student's name in confidence and discuss only the events, your reactions to them, or questions about them. This also applies to information that may come to you regarding a student who is experiencing personal difficulties. In all cases, maintain confidentiality while steering students toward finding the help they need. The following sections offer advice on negotiating this delicate balance.

Besides the first degree of eminence in science, a professor with us must be of sober and correct morals and habits, having the talent of communicating and peaceable temper. The latter is all important for the harmony of the institution.

— Thomas Jefferson, letter to Dugald Stewart, April 26, 1824

Defining Your Role as a Teacher

Along with confidentiality and discretion, professionalism means the ability to juggle several roles: instructor, scholar/student, administrator, advisor, colleague, supervisor, mentor, protégé. Combining roles can be especially difficult for TAs, who add the responsibilities of instructor or grader to their graduate student status, and for beginning assistant professors, who teach graduate students shortly after having been one.

If you find yourself in either position (or if you have the benefit of looking younger than you are), avoid

inadvertently setting yourself up for difficulties by dressing like, behaving like, or socializing with your students. Sometimes such behavior stems from an effort to be non-hypocritical (if you *are* a student, after all, why not act like one?) or from a certain insecurity about this new role (“What, me teach? What do I know?”). In any case, acting like your students or trying to be too familiar with them may well undermine your authority for the entire semester. The closer in age to your students you are or appear to be, the more you should avoid students’ habits and dress. Dressing even more professionally than older faculty will go a long way toward making you feel professional, and students will accept the University’s inherent endorsement of you as an authority figure.

The question of teacher-student relationships becomes even more troublesome when it involves the possibilities of friendship or dating. Sometimes TAs or faculty members wish to develop personal relationships that can create various conflicts of interest. If an instructor were to develop a friendship or romantic involvement with a student outside of class, not only would the instructor’s role as teacher and evaluator be jeopardized, but the other students might feel that the instructor could no longer be impartial. Depending on the specific circumstances, the student could assume sexual harassment despite the instructor’s best intentions. Thus such relationships fall under the University’s Conflict of Interest policy and are to be avoided. (See Appendix II for policy web sites.) If you find yourself desiring to know one of your students more personally, wait until the semester ends and grades have been submitted.

Similarly, you may find that you have potentially problematic ties with a student in your class: for instance, someone from your home town or a student who contested a grade in a former course. Most likely you are the best person to judge whether a problem awaits you. If it does, and if the course has multiple sections, arrange for the student to transfer. If impossible, be sure your students know that you grade work blindly, without names, as suggested in the section on evaluating students’ work. You might also ask a colleague to confirm your assessment of the work of that student and of several others.

I want my students to know that biology is not about committing facts to memory—it is an active, ever changing field. In short, I view my teaching as an extension of my research and graduate training, rather than as a task conflicting with the pursuit of my dissertation research.

—Jennifer Secki-Shields, Biology

Teaching a Diverse Student Body

Our student body is comprised of a diverse group of graduate and undergraduate students from a wide variety of ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Significant numbers of African American, Asian and Asian American, Hispanic, international, and gay/lesbian/bisexual students diversify our student community. Although students within a particular minority group may have a common racial, ethnic, or cultural identity, their experiences and backgrounds differ. Thus these individuals exhibit a diversity of attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about themselves and the world. There is, of course, no monolithic perspective for any group of people.

Yet being part of a minority group may have a strong impact on students’ classroom interaction and performance. Thus, although race is not normally a consideration with respect to imparting knowledge about specific disciplines, awareness of race can affect students’ comfort level in class, their active participation, and their perception of their status within the class. Minority students frequently speak of feeling isolated or spotlighted on the basis of their race. When they feel this way in a class in which they are underrepresented, their perceptions may affect their performance. The TRC’s handbook, *Teaching a Diverse Student Body*, offers many practical ideas about how you can work toward creating a classroom climate conducive to learning. Here are a few brief tips:

- ✧ Treat all students as individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Despite good intentions motivated by awareness of a minority perspective, making assumptions or generalizations about an individual’s experience or perspective can create problems and should be avoided.

- ✧ Make efforts to ensure that your treatment of students in and out of class (including body language and interactions) are perceived as equitable and fair. For example, if you chat informally with students after class, provide the same opportunity for informal contact with all your students. In addition, encourage students to visit you during office hours to foster good student/teacher relationships.

- ✧ Create a climate that encourages dialogue by allowing a wide range of opinions to emerge in a non-intimidating environment. Encourage students to express themselves freely.

- ✧ Vary the races and genders you use in examples, whether anecdotal or visual. Avoid stereotypes.

- ✧ During discussions, do not spotlight individual students by expecting them to articulate the “minority

perspective” or by calling on them particularly when topics involve issues of race or an ethnic, cultural point of view. Establish a fair way to involve all students in discussions.

✧ In large lecture classes, notice where minority students sit, establishing eye contact with them and asking them to participate equally.

✧ Assign class projects and design study groups to involve students equally in groups without feeling that they are imposing. Minority students sometimes find it difficult to be invited into groups and may be overlooked by other students when working on class projects.

✧ If you are a member of a minority group, be aware that students’ perceptions or expectations of you may be stereotyped or unreasonable. Model the behavior that you wish them to emulate: expect them to

Sources of Errors in Problem Solving

Inaccurate reading. The student:

- reads without concentrating on meaning.
- skips unfamiliar words.
- loses some facts or ideas.
- doesn’t reread a difficult section.
- starts to work the problem before reading all the material.

Inaccurate thinking. The student:

- doesn’t value accuracy above speed or ease of completing the work.
- doesn’t take enough care in performing some operations.
- interprets words or performs operations inconsistently.
- doesn’t check or review unfamiliar or unclear procedures.
- works too rapidly.
- draws conclusions without sufficient thought.

Analyzes problems poorly. The student:

- doesn’t divide a complex problem into parts; doesn’t use the simpler parts to understand the harder ones.
- doesn’t use prior knowledge and experience to make sense of unclear ideas.
- doesn’t use the dictionary when necessary.
- doesn’t construct a useful representation of ideas on paper when necessary.

Lacks perseverance. The student:

- lacks confidence and gives up easily.
- chooses an answer after only superficially considering the problem.
- solves the problem mechanically, without much thought.
- reasons through part of the problem and jumps to a conclusion about the rest.
- tries one way to solve the problem and gives up if that one doesn’t work.

(Adapted from Whimbey and Lochhead, 1980)

Training Students to Solve Problems

You can help by training the student to solve problems more effectively. Orient your help session around how the student thinks about the problem rather than how you would go about solving it. You must elicit the student’s thinking so that you can teach better problem-solving procedures. To encourage students to reflect about the process and let you in on it, try the following techniques:

✧ Have students read the problem aloud and tell you how it can be solved before working on it.

✧ Ask students to “think aloud” while solving the problem, constantly talking about what they are doing and why. Doing so slows down their thinking and makes the process more apparent to you. You can help them analyze their reasoning and find their mistakes by asking specific questions about their approach to or understanding of the problem. Use some of these questions to help students clarify their thinking:

- Tell me what you know about the problem.
- How could you break the problem into small steps?
- What are some ways you could solve this problem?
- Please tell me how you got from step one to step two.
- I don’t understand your reasoning behind that step; will you please explain?
- What are you thinking right now?

✧ When students are very confused, you may need to model good problem-solving techniques, showing how you read and understand a question before working the problem. If necessary, show the student your process for solving the problem: working step-by-step, backing up when necessary, breaking a complex problem into parts, trying a new method when one doesn’t work, etc. After modeling the process, have the student work a similar problem to demonstrate understanding of the process.

(Adapted with permission from the *University of Michigan TA Guidebook*, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, Ann Arbor, Michigan, n.d.)

respect your right to be yourself, as you in turn respect their rights of individuality.

Without good student responses, teaching has no chance. With good student response, its possibilities for satisfaction and accomplishment are almost without limit.

—Norman Graebner, History

Students with Difficulties

Students may come to you with not only academic, but also personal problems. In all situations, know your limits; you are (most likely) not a trained psychologist, and you should not assume a counseling responsibility. You can, however, be a concerned helper or provide a

referral when professional assistance is warranted. If you are unsure about how to help, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CAPS). No matter what type of difficulty the student is experiencing—academic, personal, or substance abuse-related—you need to follow up to see whether the problem has been addressed, thus reaffirming your concern for the student. A note in your appointment book will help you remember.

Academic Difficulties

One of our most challenging yet satisfying jobs as teachers involves helping students succeed in learning a subject even when they have substantial difficulties. When students approach you with concerns (or when you approach students), first identify the scope of the problem. Is the student having difficulty in your class only or in other classes as well? Does the student have problems with your class in general or only with specific aspects of your class: for example, does the student do well on tests, but writes poor papers? Once you identify the boundaries of the problem, take appropriate steps such as those outlined below:

A student having difficulties in several classes should be in contact with the appropriate academic advisor and association dean (for College students). If you want to help directly, consider these ideas:

✧ Has the student taken on too much: too many credit hours, too many extracurricular activities, too demanding a job? If so, help the student identify something to put on hold or eliminate.

✧ Help the student manage time efficiently (see “Time Management”).

If the student is having trouble in your class in particular:

✧ Work with the student individually for at least half an hour, asking specific questions about material covered recently and not so recently. Ask probing questions about how and when the student studies and what parts of the course are most difficult. Look for signs of emotional distress or a specific learning disability (see “Teaching Students with Disabilities”).

✧ Ascertain whether the student has adequate background in the subject or should be enrolled in a prerequisite or lower-level course.

✧ If the student has trouble *solving problems*, you need to discover the source(s) of the difficulty, even though simply having the solution may seem the student’s goal. Students cannot solve problems for a

variety of reasons; if your course involves much problem solving, familiarize yourself with the sources and types of problem-solving errors below.

✧ If the student’s difficulties emerge primarily on *tests*, look for a pattern in the incorrect items. Are they mostly from the reading, the lecture, or discussion or lab section? Do errors appear in multiple-choice items or essays? Does the student repeatedly run out of time? Use test results and students’ performance to redirect your methodology, your directions, or your explanations when necessary.

- If responses to *course reading* are problematic, ask to see the student’s textbook; if *in-class information* has been misunderstood, check class notes. Do the student’s highlighting and note-taking indicate awareness of what information is essential and what is peripheral?
- If *multiple-choice questions* are troublesome, make sure the student is reading all the items and can distinguish among distractors.
- If *essays* are the problem, can the student identify major themes and relate them to each other and to broader issues? If not, you can help develop these skills by soliciting a two- or three-sentence description of themes following each lecture, discussion, or reading assignment.
- If a student *always runs out of time*, he or she may not have sufficient command of the material to summarize facts quickly, or may previously have been rewarded for verbosity rather than conciseness, or may have a learning disability that slows processing time. If, during your conversation, you find that the student grasps the subject matter, contemplate the possibility of a specific processing problem (see “Teaching Students with Disabilities”). If the student’s test tells you everything known about the subject, show how to improve the answer, or provide sample answers that present necessary information concisely.

✧ If the student’s difficulties emerge primarily on *writing assignments*, investigate whether the student has misunderstood the assignment or has more general writing/research deficiencies. Ask for a description of the assignment in the student’s own words. The student can perhaps write well but is unaware of your expectations; if so, evaluate your instructions. For example, if you expect a logical argument, explicitly state, “This assignment requires a logical argument,” and explain what that involves (a clarification that is often necessary in lower-level courses). Some students do not transfer skills learned in writing classes to other disciplines: One

student responded to instructions to “tell me what you’re going to tell me, tell me, and then tell me what you have told me” with, “Oh, I do that all the time for my English papers. I didn’t know that’s what you wanted.”

If the student has not misunderstood the assignment, try to determine whether the difficulties result from deficiencies in research, organizational, or grammatical skills. A student with poor research skills may not know where to find material, how to use the required reference system, or how much material is expected. A student who has problems organizing may not know how to develop an idea, what types of questions to ask, or what constitutes adequate support or refutations. To help, require outlines of subsequent papers before final drafts, and recommend the Writing Center (924-6678) and/or another writing course.

❖ If you are dissatisfied with students’ *class participation*, determine confidentially what’s holding them back. Most often they will tell you: they are shy, they don’t like to discuss or, perhaps, their cultural heritage discourages such activity. For instance, some Asian and Arab women believe it rude to meet the eyes of an authority figure. Your teaching style may inadvertently put off some students, particularly those of the opposite gender. For example, a non-confrontational style of interaction can offend some men, who interpret a blanket acceptance of their comments as an insult, believing that a quality comment demands a counter-comment. Similarly, some women may hesitate to risk potential humiliation from a teacher who employs the more confrontational approach on which some people thrive (Tannen, 1991).

When students don’t participate, ask them individually how you can help. Some students speak comfortably in class when called upon or when giving a scheduled presentation, but hesitate to volunteer. If skills related to oral participation are mandatory for your course or for individual students’ future careers (for business/marketing majors, for instance), help your students develop them.

If oral participation skills are not essential, encourage students to be active in class in other ways: for example, by submitting potential discussion topics a few days prior to class or by preparing for classmates a written summary of the pros and cons of a controversial topic. Students who approach you about this problem are generally eager to find solutions.

When problems seem serious, consider referring the student to the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center for help. If in doubt, call LNEC (243-5180).

I continue to seek a balance between telling students things and asking students to make discoveries themselves, between asserting my control and allowing students to take genuine responsibility for what occurs in the classroom.

—Jessica Feldman, English

Personal Difficulties

Students who solicit your help with personal difficulties do so because they trust you and believe that you care enough to listen. Often, good listening is sufficient to help students toward their own solutions. Here are some tips to help you be an effective listener while still maintaining an appropriate teacher-student relationship:

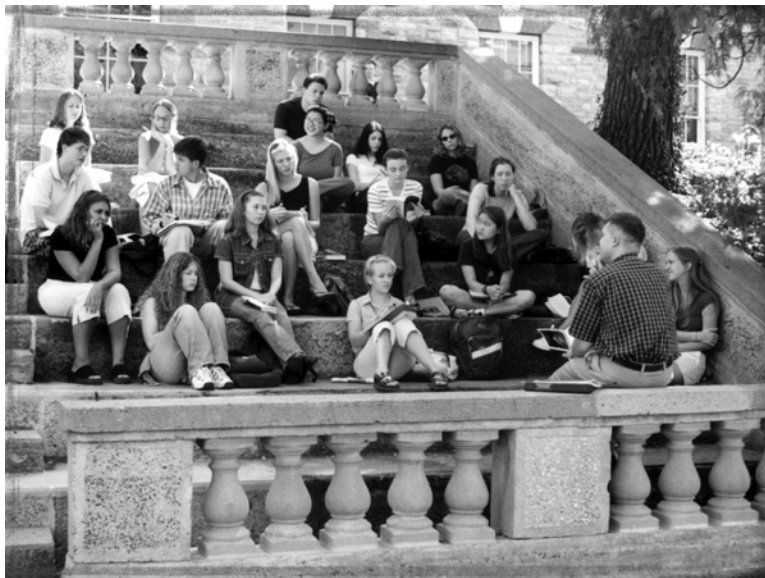
❖ *Clarify your role as instructor, not counselor.*

Whenever students or teachers disclose personal information, role conflicts may occur. If the student sees you as an authority figure, you may feel obliged to give advice, advice that may be unwanted or not in the student’s best interest. If the student sees you as a peer, you might find it difficult to act objectively as a teacher/evaluator.

❖ *Don’t pry.* Let the student decide how much to reveal about the problem.

❖ *Clarify the concerns.* After the student has described the problem, rephrase the main aspects of the situation, helping the student define primary concerns.

❖ *Offer support.* Often rephrasing the emotions the student has expressed (either explicitly or implicitly) is



Classes in the amphitheater are popular on pleasant days.

enough to let the student feel heard, understood, and supported: for example, “So you are feeling betrayed by your roommate?” Other situations merit more explicit expressions of your regard for the student and your perceptions of the student’s competence.

✧ *Help the student generate potential courses of action and select possible solutions.* When a student seems unable to generate plausible solutions, suggest some as a model; but do not assume responsibility for choosing a solution. Remember that the best helpers help students help themselves.

✧ *Be sensitive about referrals.* To some people, the suggestion that they see a professional counselor is stigmatizing. Demystify the process by emphasizing that recognizing one’s need for help is a sign of strength, not weakness, and by explaining that many people seek counseling occasionally. If a student seems ambivalent about making an appointment, simplify the procedure by writing down the phone number of the Office of the Dean of Students, Counseling and Psychological Services, or Learning Needs and Evaluation Center, or by telephoning yourself for basic information.

Sexual Harassment or Assault

Both male and female students can become victims of sexual harassment. Although you cannot always foresee when a topic will touch on a sensitive subject, it is important to be aware that a student’s emotional reaction to seemingly innocuous classroom discussions can be the result of traumatic past experiences.

A student who has experienced significant trauma, either in the past or recently, or been the victim of sexual harassment, may seek you out for advice and/or support. Although, as noted above, you are probably not qualified as a counselor in such situations, you can have a significant impact as a listener or referral source. The following are a few suggestions for handling such situations:

✧ In the case of sexual harassment, reassure the student that the University has a policy prohibiting sexual harassment and that the victim’s wishes as to how to handle the situation will be taken into account. The Equal Opportunity Programs Office or the Sexual Assault Education Office can provide detailed information on how to file a complaint either on or off-Grounds. Filing a formal complaint will allow the University to take action against the harasser, if appropriate, and can protect others from experiencing the same behavior. Persons who file a complaint in good faith are protected from retaliation.

✧ Express your willingness to listen non-judgmentally and assist in any way you can.

✧ Determine whether or not immediate action needs to be taken; does the student feel in danger? Is medical attention necessary? This is a priority if the assault was recent.

✧ Listen without suggesting explanations or providing excuses. Validate feelings. Say: “That must be hard to talk about....”

✧ Avoid making decisions even if the student seems confused. Ask questions about what he or she would like to have done. In the case of harassment, suggest steps they can take to make it clear the behavior is unwelcome and that it should stop. Be flexible and supportive if work or class performance has been affected.

✧ Follow up to see if the situation persists or has been repeated.

Substance Abuse Problems

Alcohol or drug abuse can, of course, seriously affect students’ academic progress as well as their personal well-being. As an instructor interested in educating the entire person, you have an important role to play should you suspect that a student has a substance abuse problem. You can help that student receive crucial help.

How do you know that one of your students needs help with a substance abuse problem? Although a student’s roommate or friend might approach you, most likely the student’s classroom behavior will alert you to abuse if you know the signals and pay attention to them. “Red flags” include tardiness, multiple absences, inconsistent performance, talk of substance use or abuse in class, apparent loss of ethical values, overreaction in ambiguous situations, and behavior that is grandiose, aggressive, belligerent, or passive and withdrawn. If you suspect that a student is abusing a controlled substance, you should do the following:

✧ Become knowledgeable by calling the Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse Education (924-5276) and/or the Office of Health Promotion (924-1509), and help the student’s roommates and friends who have approached you become knowledgeable. We cannot begin to tell you here everything you should know.

✧ Don’t assume that someone else will do something. Others may be thinking the same thing. Moreover, the student may need to be confronted several times before recognizing or admitting a problem.

✧ If you confront a student, be nonjudgmental but persistent. Stick to observable facts and show you

care. Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements: say, “I am concerned about you,” not “You are ruining your life.”

✧ Never “enable” by giving extensions, allowing make-up tests, or sparing the student the consequences of the abuse.

✧ In the unlikely event that a student approaches you to discuss a substance abuse problem, make a referral. Encourage a visit to either Student Health or the Counseling and Psychological Service Center (CAPS).

For more details, see the brochure “Recognizing and Assisting Students in Distress: A Guide for Faculty and Teaching Assistants.”

Discussing Alcohol with Students

In recent years the University has taken steps to reduce the prevalence of abusive drinking on Grounds, including initiating the University-wide Task Force on Alcohol Abuse (1997-8). The problem is in some part perpetuated by a tradition and culture that condones excessive drinking habits. As a faculty member or teaching assistant you can foster responsible attitudes toward alcohol use and avoid inadvertently enabling the “drinking culture” through your own behavior and language. Here are some suggestions:

✧ Whenever possible, encourage student participation in cultural, non-alcohol-related activities in the Charlottesville/Albemarle area.

✧ Suggest meetings at coffeehouses on the Corner (University Avenue) rather than at bars.

✧ Bear in mind that even casual remarks, such as that all students “party,” can serve to normalize alcohol use by reinforcing the misperception that “everyone drinks anyhow.” Not every student engages in excessive or risky drinking behavior, and a significant minority of students do not drink at all. Blanket statements dismissing students as irresponsible drinkers support those who are and alienate those who use alcohol in moderation or not at all.

✧ In the classroom, use serious situations as teachable moments, incorporating alcohol-related issues into the class discussion when appropriate. Active debate allows students to explore and evaluate their own attitudes toward alcohol use. At the same time, stress that alcohol is a drug and the consequences of misusing it are often harmful.

Students really want their instructors to succeed, to be engaging, humorous, wise, and informative. They will do everything within their power to draw these qualities out of us if given some indication that these qualities are there to be tapped.

—Dennis Proffitt, Psychology

Teaching Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities at the University constitute a population as diverse as the total student body. As intelligent and academically prepared as other students at U.Va., they clearly have special needs that may require your knowledge and understanding as well as the support of the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center (LNEC) (243-5180). Disabilities include those related to chronic health conditions (for example, diabetes, HIV positive, sickle cell anemia), neurological conditions (such as seizure disorders and head injuries), and specific learning disabilities (for instance, dysgraphia, dyslexia, dyslogia). Some students have psychiatric disorders or emotional problems resulting from childhood sexual abuse, arrested addictions, and biochemical imbalances. A few students have vision or hearing deficits or mobility impairments, including temporary ones due to sports injuries.

Constraints

As an instructor, you need to understand that simply managing any disability drains students of time and energy, and their health routines are critically important. Disabilities also interfere with daily living skills. Some students with disabilities cannot take notes while trying to listen; others cannot read at a rate commensurate with their general intelligence. Still others have great difficulty simply getting work on paper (trouble with eye-hand coordination, apraxia, arthritis, or prostheses). The same problems you see in class sometimes mean that they repeatedly get lost or cannot drive because they cannot coordinate information from several senses quickly enough. Students with disabilities may have low self-concepts or be socially isolated. And, of course, students with disabilities also encounter generic student predicaments: perfectionism, pressures associated with family expectations, family responsibilities, and so on.

Reading what sounds like a litany of problems may provoke in you one of the common reactions to disabilities, reactions you need to recognize if only to spot them among your non-disabled students. Some people feel awkward or flustered when near a person with a physical disability: “Should I open the door, or would that be condescending?” Others feel an overwhelming sense of pity and a need to take care of

the person. Fear is another common reaction, including the irrational fear of the same disability attacking you. Still others suspect that people with disabilities are receiving “special breaks” and aren’t pulling their own weight. Such negative feelings constitute one of the greatest constraints on people struggling to overcome disabilities.

Feelings of discomfort and prejudice toward people with disabilities disappear, however, when people get to know others as individuals. The section below explains how you can offer students with disabilities reasonable accommodations designed not to give them an unfair advantage, but rather to level the playing field. For more details, see the TRC handbook, *Teaching a Diverse Student Body*.

Accommodations

The term *reasonable accommodation* is frequently used to indicate that people with disabilities require that others be creative and flexible in adjusting to their special needs. Given a documented diagnosed disability (with information from the student’s academic dean or from the LNEC), you may need to accommodate certain students by individualizing your instruction or by changing requirements. Normally, the LNEC will suggest relevant accommodations. Although not all accommodations or techniques will work for every individual, here are some time-tested recommendations:

- ✧ Encourage your students to let you know of any disability. You are not responsible for accommodating a disability that the student does not declare or that you cannot verify.

- ✧ If a student with a physical disability takes your course, be sure that your classroom is accessible and comfortable for a person in a wheelchair. If a classroom change is necessary, you should hear from the student’s dean.

- ✧ Hearing-impaired people who read lips lose out if you turn away from them. Make an effort to speak distinctly; men with beards are especially difficult to understand. If an interpreter accompanies the student, speak directly to the student, not to the interpreter.

- ✧ Make written information available in another format for a blind student, such as reading what you’re writing on the board or narrating demonstrations.

- ✧ Some disabilities cause erratic class attendance, which may be offset if the student has class notes or tape recordings. If irregular participation precludes such a student’s completion of the course, consult with the student’s dean.

- ✧ Sometimes students cannot meet due dates because of a disability. Negotiate reasonable schedules for completing work and record them for all parties involved. When timed quizzes and exams present problems, consider sensible alternatives. In courses like accounting, however, where time is a defensible standard because of professional or licensure expectations, any student must meet the time standard in order to succeed in the course. Extending a course into a second semester has been allowed and may be an option.

- ✧ Interpersonal problems can result from neurological impairments. A student with short-term memory deficits may report never having received a particular instruction. When you know of short-term auditory deficits, make sure the student receives all expectations in writing.

- ✧ A student with perceptual deficits may not process an event as others do, may miss the main point in reading, may write an excellent response to a question quite unlike the one asked, or may make a discussion contribution from left field. The LNEC can help you discover whether such behavior is due to a disability and can provide reader services and/or social training for such students.

- ✧ A learning disability often means that a student learns better some ways than others. Some students think very well but have trouble with rote tasks. Others do poorly in lecture classes until they complete enough hands-on labs to understand concepts thoroughly. Some cannot visualize well and need someone else to draw for them until they learn compensatory skills. Others cannot easily interpret visual material and must go through a lengthy language translation to interpret graphs and charts or depend on someone else. Consider it a challenge to find new ways for such students to master your course material, and refer to LNEC staff for assistance (see also “Learning Styles”).

- ✧ Students with disabilities sometimes need individualized test formats. Some students cannot perceive the author’s intent in multiple-choice items but may be able to argue pro and con for each possible yet incorrect answer. Others have difficulty finding words to fill in blanks but can give the necessary answers in an open-ended format. Others have extensive problems organizing written language.

Experience has shown that students with disabilities are among the most industrious and motivated U.Va. students and that they complete degrees more dependably than do students in general, although some must take longer than average to finish. With reasonable understanding and accommodation on your part, these students meet degree standards, enter professions, and

succeed in graduate and professional programs. By taking a role in their accomplishment, you can emphasize the *able* in “disabled.”

Education has for its object the formation of character.

—Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, 1851

Academic / Social Calendar

Certainly, you plan and conduct your course with the expectation that students will be present and attentive at all classes. Still, you should be prepared for the impact on students’ lives of some social events and academic deadlines (schedules are available from the office of your dean).

Academic Schedule

Add / Drop. In most departments, students may change courses or sections through the University Registrar’s Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) either on-line or by telephone during the first two weeks of the semester. You can discover which students are enrolled in your course any time by requesting an automatic e-mail copy of your current class list from uvai@virginia.edu. You need to know the five-digit schedule number of your course and your four-digit instructor number. You may request up to three course rolls at a time, but you must list each course on a separate line. For example:

To: uvai@virginia.edu

Subject: classrolls

Message: schedule=12345 instructor=2707

You can also get enrollment information through Instructional Toolkit (<http://toolkit.virginia.edu>). In

any case, you will receive the registrar’s “official” class list about four weeks into the semester.

Expect your class to be in a state of flux for as long as two weeks. Combat this confusion, and avoid students’ claims of never having heard about an assignment, by distributing the syllabus and course requirements to all students who enter your class during this period. Even if this material is on your course web site, students will understand and remember it better if you discuss it with them. Also, consider asking new students to stay a few minutes late one day at the close of the add/drop period so you can review requirements. Later in the semester compare your new class rosters with the names of students attending, and alert students to any problems.

Deadlines. Know semester deadlines for administrative procedures such as students’ changing the grading option from graded to credit/no credit or vice versa and their dropping and withdrawing from a course. Remember that students follow the rules of their home College or School, not yours. For example, your Engineering (SEAS) student may have deadlines different from those of your College of Arts and Sciences (CLAS) students. (For policy web sites, see Appendix II.) Although students are expected to know these rules, they don’t always remember the details; if you do, you won’t endorse a student’s petition against faculty rules. (For details about some CLAS rules, see Appendix IV.)

Advising and pre-registration. The advising and pre-registration period occurs within the last three weeks of each semester. Students quite rightly perceive advising to be an essential part of teaching; know how to answer questions about the next course in a sequence, the “best” teachers, or their optimal course choices (see “Professionalism”). Because even unofficial advising can be time-consuming, you may want to avoid having lengthy papers or tests to grade at this time.

Orientation. Students accepted to the University of Virginia attend a Summer Orientation for two days and one night prior to their arrival in late August, and then attend a multi-day Fall Orientation. During the Summer Program, students and their parents learn about the academic and social life at the University. Students are able to receive academic advising, enroll in fall courses, familiarize themselves with Grounds, and learn what it means to be a member of the University community while also taking care of many details like getting a student ID card and e-mail account established. There is an optional Parents’ Orientation program that includes information about intellectual life at the University, student life issues, and parenting a University student. After completing Summer Orientation, students return in the fall with a greater sense of



confidence and familiarity with life at the University of Virginia.

During the Fall Orientation program, students are able to meet with faculty members and attend academic sessions that will prepare them for life in the classroom. There is a University-wide lecture presented by a distinguished faculty member, and students interact with their faculty advisers and other members of the faculty from their respective schools during a number of formal and informal sessions. There are also numerous opportunities for students to meet classmates. The entire first year is filled with events that help students become acclimated to life at the University, and the Summer and Fall Orientation programs help to begin that process.

Final exams and grades. The scheduled day and time for your course exams appear in the registrar's *Course Offering Directory*. Do not change the official exam period; include the exam day, time, and place on your syllabus, announcing that students must plan to depart *after* the exams. In most schools, exam times for individual students cannot be changed without good reason and the academic dean's approval. Final grades are due at the registrar's office within 48 hours after your exam ends. For details about giving grades of incomplete (IN) or withdrawal (W), consult the *Undergraduate Record* (see Appendix II for policy web sites).

Slumps. While certainly not official academic periods, seemingly cyclical and predictable slumps deplete some students' energy levels: for example, we tend to see more lively and industrious students in September than in January. Thus a successful first-semester activity may need spice to elicit the same excitement in the second semester. Similarly, long rainy spells or wintry weather during "official spring" can dampen students' enthusiasm, and some fourth-year students seem to slump with "senioritis" during the entire school year. While you cannot always prevent such declines in energy and may feel them yourself, consider that they—and not your teaching—might be producing a suddenly droopy class.

I ask my students to open their minds, believe that they are capable of not just solving physics problems, but of developing the skills to face any challenge presented to them in life. I encourage them to set high standards for themselves, to reach goals beyond their furthest expectations. I advocate that it isn't super-intelligence that one requires, but the willingness to train one's mind to think effectively.

—Supriya Jaiswal, Physics

Social Events

The social aspects of an undergraduate's personal development during college should not be denied; as an instructor, however, you must uphold the rigor of your course and maintain your announced policies. Be aware of major U.Va. social events sponsored by Greek and non-Greek student organizations. Rush, pledging, and Foxfield are explained below. Remember that social development is no excuse for inadequate academic performance. Students who choose to place their social lives above their academic progress must live with the consequences of that choice.

Fraternities and sororities. During the first month of the spring semester, fraternities and sororities hold parties almost every night for a period of three weeks. During this "rush" period, individual students decide whether to join a specific fraternity or sorority, and the Greek organizations select new members. A highly stressful, time-consuming period for many students, rush seems to some more important than academic pursuits.

Following rush, students who have received and accepted bids (invitations) to join a Greek organization become "pledges." Pledging activities serve as initiation rites, in which these students often perform a variety of activities at all hours of the day and night. Like rush parties, pledging can leave students too exhausted to concentrate and sometimes renders them physically unable to attend class. Although it may be tempting to take pity on students who have missed class "through no fault of their own," let such students know that they face the same consequences as any student who misses a test, deadline, or a class meeting when attendance counts towards the grade. If you have problems because of pledging, call the Inter-Fraternity Council (243-2396) or the Inter-Sorority Council (924-3056) for the name of the appropriate faculty advisor.

Foxfield. The Foxfield horse races form an important part of many undergraduates' social calendars, as they generally require extensive planning and shopping for formal attire and tail-gate party provisions. Foxfield occurs the last Sunday in September and the last Saturday in April.

Throughout the year, planned and unplanned student-oriented events take place: a popular student may be in a fatal car crash, or students may picket the Rotunda for a cause. Because some students respond passionately to such occurrences, you should be aware of them and sensitive to students' feelings about them. Besides, prominent issues make great lecture examples or discussion lead-ins. To keep abreast of what's happening, consult *The Cavalier Daily* (on the web at <http://www.cavalierdaily.com/>).

Writing Letters of Recommendation

Early in your career, you may be surprised the first time a student asks you to write a letter of recommendation (it seems just yesterday that you were asking for letters). Be assured, however, that your academic career has prepared you for this task. A letter of recommendation is basically a short essay, complete with thesis and supporting evidence; you can prepare and write it much as you would construct any paper in which you persuade your reader toward a stated position. Here are some tips:

✧ Clarify the assignment. Ask the student for detailed information about the desired position or academic program, as well as for a stamped, addressed envelope. If possible, read the application form to learn exactly how the request for recommendations is worded and when it is due. Some program guidelines request information about the applicant's character; others emphasize the applicant's academic performance. If you are unfamiliar with the letter format, ask colleagues for anonymous copies of their letters or stop by the TRC for a sample or for additional "how-to" guides. Follow the recommended length; if none, normally limit yourself to no more than one or one-and-a-half single-spaced pages.

✧ Research the "topic" thoroughly by asking the student for all relevant academic records, copies of successful papers, and lists of honors, internships, volunteer work, extra-curricular activities, and career goals. You want to hear anything that will help you know the student or remind you about your previous relationship. Interview any student you don't know well, paying special attention to social skills and personality. Be sure to ask for suggestions about what to include in the letter; the answer will give you more insights and may focus the letter for you. If necessary, ask colleagues about their experiences with the student.

✧ Formulate a thesis and support it with specific examples: for example, "Sharon's thirst for knowledge will make her a coveted prospective graduate student for your department. I once found her working in the lab after midnight; she said that she'd been about to fall asleep when she'd come up with a hypothesis she just had to test."

✧ Interpret objective data. Not all 3.8 GPAs are equivalent. Some students make these grades in honors' courses, others by stacking their schedules with easier courses. Comment on the student's academic career.

✧ Be precise in your interpretation: "Phil was fifth in a class of 103" tells the recipient much more than, "Phil is an excellent student."

✧ Go beyond the objective data. Letter recipients probably already have objective measures of the student's capabilities and look to you for the subjective, anecdotal information not reflected in a transcript. In particular, they seek an evaluation of the student's personal virtues: Is the student organized, trustworthy, persistent, thorough? Particularly gifted in social skills, written or oral communication, or analytical thinking? Mature, with the sense of humor necessary for the job? Some positions require particular personal qualities; thus some recipients scan letters for these. Make your student memorable to the reader: lots of students make the dean's list, fewer defend their English honor's thesis from the perspective of Milton.

✧ If you have a particular respect or even fondness for the student, express this: for example, "I think back to the day Charlotte begged me to let her into my overcrowded class—I'd do it in an instant now," or "James tries to learn something from everyone, even from those with whom he disagrees. In this way I would like to be more like him."

✧ Note reasons for discrepancies in the student's performance if they arise from extenuating circumstances (e.g., a prolonged illness, a death in the family).

Checklist for Letters of Recommendation

Preparing to write:

Do I have:

- _____ the request for recommendations (including a stamped, addressed envelope, and due date)?
- _____ the student's academic records (including transcripts and SAT scores, with percentile ranking)?
- _____ a sample of the student's writing?
- _____ a list of the student's extracurricular activities, honors, internships and past employment, and long-term goals, including interest in the specified position?
- _____ if necessary, opinions from colleagues who also know this student?

Writing the letter:

Have I:

- _____ interpreted the student's objective records?
- _____ provided a precise quantitative description of the student's capabilities relative to those of other students?
- _____ described the student's personal virtues, particularly as they relate to the position sought?
- _____ provided anecdotal information that will make the student memorable?
- _____ conveyed my genuine respect or liking for the student?
- _____ addressed discrepancies in the student's record?

✧ Approach a letter of recommendation with the same standard of honesty that you would insist on for a published paper. Of course, this means that for some students you don't feel you can say much. So *don't*. Politely and honestly refuse as soon as you have decided, suggesting that the student make the request of someone else. Say, "I'm sorry, I don't feel as though I can write a letter that would facilitate your acceptance." It is unfair and unethical to agree to write a positive letter and then write a negative one.

✧ Keep a copy of your letter. If you keep the letter on a word processor, you can rapidly update it should the student need a new letter.

✧ Meet the necessary deadline and let the student know when the letter has been sent. If you cannot or find that you have forgotten to do so, notify both the student and the recipient of the letter. Normally, admission committees and future employers are sympathetic when contacted by the recommender.

I think we don't really teach students; we create opportunities for them to learn.

—Robert Vickery, Architecture



III. TYPICAL TEACHING SITUATIONS

SECTIONS:

Promoting Students' Intellectual Growth
 Understanding Students' Perspectives
 Teaching Students to Think Critically
 Lecturing
 Organizing Your Course
 Knowing Your Audience
 Clarifying Expectations
 Preparing Individual Lectures
 Delivering Your Lectures
 Discussions and Discussion Sections
 Setting the Stage for Interaction
 Knowing Where You Are Going
 Asking Questions and Listening
 Increasing Participation
 When Nothing Seems to Work
 Laboratory Teaching
 Preparing Labs
 In the Lab
 Visual Aids
 Case Method
 How Do You Select Cases?
 How Can You Help Students Prepare for
 Good Discussions?
 How Can You Get Them to Talk?
 What Should You Be Doing?
 What Should Happen at the End of Class?
 Some Final Advice
 Modern Foreign Language Courses
 Class Activities
 General Tips

The type of teaching that works best for you and your students depends on complex combinations of many factors: requirements of your discipline, your personality, your goals, the class size, the instructional materials you choose, and the response of your students, including their diverse levels of intellectual and cognitive development. This chapter first summarizes research on students' cognitive development, offering examples of predictable student reactions to new information and perspectives, as well as ways to help students grow intellectually. The majority of the chapter details suggestions about individual teaching methods from experienced U.Va. instructors.

For the sake of clarity, most sections are written as though you were teaching the entire class with the described method, but you can effectively mix methodologies. We encourage you to experiment: How about adding mini-lectures to a discussion of historical documents, for instance, in order to offer new perspectives or useful background information? Could you ask students to solve a problem on your web site during class? Why not encourage students to discuss solutions to a problem during lab? What would happen if you brought a case to a discussion where you usually analyze primary texts? Why not have students solve a problem or share ideas during a lecture, even if you have a

hundred students? Varying your techniques will motivate and interest students, promote development of their critical thinking skills, and help you remain excited about teaching material you know *very* well.

To get the most from this chapter, consider suggestions in the context of your course, referring to other handbook sections as recommended. In order to avoid repetition, we have placed general advice, such as teaching the first day of class, in the relevant handbook section.

Introducing students to new and challenging methods of examining that which they have come to understand as familiar prompts them to question their own implicit assumptions about the world.

—Craig Barton, Architecture

Promoting Students' Intellectual Growth

How often have you found students' comments such as these frustrating? (adapted from Perry, 1985):

- “What’s this rigmarole about three theories of the economic cycle? Why doesn’t she give us the right one and forget these games? How can we study for the exam?”
- “My roommate says *his* instructor *really* knows; maybe I should go to that section.”
- “You said three to five pages. Does that mean four? Double-spaced or single?”
- “Everyone has a right to his own opinion.”

Irritating and disturbing as such perspectives are, they are common to many young people who still believe what they learned as children: that knowledge comes from authority and if one memorizes and restates the “facts,” one will receive good grades and be educated. Because these attitudes are, in fact, normal stages of cognitive development, faculty members and TAs need to know how to help students move to higher levels of understanding and graduate as people who reflect thoughtfully, or think critically, about the world around them.

Understanding Students' Perspectives

The prominence of “critical thinking” as a buzzword during the past two decades at times threatens to overshadow the usefulness of this concept for teachers. Yet critical thinking refers to those advanced cognitive processes through which educated people

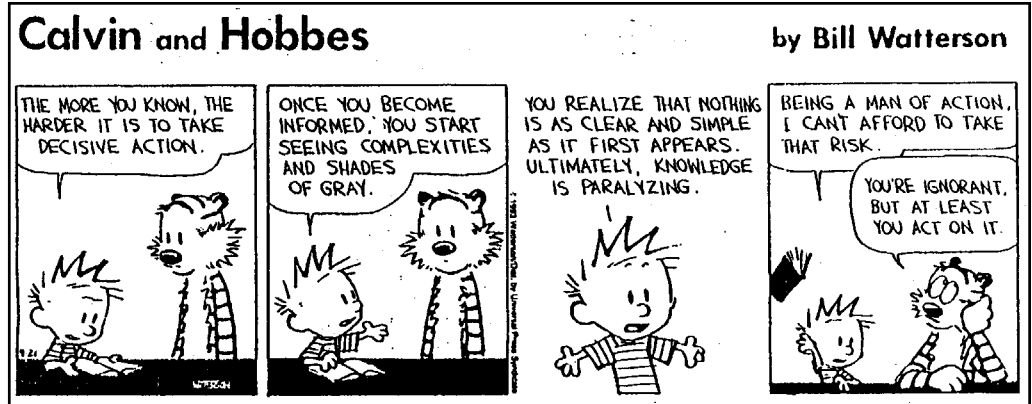
make a rational response to questions that cannot be answered definitively, a response that integrates all relevant, available information to justify conclusions (Kurfiss, 1988, p. 2). People who think critically recognize that, in effect, little in the world is absolutely known but that we need to learn all we can and make reasoned

judgments about what we believe and why. You can better encourage your students' progress to this level of intellectuality when you understand their different conceptions of knowledge. Through hundreds of interviews over many years in several different contexts, cognitive psychologists have documented young people's development through different stages, or levels, of understanding what constitutes knowledge (see especially Perry, 1970, 1981; Belenky et al., 1986). Kurfiss (1988, pp. 52-56) offers a clear overview, integrating Perry's nine "positions" and the seven ways of knowing outlined by Belenky et al.:

✧ *Stage 1: Knowledge as facts.* As some of the comments above show, many students believe that knowledge is a collection of discrete facts that one simply has to acquire from the professor or text and articulate on papers and exams. They see the professor as an authority who should give them the right answers. For such students, the concept of interpretation is puzzling, and they have no awareness of the complexity of the world.

✧ *Stage 2: Knowledge as opinion.* Students progress to this level when they have been convinced by the presence of conflicting theories, perspectives, and interpretations that one cannot always know what is right. But since they have not yet moved to a position from which they truly understand the reasons behind different points of view, they attribute them solely to personal opinions, all of which they see as equal: "I mean if you read them [critics], that's the great thing about a book like *Moby Dick*. [Laughs] *Nobody* understands it!" (Perry, 1981, p. 84). These students believe that giving one's opinion is enough and that teachers have no right to call the student "wrong" on matters of "opinion" (Perry, 1970, p. 97).

✧ *Stage 3: Knowledge as reason.* At this stage, students realize that there are indeed reasons why some opinions are better than others and that people use logic and evidence to support their arguments. In studying people who have progressed this far cognitively, Perry (1970) and Belenky and associates (1986) find



CALVIN AND HOBBES© Watterson. Reprinted with permission of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. All rights reserved.

different ways of understanding another's way of thinking. (Perry and colleagues interviewed Harvard University male undergraduates in the 1960s; in the 1980s, Belenky et al. interviewed female students and female parents.) Perry's scheme focuses on the traditional academic view that reasoning is primarily objective analysis and argument, whereas Belenky and her colleagues found that some women focus on trying to understand the reasons for another's way of thinking (hence, the term "connected knowledge"). In either case, the student realizes that "you've got to have some facts *under* the opinion, I guess" (Perry, 1981, p. 86).

✧ *Stage 4: Knowledge as commitment.* At this final stage, individuals recognize the complexity and uncertainty of knowledge while realizing their need to make commitments to reasoned positions. Perry's imaginary student sums up this stage this way: "I must be wholehearted while tentative, fight for my values yet respect others, believe my deepest values right yet be ready to learn" (1981, p. 79). Also described by Belenky and colleagues as "constructed knowledge," this stage for some people consists of integrating knowledge they learn from others with knowledge they feel intuitively is personally important: "Once knowers assume the general relativity of knowledge, that their frame of reference matters and that they can construct and reconstruct frames of reference, they feel responsible for examining, questioning, and developing the systems that they will use for constructing knowledge" (Belenky et al., 1986, pp. 138-39). In the end, critical thinkers continually question received knowledge and their own assumptions, approaching life with a spirit of inquiry.

Cognitive development research provides useful background for understanding critical thinking, but we academics have our own understanding of what it entails in our disciplines. Still, we can generally agree on several aspects of critical thinking, including many, if not all, of the following:

- it requires open-mindedness
- it proceeds from a sense of curiosity and/or inquiry

- it is self-reflective, recognizing the need to examine one's own assumptions
- it takes evidence into account
- it is logical, or ordered
- it is purposeful
- it is individual and independent
- it is tenacious, persevering in asking questions and seeking answers
- it is not averse to taking some risks
- it proceeds to develop a clear argument meant to persuade
- in fact, because critical thinking is difficult, it requires that people be willing to make the effort to do it.

Giving students insights into how you and your colleagues think critically about your discipline broadens their outlook and develops their own skills. Moreover, since Perry's (1970) study shows that students can progress at different rates in different academic disciplines, what they learn to understand in your course may well help them better grapple with new ideas in another.

Teaching Students to Think Critically

So, how can you help your students develop such habits of mind as to make them reflective, engaged citizens? First, recognize that you are not alone; advisors, academic deans, and students' peers (many of whom are at different stages of cognitive development) engage your students in situations that provoke puzzlement and growth. And know that intellectual growth is usually unsettling and upsetting, although we tend to forget that once we've arrived. Since some students resist or are angered by activities that make them question their assumptions and previous understandings, telling them the purpose of such exercises is



Two women students discussing medieval architecture.

usually helpful. Consider how to incorporate some of the recommended activities below, or create your own (for more ideas, see "Further Reading").

One of my greatest joys is to see the classroom become a vibrant intellectual community, with students and professor dynamically engaged in the animated exchange and discovery of ideas. Cooperative devices can help students to learn more by taking active responsibility for their own educations.

—Jahan Ramazani, English

✧ Encourage students' interest and their awareness of complexity by highlighting problems, issues, and topics that experts wonder about. By showing them that all is not known, you invite students to engage their minds; their own questions will open new avenues of thought to them (Meyers 1986).

✧ Design assignments that require students to argue positions not their own. Those who have difficulty understanding others' positions gain new understanding. Students who are cautiously considering embracing a position can "try it on" without taking the responsibility inherent in actual commitment.

✧ Create activities that enable students to juxtapose their current model of understanding with a better one. For instance, students who have learned an Aristotelian view of the universe will not forego it for a more accurate model until they see their theory fail (see *A Private Universe*).

✧ Emphasize change as inherent to the learning process. For instance, ask students to write briefly about how and why their perceptions about a certain issue have changed since the beginning of the course.

✧ Model the critical thinking process. For example, you might describe how you modified your position on an issue, emphasizing changes attributable to students' comments and ideas. Or, you can point out discrepancies in different texts, and explain how you came to be at ease with them. You might also ask students to point out assumptions in your thinking that you may not perceive.

✧ Remind students that embracing a position is not a lifelong commitment. With more information, they will reevaluate and change positions accordingly. Moreover, even wrong positions can lead to positive outcomes when wholeheartedly pursued.

✧ Respect and encourage each student. Students considering abandoning their family's world view may consider you a role model and need to know that you will stand by them, even if they lose familial support.

Students who do not yet trust their own thinking process (and would prefer indisputable external evidence about “truth”) are heartened by knowing that someone they respect trusts them to embrace the right position. In contrast, attacking students’ positions (no matter how narrow-minded these seem) may make them cling to biases even more tightly, impeding their intellectual development.

✧ Identify the general principle behind students’ comments and “mirror” it back to them, giving them a chance to ask, “Is that what I really believe?” and to reconsider: For example, “so you think moral principles differ in war time and peacetime?”

✧ Ask students to list and then compare the pros and cons of an issue. By juxtaposing their ideas with those of peers, they are prone to perceive some of their assumptions and might begin questioning them (Angelo and Cross, 1993).

✧ Show students that writing is, in effect, thinking: that in writing they clarify and refine their thoughts in wording them so as to communicate with others. For practical tips, see “Conceptualizing and Assigning Papers and Projects” in “Evaluating Students’ Work.”

Whether you define this issue as one of intellectual growth, reflective habits of mind, critical thinking, or thinking “like a mathematician, historian, etc.,” you and your courses are essential to helping our students achieve an advanced level of understanding and thought. Consciously teaching them *how to think* about your discipline along with *what to know* about it will help them develop into reflective, engaged members of society.

Convinced that the people are the only safe depositories of their own liberty, & that they are not safe unless enlightened to a certain degree, I have looked on our present state of liberty as a short-lived possession unless the mass of the people could be informed to a certain degree.

—Thomas Jefferson, letter to
Littleton Waller Tazewell,
January 5, 1805

Lecturing

To lecture effectively, you must know your discipline in both breadth and depth and carefully observe it and your students: lecturing consists of gathering and arranging detailed materials with sensitivity to your audience’s particular needs and interests.

Organizing Your Course

Before writing individual lectures, analyze your course, both pragmatically and theoretically. Answer the questions below to help determine the nature of your lectures: factual, polemical, provocative, integrative, or—most likely—a varying mixture.

- How many lectures will you give?
- What is the logical sequence of topics?
- What common themes and general trends will you emphasize to create coherence?
- How will the lectures relate to assignments? Will students consult primary sources or original research or learn from specialists who have already digested the material?
- How will you help students follow lectures and take notes?
- Do you want students to listen more and take fewer notes?
- How will you designate key points?
- Will you have discussion sections? If so, will you orient them around readings, videotapes, lectures, or a combination? If you are a professor working with teaching assistants, read “Working with TAs,” and “Specific TA Concerns.”

How organized you appear to students (and TAs, if any) and how comfortably you progress through the semester depend largely on how rigorously you formulate your syllabus and schedule. When first designing a course, consult with experienced colleagues about how many readings and how much detail to include. Be prepared to condense topics that warrant years of graduate research in order to illuminate the whole subject for students. As the semester goes on, note problems and necessary modifications while altering the syllabus as little as possible (changes confuse and frustrate students). Stick to what you planned to do, and incorporate your great ideas next time.

Contrary to stereotype, I think the most entertaining lectures are the most, not the least, disciplined ones. . . . A lecture should be as transparent as possible: clean, not encumbered by a host of qualifications and reservations.

—Edward Ayers, History

Knowing Your Audience

Discovering students’ backgrounds. Consider your audience as you organize individual lectures.

- What do you expect your students to know before each lecture?

- Where might they have questions, misconceptions, or confusions?
- How can you best resolve their misunderstandings and difficulties?

The more you teach the more you will know what to expect. In the meantime, predict what students will bring to the course and compare those predictions to the reality that emerges throughout the semester; you will rapidly learn to formulate reasonable expectations. See “Preparing a Course” and “The First Day of Class” for ideas about learning your students’ backgrounds.

Responding to students. The best lecturers interact with their audience, making students feel that they care about them and what they learn.

✧ Come to class early and leave late; students who might never come to your office hours will talk with you before or after class if you’re there, not barricaded behind a podium. Initiate conversations with students who arrive early.

✧ To make your material meaningful, determine how well your students follow you. Watch for negative body language (eyes focused on the middle distance, whispering, slouching) and for positive reactions (solid eye contact, nods of agreement, perplexed eyebrows). When possible, stop for questions, but don’t be sidetracked.

✧ Ask questions that require students to restate main points and draw conclusions; use rhetorical questions to provoke thinking.

✧ Finally, use an exercise like the one-minute paper to see exactly what students comprehend (see “Analyzing and Improving your Teaching”).



Angeline Lillard's Introduction to Child Psychology, with visiting three-month-old.

Preparing students. Your lectures will hit the mark more closely if students have prepared beforehand, and you can motivate study before class in several ways.

✧ In your lectures, allude to assigned material to show that you aren’t repeating information and that you expect students to be prepared (while knowing that they cannot all invariably keep on schedule).

✧ Quizzes demonstrate that you expect preparedness and usually encourage students to rate your assignments a high priority; you might choose to drop the scores on one or two to reduce anxiety.

✧ A five- or ten-minute essay in which students summarize the day’s reading and, perhaps, give their personal opinion checks comprehension (see “Evaluating Students’ Work”).

Good lecturers motivate students to study by making clear the need for basic understanding and knowledge *before* the lecture; they don’t rehash fundamentals.

I arrange my schedule so that I can remain after a lecture and talk and answer questions as long as any students are there to talk with me. This is a very important signal to them that I care about them. It’s also a very important time of feedback for me.

—Kenneth Elzinga, Economics

Clarifying Expectations

It is worthwhile to spend about 15-30 minutes at the start of the semester to clarify expectations for the course in order to avoid the frustration of finding out at the end of the semester that some students had

expected something from the course other than what you designed. Discussing with your students what they hope to learn from your class, and how those goals can be reasonably achieved, also encourages students to take responsibility for learning and engage with the course. As people are more receptive to ideas they generate themselves, create a teachable moment when students are ready to listen by asking a few probing questions about the upcoming course.

Here are a few examples:

- What do you expect to learn in this course?
- How do you expect this course to expand on the one you just finished?
- Why did you enroll in this course?
- How do you expect this course to prepare you to go on in this discipline?

During the ensuing discussion, focus on students' ideas: you provoke them, hear and acknowledge them, develop them when necessary, write them for all to see, help analyze ways to fulfill them, and respond to them. Compare students' expectations with yours, and explain the rationale behind your own objectives. You might, in fact, modify your planned expectations in light of some thoughtful ideas from your students. Later if students complain that there is too much work, you can refer back to this discussion and remind them of what is necessary to achieve the learning goals that they have set for themselves. For more details, see Barnett, "On the Same Wave Length?" 1999.

Preparing Individual Lectures

Structuring your lecture. Once you have a sense of your students, structure your ideas and main points. Have a goal: What one new idea, concept, or skill should your students leave the talk with? Many experienced lecturers compare preparing a lecture to writing a paper: a thesis statement followed by branching ideas and concluded by a look ahead to the next lecture or assignment. Know, too, that if you make a point only once, only about a quarter of your audience hears it. So, tell them what you're going to tell them, tell it to them, and tell them what you've told them. To plan, ask yourself questions like these:

❖ Can I briefly summarize my main points and the goal of my lecture? If you can't, you probably don't have a clear direction.

❖ How does this lecture fit into the course? Refer to previous lectures and readings and tell students where you're going.

❖ Which details best illustrate my main points, and how can I use them most effectively? Although personal style, taste, and preference dictate much of each lecture, you need to grab the students' attention, perhaps by starting with a key question or paradox, and offer a new idea or a new twist (Lowman, 1984). To interest your audience, you need to hit the level at which ideas seem sensible to most listeners but involve some reflection or reorganization of old ideas. Listeners can understand at

a great depth if you present material in the context of previous lectures, readings, and their lives.

During lectures I bring my personal experiences to convey the notion that concepts explored in class are not merely abstract thoughts but can be widely employed to derive basic understanding of natural phenomena.

—José Fuentes,
Environmental Sciences

❖ Is my lecture clear? To make your lecture cohesive, reinforce main points logically. In addition, handouts in class or on the web help most students tremendously: use them to offer outlines to fill in, thought questions to consider, definitions of key points, significant dates and events. By furnishing basic information, handouts can save students from rapid writing and give them time to think.

❖ Can my students assimilate what I'm telling them? Listeners can absorb only three or four main points in fifty minutes, only four or five in seventy-five minutes. Make your points count, and reiterate them in various ways: use examples and analogies, define terms, tell an anecdote, summarize. People learn and remember in different ways (see "Learning Styles").

❖ Will I keep my students' attention? Because the average attention span is about 15-20 minutes, you need to vary your presentation and, when possible, incorporate moments of discussion. Remember that the first ten and last five minutes are key; emphasize major concerns then. You're most likely to lose students' attention in the middle of class; if you have an appropriate anecdote or shocking idea, use it then.

❖ Use "*Change-ups*" to hold your students' attention over the course of an entire class period. The term comes from baseball: by throwing the ball at different speeds the pitcher keeps batters off-balance. Inserting a change of pace every 15-20 minutes works equally well in the classroom. Make your activity directly related to that day's course material and seek out tasks that will help reinforce the main points that you want students to remember. It is also important to have a clear idea of what you want your students to do and give explicit instructions about what they are to accomplish. After the change-up is completed, talk over the exercise in order to confirm what students have discovered and tie it into the day's main points. For more information and examples of change-up exercises, see McAllister, 1997 and Barnett, "Whose Course," 1999.

❖ Where will I go from here? At the end of the lecture, tie up loose ends and pique students' interest in the next assignment or lecture.

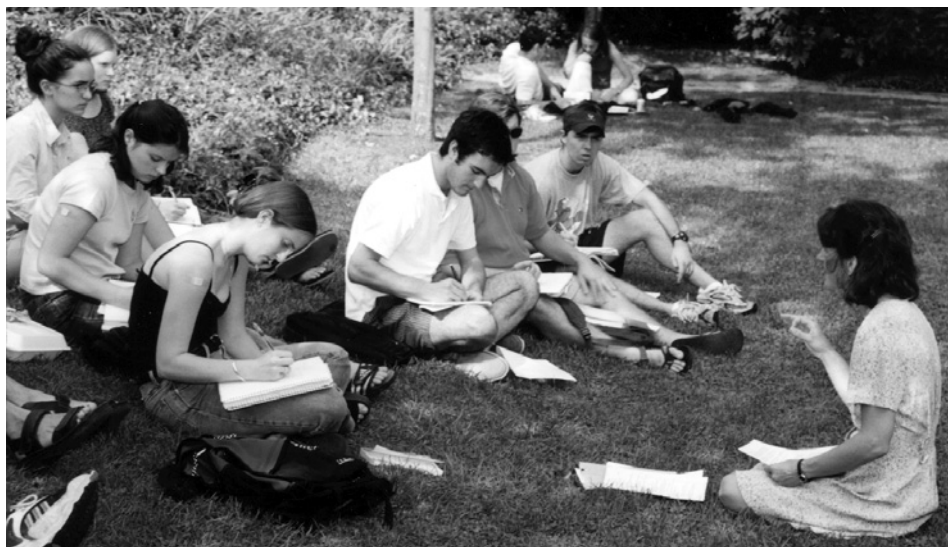
Writing your lecture. Your actual writing process depends on you: some people outline, some brainstorm, and others start at the beginning and plunge through; some use pencil and legal pad, others prefer word processors; some write every word, others write notes. As long as students find your lectures interesting and clear, your system works.

Whether you initially write notes or paragraphs, you will probably come across best if you lecture from notes. Listening to anyone read for 50 or 75 minutes is difficult unless the speaker has a fine rhetorical style, powerful eye contact, and brilliantly conceived and clearly stated points. Using notes competently, you can interact with your students, make effective eye contact, and show that you really *know* the subject.

As for length, you may find it helpful to know that an average rate for reading aloud is 140-160 words per minute and that ten pages of typed, single-spaced notes is generally all you can use in a fifty-minute lecture. Time yourself carefully and practice in advance to be certain you don't run over time. If you do, you can't tie the pieces together, and students will not be really listening as they gather belongings and worry about being late to their next class. If you finish too early or too late, consider videotaping yourself to analyze how your performance compares to your plans (see "Analyzing and Improving Your Teaching").

Analogies are powerful tools. Too often, the essence of a technical subject is cluttered by semantics. By stripping away jargon, I can relate the key elements of a new concept to daily experience or topics previously learned. Searching for accurate analogies and determining their limitations can be a challenge, but the search process itself improves the quality of my teaching by letting me think outside the box.

—Rob Kelly, Materials Science



Karen Ryan teaching her University Seminar, "Russian Humor and Satire," in the Pavilion VIII garden.

Delivering Your Lectures

A wonderfully organized lecture can fall flat from weak delivery, and a fine delivery strengthens a hastily written lecture. Consider appropriate use of visual aids (see "Using Visual Aids"). Scrutinize your lecturing style by analyzing a videotape of your class or by discussing it with a colleague or TRC staff member who attends and take notes. In analyzing your technique and in preparing to speak, consider these points:

✧ *Eye contact.* The best eye contact lasts about five seconds and focuses on individuals throughout the audience. Do you seem to be speaking directly to individual students?

✧ *Pace.* You should be speaking at a speed and rhythm that keeps students' attention but still allows time for necessary notes. Do your students appear interested and comfortable or bored or harried? Is your pace varied or droning?

✧ *Tenor of voice.* Does your voice demonstrate your enthusiasm for your subject? Is your voice clear? Do you project to students in the back? If you find that the atmosphere you want to project just isn't there, consider a voice workshop sometimes offered through the Teaching Resource Center.

To counter the perception that philosophy is extremely dry and unbelievably complex, I try to do three things:

- *Be absolutely clear and jargon-free in my presentations*
- *Give students something memorable (for instance, vivid examples and humorous stories) to help them retain key ideas.*
- *Directly engage and challenge the student, treating her/him as a participant in an activity rather than as a member of an audience.*

—John Simmons, Philosophy

Discussions and Discussion Sections

Leading a discussion can be somewhat like directing actors who step out of character when the dialogue is sensitive, try to steal the show, experience stage fright, arrive late for productions, and sometimes neglect to read the script. Whereas only very experienced (or foolhardy) directors would attempt such a production on Broadway,

discussion leaders (often TAs) can sometimes find themselves as jittery as actors on an opening night without a dress rehearsal. If you feel this way, don't despair; here are some ideas to help make your class a hit. This section offers suggestions for leading good discussions, with special attention to TA-led discussion sections.

Setting the Stage for Interaction

The most important aspect of stage setting is relationships, crucial because genuine dialogue demands that all participants feel comfortable with one another. While all instructors need to relate to their students, discussion leaders have a unique opportunity and a greater responsibility to form teacher-student relationships and encourage student-student relationships. When participants value, respect, and communicate with one another, they feel free to express partially formulated ideas and jointly create their own learning experience.

✧ Names are of utmost importance. Tell students immediately what you prefer to be called and something about yourself (see "The First Day of Class"). Encourage students to learn each others' names by devoting part of the first class to students' introducing each other, making name placards (use these for as long as you or the class needs them), or playing a name game in which students identify each other when you're stumped. Such procedures may seem laborious initially, but they pay off and students appreciate your effort to know them.

✧ Work with students' individual personalities. When students seem interested but never contribute, ask them privately how you can facilitate their participation. Some students would rather be called on than force their way into a conversation. On the other hand, you can ask students who contribute too much to hold their comments to give others a chance. If students are prone to posit hasty, poorly conceived conclusions, give them a chance to correct themselves before class ends. If students speak with biases, respectfully point out their implicit assumptions; or, better yet, make it a course goal that all students learn to recognize their own biases. To make this endeavor non-threatening, identify biases you bring to the material and invite students to "call you" on these, should they appear. To really know your students, spend a few minutes after class recording observed dynamics and interesting interchanges. These notes will also prove invaluable should you be asked to write a letter of recommendation (see "Writing Letters of Recommendation").

✧ Interesting props also help facilitate discussion. When appropriate, bring historical documents, photos,

ethnic food and costume, a human brain, poll results, and so on. Your students may become more involved in the topic and will probably remember better.

✧ Last, but before the semester begins, be sure the physical stage is set for dialogue. When possible, request a room suited to the anticipated enrollment, with tables or chairs that can be arranged in a semi-circle. At the very least, everyone should be able to make eye contact with all other discussants.

Knowing Where You Are Going

Like good directors, skilled discussion leaders know what they want to accomplish. Before entering the classroom (and usually in conjunction with the course lecturer if you are a TA), determine the discussion goals. Purposes vary: you can clarify and supplement lecture material; students can learn and practice new skills, propose and critically evaluate positions, gain confidence in their analytical skills, and/or draw connections between course material and the outside world. Discussion sections are not normally used to convey large amounts of new information.

Purposes in mind, next decide how you will accomplish them through both course requirements and your teaching style. If you are a TA leading a section, you will probably share requirement decisions with the lecturing professor, although one of you might hold sole responsibility. Distribute the syllabus the first day, even if the lecturer has included discussion assignments on the lecture syllabus (see "Preparing a Course").

No one teaching style characterizes effective discussion leaders, but style does communicate implicit expectations about amount and type of student participation. If you are very directive, students may spend more time guessing your next point than contributing ideas. Conversely, if you are completely non-directive, anticipate days when important matters are never covered. Develop a style between these two extremes, closer to the one more congruent with your course goals. Choose your style before the first meeting, and define it in the first few weeks. Changing implicit expectations mid-semester is as frustrating as changing explicit requirements: for example, if you intend to call on students rather than wait for volunteers, you must do so from the first days of class.

Finally, whatever your teaching style, students need to leave with a few main points. At the end of class, with students' help, abstract main issues and their resolution. A class without a synopsis is like a play without the last scene. Similarly, running out of time and summarizing during the next class would be like a director stepping on stage before the last scene and saying, "Sorry, folks, we'll pick up tomorrow night where we left off."

I see teaching and research as complementary, even symbiotic. Reading recent scholarship prevents long-known concepts or texts from ever seeming stale and, more importantly, reminds me of the necessity to be open to new ideas and to see that a mind can change—as must lesson plans.

—Candace Caraco, English

Asking Questions and Listening

Generally, you need to direct or frame the discussion to reach a predetermined goal. The type of orchestration you choose depends on your questioning skills and students' preparation, motivation, and participation (see also "Case Method").

If you opt for traditional questions (and you should try them), first ask about concrete facts and theories previously presented in lectures or readings and then progress to questions requiring more abstract thought. Abstract questions may involve comparisons between sources, critical analyses of logic or methodology, alternative explanations, real-world applications, or the separation of primary and secondary arguments. For example, when discussing Skinner's typology of behavior, you could develop a progression of questions something like the following:

(fact)	What is Skinner's main premise?"
(evidence)	"How does he support this theory?"
(comparison)	"In what ways are Skinner's ideas similar to Locke's?"
(application)	"How would the adoption of such a theory affect social policy?"

Avoid yes/no questions or questions with obvious, programmed answers; they bore students, and their responses do nothing to facilitate subsequent dialogue.

My personal teaching style is one of guiding students' natural curiosity and feeding it—not with answers, but with more questions. My greatest reward is the light in the eyes of the students who realize that they just found a way to answer their own questions.

—Suzanne Guihard, Materials Science

Just as important as asking the right questions is the way you ask them—and the way you listen and respond to students' answers. Here are some tips:

✧ Treat all students with respect by considering their contributions thoughtfully.

✧ Expect valuable remarks from all students.

Rather than reserving the more abstract questions for the more "insightful," give all students a chance at the lead. Students soon realize your intent and fulfill your expectations.

✧ Positively reinforce genuine attempts with verbal or facial expressions. When comments are slightly off the mark, rephrase elements that come close and give students a chance to agree or disagree. Of course, when comments are factually incorrect, you must acknowledge this in a polite and non-patronizing manner. When comments are particularly brilliant, give the other students time to recognize them as such. Then, as you summarize and draw the class to a close, recall noteworthy remarks and weave them into your synopsis, acknowledging the students who made them.

✧ Be sensitive to the different ways students use language, and vary your approach to accommodate all students. Men are more likely to prefer a devil's advocate approach; in fact, some men feel that an unchallenged comment must have been unworthy of attention. Some women are more likely to react negatively to a challenge, and women generally monitor their participation more. For example, a woman who has made several comments may refrain from additional involvement, not wanting to dominate the discussion (Tannen, 1991). Of course, some women enjoy a good debate, and some men fear it. The point is: using *one* approach all the time is likely to be effective with only *some* of your students. (See also the TRC handbook, *Teaching a Diverse Student Body*.)

✧ Learn to be comfortable with silence. When students don't have a ready answer, wait patiently (5-30 seconds depending on the complexity of the question) before embellishing, rephrasing, or changing your question. You show that you value students' learning more than their rapid guessing of your thoughts, and students prize this time to think. At home, practice posing a question and waiting to see how long half a minute of silence feels. At first, it will seem exceptionally long, but you will soon become accustomed to it. (By the way, if your students always have a ready answer, reevaluate the quality of your questions.)

✧ Encourage students to talk *to* each other, not *through* you, by holding your rejoinder until more than one student has spoken. If necessary, say, "Cathy, would you please respond to Grant's comment," or "What do you think about Grant's argument?" If Cathy still seems to be talking to you, orient her toward Grant with head and eye gestures. Such a directive may feel artificial at first, but students catch on quickly and conversation flows more realistically.

✧ Promote mutual respect among students by encouraging inclusive language and the acceptance of people in various racial, religious, gender, and cultural groups.

✧ If you have a good sense of humor, use it positively; it is possible to offend by comments you believe benign.

✧ Answer students' questions appropriately, and acknowledge when you don't know the answer. For details, see "Resolving Conflicts."

At the beginning of a class period, I pose questions in order to focus attention, gauge understanding, reiterate important themes and facts, or to set up the topic I want to discuss next. If we are formulating a problem, I ask individual students to offer a suggestion on what to do next.

—William Johnson, Materials Science

Increasing Participation

Innovative discussion techniques motivate students in different ways. We describe a few briefly here; for greater detail, see Frederick (1989) and Kraft (1990):

✧ *Thinking time.* Ask students to spend several minutes thinking about their answer and, perhaps, writing it down. Allowing thinking time emphasizes the importance of the question and gives all students a chance to gather their thoughts. As a result, students who otherwise are slow to participate jump early into the ensuing discussion. One variation on this activity, think-pair-share, encourages students to share and compare answers in small groups or pairs before discussing them as a whole class (for more information, see "Further Reading" on cooperative learning).

✧ *Group work.* Divide students into groups, asking them to develop an answer consensually. In smaller groups, more students can speak, shy students address less formidable audiences, students can build relationships, and a competitive group spirit assures lively discussion when the class reassembles. Vary the way you create groups: ask students to number off, select partners whom they do not know, pair with classmates wearing the same color clothing, and so on. As long as you give *very clear* instructions, you can assign many types of tasks to groups. Some favorites are:

- Generating truth statements. Each group produces three statements known to be true about a particular issue; for example, "It is true about slavery that . . ." When students feel already well

informed about an issue, this strategy helps you challenge their assumptions.

- Determining the main point of the day's text. Students report on their consensus and invite response from other groups.
- Finding quotes in the text that best illustrate the major premise. Students read these aloud and defend their selection.

✧ *Concrete images.* As each student briefly states a salient image, scene, event, or moment from the text, list them on the board and ask for the connection between them, the missing link, the emerging theme. With this approach, students participate in a sort of collective memory-making.

✧ *Generating questions.* Students formulate the primary questions raised by the text or lecture. Students might hand them in before class so that you can select some for discussion; or students can lead the discussion their questions provoke. Because this latter approach requires more class time, appoint only a few students to lead each discussion and start early in the semester so everyone has a chance. You also need to instruct students about leading discussions and limit time allotted to each question.

✧ *Thought papers.* Students prepare short reactions to the week's readings or lectures. These can be the springboard for lively discussions.

✧ *Role-playing.* Students reenact a scene from a novel, plead their case before a "jury," or discuss "in character." Assign characters to volunteers or by placing placards at students' seats. Students need from several minutes to a week to study a character before performing.

✧ *Forced debate or position taking.* Pose an "either/or" question ("Were the British or the Americans responsible for Revolutionary War?") and force students to identify their position by sitting on the side of the room corresponding to that position. Ask students to change seats if they change their position. Alternatively, use the seating as a continuum.

✧ *Visual scientific models.* With a scientific phenomenon or conclusion on the board, students work backwards, generating several plausible causal chains.

When Nothing Seems to Work

Sometimes—even though you are prepared, have sought help from colleagues and/or the TRC, have tried traditional approaches, nontraditional approaches, and everything short of a literal song and dance—students

don't participate. (Was it a rainy Monday morning?) The best teachers have classes like this now and then. Realize that you can't force participation; but if participation is key to your course, you must uphold your stated requirements. (Note: If your discussion section doesn't count for a grade, it should; see "Working with TAs.")

Talk about the class with a friend or colleague to see if you can spot problems. For the next classes, prepare students for the assignment in a different way, or repeat a discussion-leading technique that worked in the past. Spend ten minutes eliciting students' comments: How effective do they find the discussions, and what improvements do they suggest? How well do they understand the readings? What do they think the goals of discussion sections are? (See "Analyzing and Improving Your Teaching").

In fact, most U.Va. students enjoy discussions with leaders excited about the subject matter and concerned about teaching them as individuals. Similarly, many instructors find leading discussions very rewarding. So, get out there and break a leg!

From the first day of class, I encourage my students to get out of their seats and move. They cannot just sit at their desks and attempt to learn passively—because passive learning will not empower them in the rest of their classes or in their lives more generally. While I believe that the subjects I teach are important, I know that teaching students how to learn is far more important.

—Kimberley Roberts, English

Laboratory Teaching

As a laboratory instructor, you teach students how to learn by doing; at the same time, you motivate, teach, and encourage them individually. Because only a relatively small number of students can work in a lab setting at one time, you have the chance to interact closely with your students. You may also be responsible for grading their work, even in labs accompanying a lecture.

Although your role as a lab instructor will vary somewhat depending on your discipline, some general precepts apply. Above all, assume nothing. Your students come from widely varying backgrounds, many from schools with little or no scientific equipment. They need instruction in its use—yes, even the microscope—and they depend on you. This section offers hints for successful laboratory teaching; for basic information, see "Preparing a Course," "The First Day of Class," and "Specific TA Concerns;" for details about preparing lectures, see "Lecture Courses."

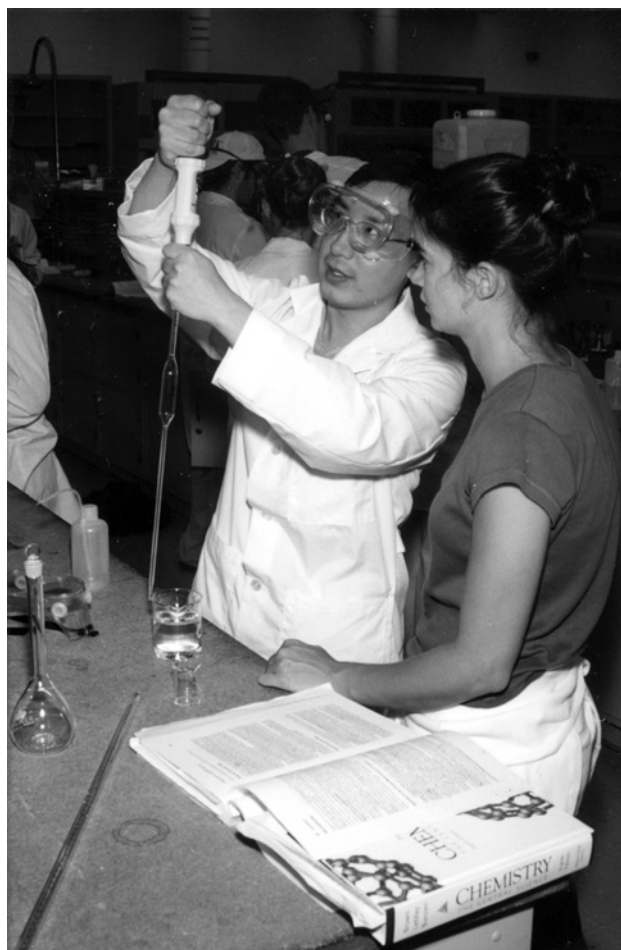
Preparing Labs

At the beginning of the semester:

- ✧ If your lab is part of a lecture course, attend the lecture so you can plan the corresponding lab work.
- ✧ Preview texts and lab manuals used in the lab and lecture. The course instructor should schedule meetings to discuss the course and lab.
- ✧ Find out where supplies are stored and who orders course materials.
- ✧ Give students the laboratory and safety rules in writing and verbally, and enforce them. If no departmental rules have been established, create necessary ones.

For each class meeting:

- ✧ Know the material thoroughly, including the theoretical basis and historical background for experiments or exercises to make them relevant to students.
- ✧ Compare the content of your lab to the lecture,



Introductory Chemistry lab with Fei Ding, an international TA.

deciding what information to reinforce and what to omit. Students tire quickly of frequently repeated background material.

- ✧ Practice with and test all equipment to make certain it functions properly *before* class. Know how to cope with equipment breakdowns.
- ✧ Complete all experiments and demonstrations at least once before class.
- ✧ Make certain all necessary materials are available in the right amount.
- ✧ Prepare lab notes, outlines, diagrams, and other necessary handouts.
- ✧ Write outlines, diagrams, illustrations, etc. on the board or overhead transparencies before class.

In the Lab

Start on time from the very first meeting; don't cancel the first lab, even if the syllabus does not schedule an experiment (see "The First Day of Class"). You may want to give a short (five- to ten-minute) quiz at the beginning of labs both to inspire punctuality and to focus students' attention immediately on the lab. With the right questions, you can also discover how well your students are prepared for lab.

You have to be more organized than you realize to teach labs.

—Javier Gonzalez, Chemistry

Lecturing. Introduce each lab by stating what you will be doing, how it fits into past and future work, and what the students should learn. In your short lab lecture, you will probably do the following:

- ✧ Announce the day's project, orally and/or on the board.
- ✧ Explain the task, perhaps by demonstrating samples you or former students have prepared. To heighten students' interest and help them remember, point out intriguing pertinent facts: for instance, during a Biology 204 lecture on fungi, the professor mentioned that a university administrator had died from eating a poisonous mushroom he had misidentified on Grounds.
- ✧ Furnish information students need to complete the lab activity. Prepare a handout, especially if you use drawings or diagrams, allowing room for students to add necessary details. Handouts help first- and second-year

students learn to take notes and reduce the amount of time spent lecturing.

- ✧ Distribute materials to be used.

Throughout the lecture, you can remind yourself to invite students' questions by writing "Questions" in colored ink at appropriate transition spots in your notes. To promote students' thinking and verify understanding, write appropriate questions into your lecture. If your students are not accustomed to questions during a lecture, they may not answer until they become more familiar with this "new" method. Begin with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where* questions and progress to *why* questions. By the end of the semester, you will have a more lively class where actual learning—not just memorization—takes place.

I ask observational questions which guide students' thoughts to the right answer. In the end, the students have reasonably concluded the answers themselves, raising their confidence and enticing their minds to future explorations.

—Brian Silliman,
Environmental Sciences

Supervising students' work. As students do their lab work, make yourself available. While building rapport and encouraging students, you can easily ask probing questions and correct faulty procedures. Call students by their names, using a seating chart at first if necessary. Move throughout the lab, watching for signs of students having difficulty: frustrated noises, confused expressions, flipping of text or lab manual pages. When individuals or groups have problems, inquire first: "What did you do first?" "When did you first have trouble?" "How else could you solve this dilemma?" Resist deciphering the problem for students; help them figure it out instead (see "Academic Difficulties").

Interrupt the entire class to make general remarks only when you find many students in the same predicament. When you do work with the class as a whole, get all students' attention before giving additional instructions. To explain experiment procedures, use the materials to show students directly rather than giving verbal instructions which may be confusing. Rephrase a student's question before answering so that everyone can hear it. Not only does this technique involve the whole class, it gives you a few moments to consider your response.

Summarizing. Finish the lab by reviewing what students should have learned and, if appropriate, previewing the work for the next class. Discuss any problematic parts of the lab so that the lesson plan can be adjusted for next year, if necessary.

Labs allow a teacher to be more creative than is possible during lecture. For instance, to illustrate the principles of optimal foraging for resources, I co-designed an exercise called Darwinopoly: students actively foraged for candy throughout the corridors of Gilmer Hall. They found that even humans exhibit a variety of foraging strategies which conform to the predictions of theory!

—Jennifer Secki-Shields, Biology

Visual Aids

Visual aids vary your presentation, help clarify the direction of your talk, and assist students who best learn visually: consider using the blackboard, overhead projector, slides, films, computer, video, and handouts. By following a few simple tips, even a novice lecturer can appear masterful:

- ✧ Plan and prepare your use of visual aids ahead of time, and consider using color to highlight important areas or ideas. Before class, make sure your presentation is large and legible by checking from the back of the room; remove any furniture or equipment that could distract students.

- ✧ If you use Power Point (or another presentation program) or write the outline or key information on the board or overhead transparency before class, you can refer or add to it as you speak. Computer programs allow you to keep your outlines for easy updating and changing. If you use these, however, be sure that their presence does not lead to such a speedy presentation that students cannot absorb material or take adequate notes.

- ✧ Slides, movies, and videotapes are forceful tools if you actively teach with them rather than using them as fillers. To prepare, preview programs and verify that slides are available and in the correct order. When using videotape, decide when you will pause and what questions or comments you will use. Tell students why you're showing the program and preview important points with them. Ask students to perform pertinent tasks during and after the presentation. For instance, can they find the main points or the bias of the documentary? Or, how are various geological formations similar?

- ✧ Remain at the front of the room and use a pointer, if necessary, to keep students' attention and to observe how well they are following.

- ✧ At the end of the presentation, review quickly, emphasizing important points.

In both the classroom and the lab I begin with the assumption that all students have some special talent, and I concern myself with trying to discern and foster it. Regardless of the course level, I expect students to have opinions, to think and learn independently, and to take an active role in defining their work.

—Cassandra Fraser, Chemistry

Case Method

Primarily developed in business and law contexts, case method teaching can be productively used in liberal arts, engineering, and education settings to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as to present students with real-life situations. For the sake of simplicity, this section offers ideas from a business orientation; you can easily adapt details to your needs.

Most studies of case method teaching describe the experience for both teacher and learner as exhilarating. In theory, the case brings into the classroom a “chunk of reality” on which students spend hours in rigorous analysis. In class the instructor asks questions, moderates, and guides the case discussion, which is rational, civil, and at times, passionate. The end of class comes too soon, with many hands still waving in the air but without having arrived at “the right answer.” Students continue the debate outside the classroom, and so the learning continues: learning how to think, how to plan, and how to act in specific contexts.

In practice, of course, things are different. Students challenge the case: it has too little or too much information, it is poorly written and confusing, no real business could possibly have all these problems. Some students don't devote time to analyzing the case because they don't know how, or don't think they need to. In class, students are silent or passive, and their comments seem strangely unrelated to the case at hand. The instructor resorts to lecturing about the case, berating the students and explaining “the point” in detail. At long last class ends, and students leave knowing that “that was the right answer—what the teacher just said.”

This gap between the ideal and the real raises several questions for the practice of case method teaching. Here are a few tips, based on classroom experience.

How Do You Select Cases?

If you were taught with the case method, your best source is your own experience: teach first the cases you were taught and loved. Your interest in the case and your enthusiasm for exploring its possibilities will inspire both your discussion leadership and your

students. Search for and select cases that are exciting, controversial, challenging, complex, and well written. The ideal case would be short, five to ten pages, but still require a full class period to explore fully. It would clearly describe a complicated situation in which people must act on difficult problems that cannot be perfectly resolved, but can be addressed in at least two reasonable ways. When possible, use more recent cases, in settings your students may eventually enter, preferably with an international backdrop. These features, however, are secondary to the basic requirement for a good story open to different endings. You may well be able to find cases in your discipline; otherwise, you might choose to write one yourself.

How Can You Help Students Prepare for Good Discussions?

Prepare students for the course. As with any course, begin with your syllabus, which clearly identifies this as a case method course or a course that includes cases. Outline your expectations, especially for class participation.

✧ In the first session, describe the course, cautioning, “This will not be like your other courses.” Emphasize the importance of “the four Ps:” *preparation* of each case before class, *presence* at every class, *promptness* in arriving, and *participation* in discussions (Shapiro, qtd. in Christensen, 1987). Explain how you grade participation, promise a written mid-term assessment of that grade, and invite students to discuss their participation with you. For suggestions about grading students’ participation, see “Evaluating Students’ Work.”

✧ Describe in general terms how a case discussion runs. You will begin class by designating one student as “the opener” to summarize the key issues of the case, and another as “the action plan person” who will be called on about halfway through class to describe what should be done about the problems in the case. Your role as discussion leader will *not* be to point to “the truth” but instead to question and to challenge their remarks with a little drama, a little humor, and a focus on their thinking. The students’ role is to think, to listen, to express and defend their thoughts, and to argue with and challenge the statements of others.

✧ State your ground rules for class discussions, and include these two: 1) No one will be humiliated for anything they say. Carefully distinguish humiliation from embarrassment here. Although you will not permit anyone to berate or personally attack any student, you hold students accountable for their remarks and may want to ensure, in fact, that students are embarrassed by seeing the implications of thoughtless comments or careless suggestions. With this rule

you simultaneously establish high standards for discussions, deter banal or foolish remarks, and demonstrate your respect for students’ minds. 2) Rude or offensive comments or class behavior, including bigotry of any kind, will not be tolerated. Your discussions are to be civil, with every student showing proper respect for the beliefs and the dignity of every other student.

✧ Explain why you use this method in your course. In an introductory management course, for instance, cases help students learn to think like managers.

✧ In business courses, you may want to distribute short notes available from Darden Educational Materials Services which offer guidance on preparing for class and useful checklists for students. Christensen (1987) also helps students and instructors prepare cases.

Prepare students for individual cases. Students usually analyze every case to answer two central questions: What is your analysis of the situation? What should Actor X do about it? The materials mentioned above, together with class discussions, help students understand those questions.

Very occasionally, at the end of class, you may wish to offer some brief descriptive comments or specific questions to guide students in preparing the next assigned case, especially when the case is lengthy or extremely complex. For example, for a case which recounts several events over the life of a task force, you can ask students to divide the case into six different time periods and assess the actions of the task force leader in each period, the choices made and what might have been done better, before recommending future actions.

You can also use study questions to establish “interest groups” and thereby determine in advance the class controversy or debate. To highlight the conflict between staff and line groups in organizations, for example, you might ask students on the left to take the position of the headquarters staff and those on the right to argue as general managers of subsidiaries.

In general, however, give this type of direction rarely. Because undergraduates often do what they are told, they may read the case solely to answer the study questions, excluding all other issues. Worse, too much direction does little to develop their confidence and ability to see what is and is not important in a situation. Better that they should struggle to make sense of conflicting and ambiguous data than learn to depend on “the boss” to direct them to “the problem.”

If you’re an expert all the time, you’re an authority figure, you’re unapproachable, you cut off discussion.

—Laurence Pettit, Commerce

How Can You Get Them To Talk?

The short answer is that you invite them, one by one. To promote active discussion, you must know who they are. First, learn your students' names and something about them as individuals (see "The First Day of Class" and "Discussion Sections"). Announce that for the next class, you will prepare and distribute a permanent seating chart to help you learn who they are. Or have them make large name cards everyone can see.

Second, start slowly and prove that discussion is safe, rewarding, and enjoyable. Early cases must be accessible, and initial participants, as many students as possible, must be allowed to speak without interruption. Give verbal and non-verbal encouragement—nodding, saying "Go on"—and be patient if a student stumbles or falls silent in the middle of a comment. Ask many open-ended questions: "What do you think?" "Do you buy that?" "Any other ideas?" "I saw your hand earlier; what were you going to say?" In early discussions, no student trying to participate responsibly should be "interrogated," or pressed to the point of being uncomfortable. In later classes, you should become increasingly more challenging and less supportive; at the start, tread softly.

What Should You Be Doing?

Instructors most familiar with the lecture method may have trouble imagining spending an entire class period without speaking from notes or writing key phrases on the board. If class time is filled with students talking and arguing, they ask, what am I supposed to do?

Plan the discussion. Your work begins when you prepare each class. First, master the material in the case itself. Even when you've taught the case before, read it again, write a brief situation summary, and develop what Christensen (1987) calls "blocks of analysis," groups of ideas that represent a logical flow in the case. Consider how much time you wish to spend discussing each one, and work within that time frame to plan the discussion process.

Planning the discussion process is, in essence, developing a list of questions. What question will you ask the student you call on to open the discussion? How will you introduce a given topic if no student raises it first? What question will you ask to move the discussion into consideration of action alternatives? You must come to class with a mental list of such questions, including follow-up questions based on probable student responses. The only certain way to avoid dead silence in discussion is to have another question to ask. Prepare *many* questions.

Plan the board. In a case method class the board is used, not for documenting "the truth" or "the right answer" but for recording logically the flow of the discussion. Making sections of the board correspond to

their blocks of analysis, many experienced case method teachers know before class begins how the board will look at the end.

You might work from left to right, arranging the board into sections for the organization and its environment, the critical decisions to be made, the different perspectives of key individuals involved, options, and then an action plan. Given the many mental activities required to teach the case method, using the board effectively is exceedingly difficult; you will improve with practice.

Develop your questioning, listening, and responding skills.

These key skills are critical not only in case method teaching but also in facilitating meetings, leading discussion sections, and performing in other settings. As you develop them, you may find your conversational style improving. Here are a few suggestions:

✧ Answer your own questions before asking them in class. Questions can be broad and open-ended or narrow and pointed. Which type of question do you want to ask? When? Why? Remember that even a little word, an "and" or a "so," can color a question in unintended ways. Monitor your tone as well; the same question can be inviting and intimidating, depending on how it's asked. Consider videotaping a class to analyze your style objectively.

✧ When listening to students, pay attention to them, mentally and physically. Look them in the eyes. Stand near them, move toward them as you call on them; use body language to signal your interest in what they have to say. While you listen *to* a student speak, you must also try to listen *for* that bridge to the next comment, the next block of analysis. Try to remember who made what critical comments in the course of a discussion; few things invite more participation than the remark, "I'd like to return to Anne's earlier suggestion that we . . ." (see also "Discussion Sections").

✧ Perhaps the most frustrating thing about case method teaching is that each class is unpredictable: you never know what a student will say, and so how can you know how you will or should respond? Remember that you have a wide range of possible responses to any statement or classroom event, including silence and verbal and nonverbal responses. Let students respond to classroom incidents before you do. When in doubt, ask a question. Finally, be aware that everything you do—movements and facial expressions as well as statements—will be interpreted by students as a response to what they have said. Choose your reactions with care.

It is a cliché to say you teach in order to be taught, but there are ways of remaining open to surprises—indeed, of structuring classes so that good surprises are inevitable—just as there are ways of shutting down those opportunities. I count on my teaching to keep me intellectually supple.

—Stephen Arata, English

What Should Happen At the End of Class?

In the closing moments of class, summarize the discussion and end with some important questions the case has raised, asking: “What does this say about . . . ?” “Under what circumstances can we . . . ?” “What if . . . ?” “How can . . . ?”

You may also use the last ten minutes of class to lecture briefly on key concepts or theories that relate to the situation just discussed. If useful, draw a chart or write terms on the board, but avoid making comments such as, “And so this explains why X occurred in the case.” Such summations encourage students to shift their attention from understanding problems to memorizing tools. For the same reason, never end class with the comment, “Here’s what this case was about.”

In final remarks, you may tell students why you selected that particular case, pointing out how you believe it relates to previous cases. Remind them of assignments due in the next class period. If appropriate, offer praise *for the quality of the discussion*, not for “the answer,” and *for the class as a whole*, not for individuals in it.

Some Final Advice

✧ For most students, the case method represents a big change, and change brings fear. You are fighting against years of experience where good students are quiet in class and listen attentively to the teacher, and where bad ones can get away with no preparation, poor attendance, sleeping, writing notes, or doing other homework on your time. Be clear, consistent, and firm in your expectations of them, and perform up to those same expectations yourself: your students will come around.

✧ Respect your students. Respect their minds: if the assigned material is too difficult, let them tell you—let them tell you *twice* before you judge that they can’t handle it. Even when they are floundering, hold them accountable for what they say. It is not cruel to ask a student to defend a silly comment or an ill-advised suggestion. That’s how they will learn.

✧ Accept the limitations of this method, which is not the only, the universal, or the best teaching method.

Be prepared for detractors, for students who say they don’t know if they’ve learned anything, and for colleagues who may agree with them.

✧ Be clear about your objectives. With the case method, students can learn how to think, how to approach problems. Although an inefficient way to learn terminology and theory, the case method is an exciting and productive way to involve students in any discipline with a real problem.

✧ Consider giving case exams. This means many pages of essays on the same situation: “What should Ms. Gilcrist do?” Although time-consuming and at times painful to grade, they let you provide extensive individual feedback on your students’ thinking and see students’ progress.

✧ Recognize the one aspect of case-method learning that cannot be measured but that students routinely describe as valuable: from a well-orchestrated process of discussion, students improve their listening skills and their ability to express and defend their thoughts to others.

Modern Foreign Language Courses

Like courses in other disciplines, modern foreign language courses treat an academic subject: in order to master grammatical structures, vocabulary, principles of literary analysis, and knowledge of the people who speak the language, students conceptualize, memorize, and analyze information. In addition, students use different mental operations to acquire communication skills. And to understand and respect another culture, they must integrate intellectual and emotional responses. Such differences are implicit in the objectives of the College foreign language requirement:

- To provide students with basic language skills;
- To develop multicultural knowledge and awareness;
- To develop understanding of languages.

In some courses, students learn mostly from reading and from attending class; language students, like science lab students, must practice in order to learn. Language learning is, moreover, a cumulative, step-by-step process: complex grammatical points build on basic ones, and skills grow as students practice different aspects of them. Understanding what one hears, for instance, depends on knowing pronunciation rules, hearing sounds correctly, recognizing words from sounds, knowing the meaning of those words, fitting the words into recognized patterns of grammar and vocabulary, discerning the significance of the tone used, and understanding

the cultural situation in which the words were spoken.

To sustain interest and to keep up with the necessary work, your language students need motivation and immediate, frequent feedback. They need more short quizzes, papers, and interviews than in most other courses; you also need to make clear why they cannot successfully cram for language tests. As in other courses, what you test reveals what you consider important. Balance your tests with items confirming students' reading, listening, and writing skills, as well as their mastery of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural knowledge. Test authentic language use in realistic contexts, and ask students to communicate their own meaning as much as possible. When the speaking skill is one of your goals, evaluate its development with oral proficiency tests. For general testing recommendations, see "Evaluating Students' Work."

Certainly, in class, students must participate individually in a wide variety of activities. Thus the Modern Language Association of Departments of Foreign Languages recommends 12 as the ideal enrollment to maximize student participation and recommends no more than 20 students in any language course. Finally, because of language study's multifaceted nature and demand for student participation, specific learning disabilities are more visible in language courses than in many other courses. For tips on spotting and accommodating learning disabilities, see "Teaching Students with Disabilities" and the TRC handbook *Teaching a Diverse Student Body*; for information about treating individual cases, check with your supervisor or departmental chair.

There are dangerous consequences to teaching students that learning must take place within four cinder-block walls. And so I have taken my students to parking lots to study car vocabulary, to a local vineyard for a French tour, to France through videos and realia from my travels. I hope that my students will realize through these activities that learning is a process that can take place anywhere.

—Candace Cone, French

Class Activities

Details about organizing and teaching your language classes should come from your supervisor or course chair. We offer here, however, a few initial tips and insights into language teaching:

✧ Plan a variety of activities for each class both to develop different skills and to tap students' individual strengths (see "Learning Styles"). To maximize students' attention, vary the length of activities usually between two and fifteen minutes.

✧ Begin with a conversational warm-up to re-acustom students to the target language and immerse them in your course. Discuss a current event, discover what your students have been doing, find out more about their lives and opinions, and so on. Integrate grammar, vocabulary, culture, or important information into the warm-up in a natural manner.

✧ Then review a point from the previous lesson or material basic to the new information that you will present during class. In the best reviews, students practice again and demonstrate their level of mastery. You may also preview or outline the upcoming lesson.

✧ Practice new material: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, skills activities, and cultural units.

- If you introduce new vocabulary early in the class, you can review it later with grammar, culture, or pronunciation activities.
- Rapid pronunciation drills can wake up lethargic students.
- Grammar activities usually work best when students have studied textbook explanations before class. It is usually best to keep your explanations to a minimum and ask students specific questions about what they have studied.
- Integrate cultural information through web sites, readings, video and audio tapes, slide shows, and conversation. Resist the temptation to talk too much about your time abroad and, rather, involve students in analyzing their own culture as well as the target culture. You may choose to use English at times to encourage students to comment.

✧ Finally, integrate the parts of the class into a coherent whole with a closing activity that encourages students to use new material to communicate. They might use new vocabulary to create dialogues about future plans; play "Wheel of Fortune" to practice vocabulary, letters, pronunciation; discuss a reading and brainstorm ideas for a composition comparing their experiences with what they've read. Students leave more excited and more confident in their learning when they've used what they've practiced.

General Tips

✧ Require students to prepare before class. Know what they should have understood from the textbook, and ask questions to verify their preparedness and comprehension. Choose students who don't raise their hand to answer most questions; you know the volunteers are prepared.

✧ Distinguish between what you can do best in class and what the textbook offers. For example, you can explain grammar differently than the textbook, with more, personalized examples. The textbook may provide written grammar rules and mechanical practice activities that you need not cover in class. The textbook lists and defines vocabulary; you need to show students at elementary and intermediate levels how to pronounce it and help them make it their own. The text and manual provide reading and listening activities; you may need to give students the appropriate context in which to read or listen.

✧ Use the target language to communicate, not merely to instruct. Give assignments in the target language; don't lapse into English when you have something *really important* to say. Use the target language whenever you think students will be able to understand it.

✧ Remember that communicating with language means more than using the four language skills; it also entails understanding culture well enough to communicate with speakers from a different background. Integrate skill areas and culture in lessons and in the overall curriculum in order to replicate language use in the "real world."

✧ Develop students' cognitive, comprehension, and language-learning strategies. Pre-reading and pre-writing activities, as well as work on how to understand a spoken or written text, are ideal class activities. If you prepare students well to work with written texts, they can read and write effectively beyond your course.

✧ Stress oral-aural skills in class. Besides language laboratory work, students do not practice speaking and listening much outside class unless you require it.

✧ Use accompanying workbooks, lab manuals, audio and video lab programs, test banks, and computer software to reinforce material in the main textbook, following the recommendations of the course supervisor. These are ideal for self-study when answers are provided for immediate feedback.

As the traveler who has once been from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own.

— Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, introduction, 1928.



IV. EVALUATING STUDENTS' WORK

SECTIONS:

Academic Honesty and the Honor System
 Testing
 Exams as Learning
 Writing and Scoring Essay Items
 Writing and Scoring Objective Items
 Constructing Exams
 Frequency of Testing
 Preparing Students for Exams
 Administering Exams
 Scoring Services
 After the Test
 Papers and Class Projects
 Conceptualizing and Assigning Papers and Projects
 Grading Papers and Projects
 Class Participation
 Determining Final Grades

You may dislike the idea of evaluating your students' work, wanting them to enjoy the course for what it teaches and to relish the challenges it presents. But evaluation does not necessarily smother students' interest; in fact, it lets you and your students know how well they are mastering the course material and perfecting their abilities to analyze or apply it. You will evaluate fairly and productively when you know why you assess students, when you recognize the students' perspective, and when you create balanced, unbiased evaluation tools. When preparing and grading examinations and assignments, remember these important tenets:

- ✧ Students believe that what's really important is NOT what you *say* is important but rather what you *test* and *evaluate*.
- ✧ Fair exams, unambiguous project assignments and clear, consistent grading guidelines enhance learning and reduce stress and anxiety for both students and instructor.
- ✧ The evaluation process should be a learning process, an opportunity to instruct, not just a means of discovering what students know or don't know, can or can't do, think or don't think.

Academic Honesty and the Honor System

As a faculty member or TA, your academic honesty begins with your commitment to teaching: your desire to continue life-long learning and your motivation to instill that desire in students. You must be willing constantly to improve your expertise by conducting appropriate research and to bring its questions,

implications, and excitement into the classroom. Commitment to self-improvement combines with self-evaluation: How well do you know the subject matter, and how well do you convey it? On a pragmatic level, academic honesty vis-à-vis students begins with "Preparing a Course" and continues through "Interacting with Students" in an intellectually honest way to "Evaluating Students' Work." Academic honesty vis-à-vis colleagues means scrutinizing data and conclusions before reporting them and acknowledging in research presentations all cooperative effort, no matter how minor.

Academic honesty is a vital ingredient in the University of Virginia Honor System, a structure maintained by the students since the 1840s (see details at <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>). Within the Honor System, students are understood to live in a community of trust, that is, to be trustworthy, honest, and committed to the ideal that a person's word is his or her bond. A student who breaches the system can be expelled. As faculty members and TAs, you do not participate in governing the system directly; by taking a teaching position at U.Va., however, you accept a proviso that you understand, accept, and comply with the word and spirit of the Honor System.

You should take advantage of Honor System procedures. Required or implied for all written work done by students of the University of Virginia, the standard Honor Pledge reads:

"On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment."

✧ Remind your students, especially first-year students, of the pledge; show that you take the Honor System seriously.

✧ Make clear the acceptable parameters of assignments. Revise the Honor Pledge to correspond to specific assignments or exams. If you recommend, for instance, multiple drafts in consultation with a writing tutor or editor, have students clearly acknowledge such help: "On my honor as a student, I have received editorial help from the following people: . . ."

✧ State requirements unambiguously in writing. For example, for a timed take-home assignment, state explicitly whether students are to return the project within four hours, have four hours to finish once begun, or can spend a total of four hours, working in shorter blocks of time. Is any required typing time part of the four hours?

✧ Reduce the temptation to cheat. Create entirely new exams, and distribute previous exams so that students have equal access to your format and style. Guard copies of current exams scrupulously. Require that students submit early drafts of written assignments with their final copy.

✧ Discuss plagiarism. Many students do not understand it completely, and even more do not know standard citation rules until you teach them. Good examples and finite rules appear in the booklet “Academic Fraud and the Honor System,” available from the Honor Committee (924-7602) or online at <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/proc/fraud.html>.

✧ You may choose to remain in an exam room if you wish. By being there you can answer students’ questions and post the time for those without watches. But you should never give the impression that you don’t trust your students.

If you suspect a case of cheating, consult immediately with your course supervisor, department chair, faculty representative to the Honor Committee, or student Honor Advisor. If you plan to pursue the matter, do *not* approach the student directly; by doing so, you would eliminate the student’s right to conscientious retraction, a voluntary admission of responsibility that absolves the student of guilt under the Honor System. You should also have read about and understood the Honor System as explained by the Honor Committee. Questions of discipline for honor violations are a student responsibility, delegated to them by the Board of Visitors; each case is a question of fact.

The Honor System does, however, recognize that instructors have sole authority over grading in their courses. If you have irrefutable evidence that a student cheated or committed plagiarism consciously, you may grade that piece of work as you deem appropriate. But be aware that what looks like strong evidence may prove inconclusive. Faculty grievance committees investigating students’ appeals of failures in cases of suspected cheating have disagreed with instructors’ evaluation of “evidence.” Consider facts meticulously before assigning final grades.

In short, heed Polonius’ admonition: “To thine own self be true.” By being honest with yourself and your students, you maintain academic integrity.

Testing

Exams as Learning

A well-constructed exam can teach students almost as much about a subject as it tests their knowledge of it. If you are using tests merely to assign grades, you are

missing an opportunity to facilitate learning. According to McKeachie (1999), students’ learning is directly related to what and how you test; therefore, you must decide in what proportion you want to emphasize simple memorization of facts versus the ability to apply the material that students have learned to other situations.

Your examinations and quizzes will be fair, reliable, and defensible when you follow a few simple guidelines. Most importantly, your exam must reflect course goals and objectives. “Of course,” you say. But studies have repeatedly shown that many exams require only the regurgitation of information, even when instructors embrace and proclaim on their syllabi higher-level cognitive goals, such as critical examination of ideas, analysis of principles, problem-solving, and inquiry. You may, of course, need to test students’ knowledge of facts; if so, be sure to test important, fundamental concepts, principles, and generalizations rather than trivial details, and to construct good short-answer or objective items.

In many cases, you cannot usefully measure all course objectives with in-class exams; rather, you need to check on students’ learning in a variety of ways. To construct a fair evaluation system, determine which goals you can best measure by tests and which by papers, projects, problem sets, in-class discussions, oral exams or take-home exams. Consider these factors:

- Time: How much “thinking” can be accomplished in a fifteen-minute essay?
- The type of performance desired: Can an in-class examination measure students’ creative ability?
- The amount of course time you wish to devote to evaluation.
- The types of evaluation, given the size of the class.

When you decide that you can best assess students’ progress with an exam, follow these steps:

- List the topics you have taught and what students should understand about each.
- Determine how important each topic has been in class and in assignments.
- Write the exam to reflect the topics covered and their relative importance.
- Tell your students what to emphasize, so that they can devote the most energy to the most important material.
- Give an ungraded quiz during the first four weeks of class so students will know what to expect and how to focus their studying for future exams.
- Help students become test-wise by spending some time explaining test-taking strategies in advance (see also “Preparing Students for Exams” and McKeachie, 1999, pp. 95-8).

I teach students the concepts and the language to frame problems which they then have to answer for themselves.

— Ingrid Soudek, Technology,
Culture, and Communication

Writing and Scoring Essay Items

After selecting your exam goals and objectives, choose the most appropriate format: essay, short answer, identification, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and so on. When skillfully crafted and carefully evaluated, essay and short-answer items can truly measure students' ability to analyze, apply, or synthesize ideas. It is recommended that you use at least one essay question per test (McKeachie, 1999). Here are a few guidelines and examples:

✧ Make sure each question clearly defines the task. Avoid the broad or ambiguous: "Summarize the Vietnam War." Phrase the question specifically and give enough details to explain without giving too much away:

In designing a one-hour Culture Fair presentation to educate Americans about Arab culture, which three cultural aspects would you emphasize and why? And which three stereotypes would you challenge and how?

✧ When you want students to demonstrate their reasoning ability, word your questions clearly, as these examples show:

Comparing Describe the similarities and differences between . . .

Justifying Which of the following alternatives would you favor, and why?

Summarizing State the main points included in . . .

Generalizing State a set of principles that explain the following events.

Inferring How would (Senator X) be likely to react to this issue? Explain why you answer as you do.

Classifying Group the following items according to . . .

Creating Write a list of questions that should be answered before . . .

Applying Using the principle of . . . as a guide, describe how to solve the following situation.

Evaluating Describe the strengths and weaknesses of . . .
(From Gronlund, 1985)

✧ Indicate the scope of the required answer by defining length in time or space or value in number of points.

✧ Remind students that their essays must have a thesis, a main point clearly stated and coherently supported.

✧ Use questions that have correct answers, even if more than one answer is correct. Essay questions should measure students' knowledge and reasoning ability, not opinions or attitudes. Instead of asking, "How do you think crime could be eliminated?" say, "Describe one proposed method for controlling crime. Give four reasons why this method would be effective or ineffective." Score on the accuracy of the information and the quality of reasoning.

✧ Allow for "thought time" in planning exam length. Students need time to assimilate the question, recall necessary information, choose a position, and organize their answer. Allow five minutes "thought time" for an answer requiring fifteen minutes to write.

✧ Consider the relative value of shorter versus longer test items. Short-answer items are more specific, better define the task, and are easier to score. You can include more items and test more topics. Longer essays, however, better evaluate students' ability to integrate material or explain complex ideas.

✧ Use optional questions sparingly. Because questions are not equally difficult or clear, students' choices may unintentionally make the exam harder for them. Choice also penalizes students who waste time trying to answer all questions before choosing the one answered "best."



Kenneth Elzinga teaching ECON 201, with an enrollment of 500.

✧ Before administering the test, develop a scoring key or guide that weights content, reasoning, and style. Tell students your expectations. Writing the key will help you spot confusing, ambiguous, or awkward questions; having the key as you read the first papers will save you from grading them too easily or harshly. (From Brown, 1981.)

Essay items can help you see how students think about your discipline if you ask questions that provoke them to analyze, evaluate, or synthesize. Likewise, short answer questions can be used to test more than facts if they ask students to demonstrate that they can apply that information to other situations. If you specify the type of information you seek, you will prevent students from writing down everything that they know about a subject in hopes that the right answer is in there somewhere. Additionally, it will be easier for you to judge whether the student has actually supplied the required information.

To score essay answers fairly and reliably, follow these guidelines:

✧ Construct the exam so that you cannot see students' names while scoring. You might have students write their ID numbers on the exam and then match names to numbers after scoring.

✧ Read several students' answers to each question to verify that your scoring guide is appropriate. If not, revise accordingly.

✧ In addition to assigning numerical or letter grades, note positive features or flaws; make sure students know the reasons for the grade.

✧ Read all students' answers to one question before scoring the next. You will better remember your expectations and more satisfactorily compare student performances. Moreover, grading by question rather than by exam makes you less likely to be biased by a student who responds poorly to one question.

✧ After finishing each question, re-grade a few you graded first to make sure your criteria have remained consistent.

✧ Then shuffle the papers before starting a new question. Imagine being the student who is always graded after a particularly brilliant writer or reading an average essay after a terrible one. Either way, preconceptions warp grading.

✧ After grading all exams, review items that posed consistent problems to ensure that they were unambiguous and keyed correctly.

Writing and Scoring Objective Items

Of course, objective items or tests can be more reliably graded than essay answers because a good objective question has only one correct answer; scoring is not subject to personal impressions or biases. For the same reasons, objective multiple-choice, matching, true-false, or fill-in-the-blank items normally allow students no opportunity to show how they arrived at an answer. Objective items can, however, measure students' ability to analyze, evaluate and apply course content to new situations. In addition, they do measure both simple knowledge and precise discrimination. However, while grading multiple choice exams is generally faster and easier than reading a pile of essays, constructing good questions can be difficult. To create such multiple-choice questions, you must imagine various logical interpretations of a given situation and offer students those as well as the correct explanation (Grzelkowski, 1987).

Here are a few tips:

✧ In order to measure students' understanding, use questions requiring them to predict the outcome of a situation rather than simply label a phenomenon.

✧ The suggested wrong answers should represent common errors.

✧ Ask students to apply information to a real-world situation using concrete rather than abstract terms.

✧ Use a series of related items in order to measure more complex thinking.

✧ If you can't think of a good distractor, don't waste both your time and your students' by constructing an answer that doesn't really test discrimination. Three possible answers can be as effective as four (Costin, qtd. in McKeachie, 1999, p. 93).

✧ Use "all of the above" and "none of the above" rarely. They are not particularly useful in testing discrimination or knowledge.

Testing with such items enables you to reduce grading time and improve reliability while maintaining some indication of how your students reason. If you use relatively innovative items, however, discuss samples ahead of time and, on the exam, group these questions separately from fact questions.

To construct problem sets that frequently occur on math and science exams, use these guidelines:

✧ Make sure your problems resemble those in practice exercises.

✧ Make the problems interesting by giving real applications or by combining two concepts for a more engaging (and more difficult) challenge.

✧ Concentrate on ideas rather than on long, detailed computations.

Although grading objective questions can be quick, writing them should take some time. As with essay questions, you need to match them to course objectives and maintain the balance of topics in the course. Use the checklist below to review your objective questions:

Constructing Exams

To ensure balanced exam coverage that reflects course content, construct test items for the most important concepts after each class. With two multiple-choice questions and one essay or problem per class, you begin an item bank for exam preparation. Select a good cross section of items to create the final test, and consider a mixed format of subjective and objective items.

You will probably not be able to test as much material as you would like; students must have enough time to attempt all questions. To check on exam length, take the exam yourself, or have a colleague take it before you administer it. Read each question thoroughly, including all options, and write out each essay *completely*. Students will require three or four times the amount of time an

Checklist for Writing Objective Test Items

Do you have:

- _____ clearly defined course goals?
- _____ items that match your course goals?
- _____ clear and well-defined directions and questions?
- _____ all the information necessary to answer the question?
- _____ a difficulty level appropriate for your students?
- _____ questions of varying difficulty?
- _____ items cast in positive form? If you must use negative items, do you point them out to students?
- _____ a scoring key? Does every item have a single correct answer? Is the right answer unquestionably right?

Have you:

- _____ avoided giving grammatical clues or response-length clues to right answers?
- _____ avoided a pattern of correct responses (e.g., *abab*)?
- _____ had a colleague review questions for clarity?

expert needs. As a rough guide for objective items, assume that a simple recall item will take 30 seconds to answer; one that requires an analysis or evaluation will take one to two minutes; and one that requires calculation will vary according to the complexity of the calculation. If scheduling allows, you may want to consider untimed exams, allowing students to begin early or continue beyond the class time; you are then more certain to measure what students know rather than how fast they can process information and record answers.

Frequency of Testing

Undergraduate students need to know whether they are studying correctly and learning what they should; you need to know whether they're learning what you're teaching.

✧ To help your students learn best, test them (if only with a lightly weighted exam or quiz) no later than one month into the semester and return results promptly.

✧ Balance quizzes, exams, papers, and projects reasonably so that testing does not consume too much class time.

✧ To assess students' work regularly, announce ten-minute quizzes at specific times and allow questions in the classes prior to quizzes. "Pop" quizzes and tests on reading or lectures that students have not been able to discuss with you may produce undue anxiety and an unpleasant learning environment unless they can have only a positive effect on a student's grades (see Wegner, 1996).

Preparing Students for Exams

You must prepare your students to take the type of exam you choose. Here are a few examples:

✧ If you are testing at an analytical and intellectual level, show during lectures and discussions how to reason towards solutions, analyze problematic circumstances, weigh pros and cons. Such activities benefit students who in the past have been rewarded for only encoding and recalling information and who don't know how to answer other types of questions.

✧ When you use multiple-choice items to assess thinking, hand out two previous exam questions in each class. After students have about two minutes to answer the questions, give the correct answers and respond to their queries. Not only do students learn how to think for the exam, they and you both see how much they understand.

✧ To prepare students for thought-provoking essay questions, try Ziegler's model (1989). A week before the first exam, explain your expectations for essays, including study techniques, ways to answer questions, and specific details on grading factors. Then, as students leave the exam itself, hand out three sample responses to exam questions (written at "A," "C," and "F" levels) for them to grade according to your criteria, with a short justification. As soon as possible, average the grades students assigned and discuss them. Students quickly learn to distinguish good essay answers.

I have found that collaborative learning techniques work best for me. My approach is to create a safe learning environment, where students are encouraged to take chances, experiment, and learn from each other.

—Brad Brown, Commerce

Administering Exams

When administering an exam, clarify the students' task and create a supportive atmosphere:

- ✧ Be sure that all copies of the exam are legible, paying special attention to graphs or diagrams. Bring extra copies in case pages are missing or illegible. If errors are discovered, write corrections on the board and draw all students' attention to them.
- ✧ Review instructions orally, and note exam page length.
- ✧ Suggest that students browse through the exam and ask necessary questions.
- ✧ To let students know how much time is left, write the time on the board and quietly update it each 15 minutes without interrupting.
- ✧ To avoid after-the-fact disputes about unintentionally ambiguous items or to permit variable interpretations, let students justify possibly questionable answers on the back of the test. Their responses will also help you to avoid similar problematic questions in the future.
- ✧ If you choose not to remain in the room, tell students where they can find you during the exam if they need to ask questions.

Scoring Services

If you use a multiple-choice format, your tests can be electronically scored at Computing Services in Carruthers Hall or the Dynamics Building. To get

details about how to do this, check with the Office of Information, Technology and Communication or look on the ITC web site: <http://www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/unix/docs/u022.testscor.html>. If you are giving several computer-scorable tests in a course, you can use a grading program to add subsequent scores and know the total points for any student at any time. You can also request that your data be mailed to your electronic mail address in ASCII format.

After the Test

Students learn from exams when feedback is timely and clear. Write specific corrections and responses on individual papers and distribute or post a key for objective answers. Offer feedback in marginal comments on essays to help students perform better on the next exam. Studies have shown that when marginal comments on earlier tests emphasized a particular skill (e.g., creativity or presenting coherent arguments), use of that skill was improved on the next exam (Johnson, 1975, qtd. in McKeachie, 1999, p.91). Return exams as quickly as possible (during the next class for objective exams), and clarify misunderstandings revealed during scoring, without wasting time by walking students through the entire exam. Set discussion guidelines to avoid unproductive debates: for example, set a time limit for questions raised in class; offer to consider an argument for a variant answer if the student submits it in writing. Exams can also facilitate learning if you allow failing students to take a make-up exam and earn up to the passing grade. Rewarding students willing to study material and gain mastery reduces test anxiety for most students.

Papers and Class Projects

Conceptualizing and Assigning Papers and Projects

Conceptualizing papers or projects is similar to conceptualizing exams: you must know what you wish to accomplish. Will a review be sufficient, or are you expecting a logical argument? Are you flexible regarding style, or should students follow a format specific to your discipline? Does the complexity of the topic fit your students' level and the assigned page limit? How you construct and phrase the assignment will influence what students submit. In the suggestions below, we are assuming that you assign papers and projects because you know that working on them helps students clarify and refine their thoughts about a subject (see also Deen, 1995, and D'Errico and Griffin, 2001):

- ✧ Phrase the assignment to gain what you want. Words like "review," "describe," "survey" and "summarize"

prompt most students to write reports rather than analytical essays. Words like “analyze,” “critique,” “judge” and “explain” more often produce the kind of expository prose you probably want.

✧ Hand out assignments in writing so that students can review the assignment as they work on it. Moreover, writing tutors whom your students may consult need to see your actual assignment rather than work from students’ recollections.

✧ Make sure your students understand the conventions and expectations of your discipline. A student studying a new subject will find a lab report, a psychological case study, or a literary analysis equally alien. Provide examples of your academic genre, and review basic genre requirements. Students are particularly baffled when asked to write a “book review;” you may have in mind *The New York Review of Books*, but their experience probably extends only to high school book reports. If your discipline is second nature to you and it’s tough to explain, take your written instructions and a sample paper to the Writing Center; as outsiders, they can tell whether you are explicitly requesting what you expect.

✧ Define the audience for each paper. Is it you? Other students? An academic journal readership? This information helps students know how much quoted material to include and review, as well as the appropriate tone.

✧ Eliminate booby traps from the assignment. For example, a “compare and contrast” assignment may well produce thesis-free essays that either spend half the pages on each topic or simply list points of similarity and difference. Likewise, the series of questions you offer to stimulate students’ thinking may lead them to produce an unfocused essay that merely answers each question in turn.

✧ Help students get started. You might ask for a thesis statement about two weeks before a paper is due, together with notes about proposed supporting evidence and a list of sources in bibliographic form. If you want the student to acknowledge and respond to opposing arguments in the paper, you could also ask for a paragraph describing alternate points of view. Then you can help students as necessary before they submit the entire paper.

✧ Assign more, shorter papers or projects to permit more frequent feedback and improvement of students’



Lisa Reilly’s Medieval Architecture students working together to determine cathedral proportions.

work. If possible, assign a short (one- to three-page) essay early in the semester. Not only will you immediately identify students likely to have trouble, but you can also extract several thesis paragraphs you can use to explain revision techniques.

✧ When possible, give students opportunities and motives for revision. Incorporate a short essay into a longer final project, and students have a stake in improving their writing. For best results, require a preliminary draft of papers and projects prior to the final due date; read them quickly, note successes, pinpoint confusions, and suggest improvements. Don’t go into too much detail; leave the rewriting to the student. Yes, you will have some extra reading early on but usually noticeably better final drafts. You also avoid receiving a paper written the night before the due date.

✧ Finally, if your class attracts first- or second-year students or non-majors, consider requiring each student to submit a thesis statement in advance; then, if possible, have conferences with students in trouble. Otherwise, discussing strengths and weaknesses of thesis statements as a class can enlighten several students at once. For an effective, detailed process to help students create and complete a long-term project, consider the “Paper or Project Prospectus” (Angelo and Cross, 1993, pp. 248-53).

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a scream pierced the air. . . . Good writing takes enormous concentration.

—Charles Schulz, *Peanuts*, 1988

Grading Papers and Projects

Obviously, you must grade papers and projects according to the criteria you announce, so be sure you are happy with your advertised standards. Refer to the techniques described in the section on grading essay exams, but demand a much higher quality of writing and

reasoning for papers and projects that students have worked on over a period of time. Even when content is your main objective, comment on students' writing, organization, logic, and style; attribute part of the grade to these aspects of communication. When commenting, remember that students who write poorly may well not have learned yet how to do better. You may need to show that you cannot find a thesis statement or show why a paper is poorly organized. Poor writers might not know how to fix an "awkward" sentence; you need to explain what is wrong and, perhaps, how to fix it. To save time and offer as much help as possible, consider creating a checklist with adequately detailed examples of errors and corrections that you can attach to problematic papers. Use this to supplement, not substitute for, individualized comments. (See also "Interacting with Students.")

Class Participation

In many disciplines, students' classroom activities help them learn and demonstrate their mastery of such

0	Absent
1	Present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.
2	Demonstrates adequate participation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret them. Offers straightforward information. Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.
3	Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them. Offers interpretations and analysis of case materials (more than just facts). Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions.
4	Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material. Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material, e.g. puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further. Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, etc.

(Adapted from Maznevski, 1996.)

skills as analyzing, summarizing, evaluating, supporting opinion, and developing logical arguments. If a discussion section is part of a larger course, participation grades must be a significant part of the course grade if students are to take section work seriously (see "Preparing a Course"). Yet grading class participation can be difficult. To avert misunderstandings, share with students your evaluation method based on standards as objective as possible. This sample scale comes from a course based on the case method:

As with other aspects of their progress, students need to know how you rate their participation. Some students worry unnecessarily and need reassurance that they are doing well. Others need to know what to do to improve. (For details about individual problems, see "Interacting with Students.") Give students their participation grades about a month into the semester, and suggest improvements. A form such as the following one will be helpful:

Your participation grade in class so far: _____
To improve this grade, follow the suggestions checked below:

- Come to all classes.
- Volunteer when you have a chance.
- Show that you have prepared the text or lesson well by offering good questions or comments.
- Push yourself by trying to say something more difficult, analytical, or imaginative than usual.
- Comment via e-mail in a more detailed and analytical way.
- Try to move the discussion forward by responding to your colleagues' ideas.

(from Barnett, "Whose Course," p. 95)

Finally, take into account different personalities and learning styles. Students who are less verbally adept may need to begin by answering factual questions, learning from you and other students how to express and defend opinions. Your most successful discussion classes are not necessarily those in which all students perform admirably; you also want to see students *improve* their discussion skills.

I firmly believe that learning is a communal activity. In the undergraduate classroom especially, interaction is vital. Students learn best when they engage in genuine conversation, both among themselves and with the instructor.

—Stephen Arata, English

Determining Final Grades

Anticipate giving final grades from the moment you prepare the course (see “Preparing a Syllabus”). Be fair and reasonable in your expectations, and stick to the grading standards you design according to your course objectives. If you are a beginning teacher, you may tend to grade either too leniently or too harshly at first; to find the middle ground, keep your objectives and standards firmly in mind, and let your students know your policies and expectations.

Keep an accurate, complete record of all grades; routinely photocopy them in case of book bag theft, fire, hard drive crash, or other disasters that do happen. (Also, keep your records for several years; students return later with requests for recommendations.) To know how your students are doing as a group, find the average grade for each assessment and, better yet, plot the scores on a graph. Such a graph shows students how they are doing with respect to the group and alerts you to uneven distributions that may suggest a poor test. Comparing the distribution graphs for different types of assignments will show you students’ relative success on tests, quizzes, problem sets, or papers.

In the end, remember that grades indicate what knowledge and skills students have acquired in your course.



V. SPECIFIC TA CONCERNS

SECTIONS:

Expectations—On Both Sides
 Teaching
 Making Connections in Your Department
 Mentoring
 You and the Undergraduate
 Your Multiple Roles
 Your Role as Advisor
 Balancing Your Teacher/Student Roles
 Communicating Your Discipline
 Teaching American Students (for International TAs)
 What Do U.Va. Students Already Know?
 How Should You Interact with Students?
 How Can You Improve Your Communication Skills?
 How Can You Expand Students' Cultural Awareness?
 Conclusion

19% of the lecture courses
 31% of the seminars
 33% of the lab courses
 87% of the discussion sections
 41% of classes overall

As a teaching assistant (TA), you are essential to the educational process at the University of Virginia: at the core of the graduate programs, where you are students, and up front in undergraduate classrooms, where you are teachers. At the Teaching Resource Center, we consider you an instructor when you interact academically with students in any context: discussion section leader, laboratory instructor, instructor for your own course, lecturer, grader, tutor, or problem-session leader. Each of those possible roles, in a variety of departments and disciplines, entails a different set of expectations, rules, and responsibilities for each of you. In this section you will find some general notes on being a TA (also known as GTA, “graduate teaching assistant”) and directions to other useful handbook sections.

Expectations—On Both Sides

Although the term “teaching assistant” denotes an “assisting” role, you may or may not find yourself assisting a faculty member. Still, as a TA you are expected to perform certain functions, and you can expect the supervising faculty member to carry out certain responsibilities as well. Some of these are detailed below, and others are described in “Sharing Teaching.”

Teaching

Because you usually teach students in relatively small classes, you can influence them immensely. According to statistics from the U.Va. Office of Institutional Assessment and Studies, in fall 1998 graduate students taught a great deal:

Of course, these statistics do not take into account the enormous impact of graduate students as graders, the people who read and score thousands of problem sets, essays, and lab reports. Moreover, as TAs, you often teach essential introductory courses where students decide whether they want to learn more about your discipline and where they learn the basic information necessary for continued study. An undergraduate education is the end of formal schooling for most American college students; thus what and how you teach is basic to American society.

No matter what type of teaching or grading you do, remember that you educate undergraduate students by what you know, how you act, and how you encourage them to think and learn. Those who might say, “TAs are only in charge of lab courses (or do grading, tutoring, etc.); they don’t really teach,” define teaching too narrowly. Discussions, well taught, not only help solidify students’ knowledge but also teach critical thinking skills. Labs teach in hands-on, real-world ways. Drill sections teach students to *use* the material they’re learning. Good comments on students’ written papers teach clarity of thought, help writers develop a sophisticated style, and can make or break students’ desire to improve. You instruct students in whatever TA task you’re assigned.

I valued my first teaching because of what the teaching taught me about how to learn, what to learn, about the complexity of the discipline, and indeed about the possibilities of serious scholarship within the discipline.

—John T. Casteen, III, President, U.Va.

Making Connections in Your Department

Normally, you will find out about your specific TA duties from one or more designated faculty members in your department, whether a supervisor of all TAs or the faculty member you assist with a course. If you have questions about procedures in your department and have no assigned faculty supervisor, check with your departmental chair or graduate advisor. After you have some experience with a course, you might like to have more say in how it’s organized. If so, ask; many faculty members appreciate the fresh ideas you can bring and the give-and-take of collaboration. Here are the ways various types of TA assignments are normally supervised (see also “Sharing Teaching”):

✧ If you are teaching one or more sections (often a discussion or lab) related to a central course taught by a professor, that faculty member should supervise and coordinate your efforts. Make certain that you meet regularly with the faculty member and other course TAs; shared talk about teaching is one of the best ways to widen your knowledge and your repertoire of techniques.

✧ If you are teaching your own section of a multi-section course (as in foreign-language courses and some lab courses), a faculty member should serve as course supervisor, making sure that sections are comparable to each other with respect to content, pace, and grading. Be sure you know these course policies and follow them for the sake of fairness to the students and your colleagues.

✧ If several TAs are teaching a multi-section course, the faculty member may designate a “head TA” who takes on basic administrative tasks. Performing such extra duties gives you valuable administrative experience.

✧ If you are teaching your own course, as you may when you advance in some departments, consult with faculty members who have previously taught the course to be sure that you have the correct focus and requirements. If possible, observe an experienced instructor’s version of the course either before or during the semester you teach to pick up valuable techniques. You may be responsible for ordering your own books, equipment, etc.; check on this important detail well ahead of time (see “Preparing a Course”).

✧ If you are a grader, make sure you understand the course instructor’s standards and concerns. If possible, attend at least a few course meetings to see how the course is taught and to know the student population a bit. Although you need not know individuals to grade their papers, you do need a sense of what you can generally expect from students at this level. If the faculty member does not offer to grade initial papers with you, request this training. By grading a few papers independently, including comments and scores, and then comparing your reactions, you learn what the instructor expects students to learn from the course and how the instructor grades.

Mentoring

If we look at a teaching assistantship as an apprenticeship, we cannot ignore its corollary, *mentoring*. Your teaching and grading are usually linked with faculty-taught courses, and graduate faculty members in your department no doubt consider themselves mentors to you as future scholars. And you can equally benefit from

their expertise as mentoring teachers. Find out how your professor approaches class topics. Ask how a particularly successful discussion was organized. Use regular meetings with the professor to gain insights into how the course was prepared and into the philosophy behind teaching your particular discipline. Of course, the faculty member will not always consciously know why one class meeting was especially fruitful and another less so. But, by analyzing and discussing the teaching you see, you can rapidly progress as an instructor in your own right.

Often TAs develop approaches very different from mine; I encourage them to do whatever their particular interests lead them to do as long as the discussion is not peripheral to the understanding of the text and the students’ needs.

—Arthur Kirsch, English

You and the Undergraduate

Your Multiple Roles

Students tend to give different identities implicitly to their teachers (Magnan, 1989). As the semester goes on, you need to respond consciously to each of these roles in your own way.

✧ You’re the *expert*, in the classroom because of your knowledge of the subject, your experience, and your wisdom. Students expect expertise but are realistic; if you don’t know the answer, just say so, and then find out.

✧ You’re the *formal authority*. In charge, you need to set standards, goals, and deadlines. Learn early that it’s much easier to loosen a strict stance than to regain control after losing it. If you’re a softie, act tougher than you feel; but don’t be draconian or treat college students like high school students. Most of your authority comes through your conduct: for example, if you don’t extend deadlines, students quickly learn not to expect exceptions.

✧ You’re a *socializing agent*. For your students, you represent the values, assumptions, and intellectual styles of your discipline. Help them step inside that world.

✧ You’re a *facilitator*. Listen to, question, and challenge your students to facilitate their learning. Some students enter some courses without average or even adequate preparation or skills, but students cannot be categorized as either teachable or unteachable. Excellent teachers teach whatever needs to be taught, whether it be organization, reasoning skills, or responsibility.

✧ You’re a *role model*, even if you don’t want to be. Be conscious of the model you want to set, and think

about the exemplary teachers who have taught *you*.

✧ Finally, you're a *person*. Students expect teachers to be human. You can capitalize on this expectation, inspiring trust, encouraging them to express freely their ideas, opinions, and feelings, and making them more willing to think.

The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it.

— Anatole France, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard*, pt. II, ch. 4,
Lafcadio Hearn trans., 1881

Your Role as Advisor

Given the nature of the courses you teach, you frequently see students in smaller groups than do faculty members. Thus you can help them mature in ways that go beyond the subject matter:

✧ You can help students take responsibility for their choices: for instance, whether to turn in an assignment on time or to attend class. Know the rules that govern undergraduates' academic lives; consult *The Undergraduate Record* (available in your department and on-line at <http://www.virginia.edu/registrar/records/ugradrec/>) when students ask you to make an exception to a College or School rule (see also Appendix IV). Set clear guidelines about attendance, late assignments, and so on. Some eighteen-year-olds will test your regulations just as they test parental curfews; help them mature by being consistent and fair (see "The First Day of Class").

✧ You can save students time and help them feel like part of your department when they turn to you for general information or advice, academic advising, and consultation about problems. Be willing to listen and know University resources and the courses relating to yours as corollaries or prerequisites (see Appendix II and "Interacting with Students").

✧ You can assist students' social development by encouraging and monitoring their interaction with classmates (see "Teaching a Diverse Student Body" and "Discussion Sections").

✧ You can promote students' intellectual development by challenging them always to think more clearly and critically, by requiring intelligent work for a good grade, and by setting an example of rigorous intellectual inquiry. Think of your students as citizens of this country and of the world: What habits of mind and of inquiry would you like them to have, and how can you

help them develop them? (See "Teaching the Whole Student" and "Promoting Students' Intellectual Growth.")

✧ You can demystify the student-instructor relationship and thereby open a door to intellectual *exchange*. Not an invitation to student-instructor socializing, intellectual openness is rather your willingness to let students see how you explore and extend the boundaries of your discipline to understanding and knowledge. As a graduate student closely involved in studying and learning, you can show your students the excitement of discovery.

Balancing Your Teacher/Student Roles

Although your graduate student experiences can contribute greatly to your TA successes, the two roles can be ironically dichotomous: in one, you *give* grades, advice, and information; in the other, you *receive* them. And both roles place important demands on you. Yet your teaching assistantship is vital professional training necessary to a graduate academic degree. If scholarship is attaining and imparting knowledge, then teaching is an essential part of scholarship.

So, although being a graduate TA puts numerous, varied demands on your time and energy (see Appendix III), being professional means sparing your students the consequences of those demands. Balance your life as best you can; when the equilibrium slips, as it inevitably will, avoid blaming one part of your life for lapses in another. Simply apologize for jobs delayed or deadlines missed, remedy the situation as soon as you can and analyze the source of the problem to avoid future conflicts. If you feel consistently overloaded and see no solutions, discuss your predicament with your faculty supervisor or advisor.

Communicating Your Discipline

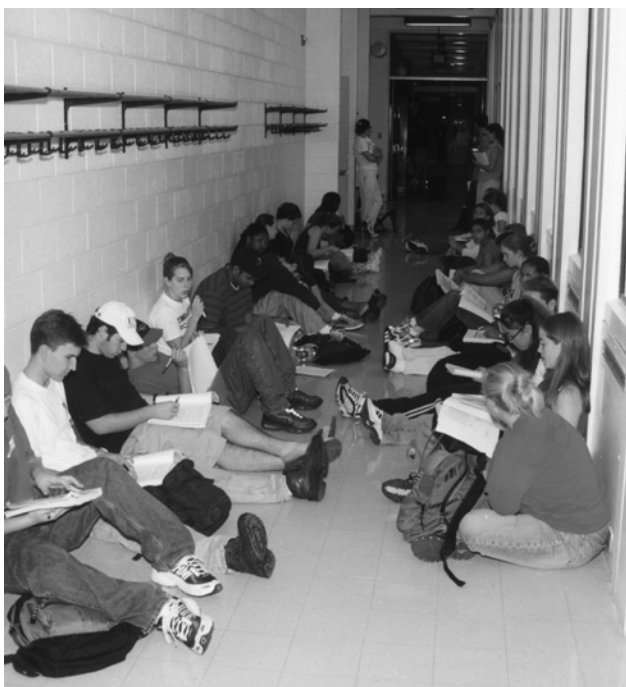
Teaching the subject matter you are pursuing at the graduate level can present another dichotomy: frequently the difference between the introductory level you're teaching and the advanced level you're studying makes them seem like different subjects: for instance, the basic biology of earthworm anatomy compared to doctoral research on neurobiology. Of course, some people wonder whether we need bridge this gap at all. For them, teaching introductory courses is a trial by fire, a stepping stone to what they consider bigger and better: teaching specialized courses.

In fact, that's not an accurate scenario for intellectual growth, as Sprague and Nyquist explain in their view of intellectual development as a three-stage spiral process (1989, pp. 14-5). They see beginning graduate

students at the first level; as novice-level thinkers, they know the basics of the discipline but do not understand all its complexities or use its conventions effectively. For example, a beginning graduate student might know British literature but not much of the critical or literary theory pertaining to it. Somewhat like students in introductory courses, they are still, to some extent, “outsiders” to the discipline learning the basics. So they can make effective teachers, with a good ability to communicate the fundamentals of the discipline.

However, graduate school masterfully socializes these novice thinkers within particular disciplines, making them into “insiders.” To succeed, they must refine the precision of their technical vocabulary and highlight narrowly defined research problems. When focusing and refining, it’s easy to lose touch with basic principles. At this intermediate level, “insiders” know and use the basics unconsciously, and it’s hard to communicate with “outsiders,” that is, undergraduate students. Thinkers who stay at this intermediate level of intellectual growth find most teaching difficult because it means working with people who don’t know as much as they do.

At the third, advanced stage of intellectual development, however, thinkers appreciate the similarities and differences of other specialties and can explain their discipline to those outside, including elementary and intermediate students. Only at this advanced level of intellectual growth does one attain professional maturity. Truly advanced scholars, those beyond the period of socialization, can translate and connect knowledge in countless ways, working in interdisciplinary settings, and communicating with scholars in disparate fields.



Waiting for chemistry lab.

Only after moving beyond the pleasant, socialized, in-crowd level can the critical thinker and scholar—you—explain what you’re doing to your friends, spouse, and students. Your teaching can help you move up to that advanced level of intellectual growth. As graduate students and TAs, you have a unique opportunity to view the teaching-learning process from both sides. Turning a dichotomy into a challenge will offer you useful insights into teaching and scholarship.

A crucial part of teaching, I believe, is to allow students to see and feel one’s emotional ties to a subject. I believe that it is a useful device to stop every now and then and “witness” for art and literature.

—Jessica Feldman, English

Teaching American Students (for International TAs)

If you are a teaching assistant from a country other than the United States (an international teaching assistant or ITA), your experiences teaching at the University of Virginia differ in some ways from those of American TAs. All new TAs experience a shift in perspective when they move from being a student to being a teacher. But as an ITA you face particular challenges and some surprises as you reach across cultural differences to interact with your American students. Certain American assumptions about students and learning may differ from those in your culture. By examining assumptions—both yours and your students’—you will better understand your students and become a more effective teacher in an American setting.

What Do U.Va. Students Already Know?

Students in U.Va. classrooms may surprise you not only by their informality of dress but also by their academic preparation. Although most U.Va. students were at the top of their high school graduating classes, they come with a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Because the United States has no standardized national curriculum, individual course content and student preparation differ, and you may find unexpected gaps in students’ knowledge. In addition, the amount and sophistication of equipment varies among high schools; some students may have no experience with what you consider basic equipment.

In many countries, higher education is reserved for a few; in the United States, more than half of the high school graduates attend college, and students enter U.Va. with various goals and interests. Some are looking for intellectual development or career preparation; others seek independence through various personal,

social, and cultural experiences. If your expectations about students' previous training and interest in your course are inappropriately high, you will certainly become disappointed and discouraged. To teach successfully, you may need more realistic expectations.

Unlike students in many other countries, American students normally follow a broad range of courses during their first two years in college and generally choose a "major," or area of concentration, by the third year. Since TAs often teach first- or second-year students in introductory courses, you may find that students' preparation and reasons for taking your course vary widely. Before classes begin, ask your supervising faculty member or an experienced TA about the expected level of students' preparation. Find out who usually takes your course and why, and find out all you can about the course: is it introductory, part of a sequence, required? What are the prerequisites, if any?

On the first day of class, ask your students about their background and interest in taking the course (see "The First Day of Class"). Ask them to list on index cards related courses they have taken and their reasons for taking your course. As you teach, keep their varied levels and interests in mind; check regularly to make sure they understand.

How Should You Interact with Students?

The typical informality of U.Va. students in class and in their relations with professors and TAs may surprise or even shock you. It is not unusual to see students in class eating or drinking, putting their feet on chairs, and reading newspapers. When you don't know how to deal with unfamiliar classroom behaviors, consult an American TA in your department or observe other TAs' sections to see how their students behave and how the instructor reacts. If some behaviors annoy or distract you or others, make specific rules for your class after consulting with your supervisor. (See also "Interacting with Students.")

American students also interact informally with the instructors. They often ask questions in a way that may appear to challenge the teacher. Rest assured that American teachers are respected; but, unlike teachers in some countries, they are not regarded as absolute authorities who cannot be questioned, doubted, or approached. More importantly, American professors encourage students to challenge them and to think for themselves because such behavior lets the instructor know that the students are learning and are involved with the course material. Teachers encourage students to have independent opinions and to make the course relevant to their own interests and goals. Students are often more casual with teachers they like and respect; they also appreciate the chance to discuss viewpoints that do not necessarily agree with the teacher's ideas.

What do American students expect and appreciate from their instructors? Here are a few common expectations, together with suggestions about how you can successfully respond to them even though your cultural expectations may be different:

✧ American students expect to be recognized as individuals, in and out of class; and they appreciate friendly teachers who in turn communicate something about themselves as individuals. You need to learn students' names and use them in class. Most often, American instructors call students by their first names; many TAs allow students to use their first names, although such informality is certainly not required. If you prefer to use your family name, do so; if you use your family name as your familiar name, explain that that is the name your friends use in your country. Also, let your students know who you are as a person. American students want to learn about life in other countries; some have traveled extensively, and many others would like to. In class, share information from your own life.

✧ Students want teachers to be approachable, available for questions, and responsive to helping them learn, even informally or outside of class. When you can, go to class early for informal conversations. Invite students to your office hours for a ten-minute get-acquainted appointment. Be flexible in accommodating students for office-hour appointments, but do not feel compelled to rearrange your schedule for them. Before mid-term or final exams, hold special office hours or review sessions. During office hours, students may want to discuss more than just questions about your course; they may seek general advice or ideas about study strategies. Furthermore, they may not know how to ask the questions they need for clarification. Be patient and offer various versions of the question; if they feel you are not judging their ignorance, they will feel less threatened by exposing it to you (see "Interacting with Students").

✧ Students expect teachers to *fully* explain course material, the details of course requirements, and the reason for grades they receive. Your department should provide a syllabus and grading scheme for your course; be sure you understand them and can answer students' questions about them. Make all assignments and deadlines clear (see "Preparing a Course"). Grade and return assignments and exams promptly, giving written comments to help students improve (see "Evaluating Students' Work"). If in doubt about the grading scale, consult with your supervisor or an experienced American TA.

✧ Students value interacting with the teacher and other students in the class. Allow time for questions, and elicit their comments.

✧ American students expect that their mistakes will be treated as part of learning. Consider mistakes as your best opportunity to discover how they're thinking. Why did the student make that particular mistake? How can you explain the right answer? What can you do next time to improve your presentation and avoid misunderstanding? Respond to students' errors politely and patiently. Above all, avoid ridiculing or belittling students.

✧ Students often look to TAs to translate the formal language of the lecture into everyday language they can understand. Make sure you can explain technical and professional terms to a beginner. Use concrete examples to illustrate these concepts.

✧ American students like knowledgeable instructors who are willing to admit that they do not know something. Prepare for class thoroughly. Anticipate areas of difficulty for your students and prepare responses to potential questions. If unexpected questions arise and you are unsure of the answers, tell the students, "I don't know, but I'll find out."

How Can You Improve Your Communication Skills?

You may think that your biggest problem is your English. And because English is not your native language, your students might fear they won't understand you and will miss valuable information. Here are a few suggestions to help you improve your communication skills:

✧ Remember that language is only part of the way we communicate. People from different cultures use nonverbal, or body, language and even spoken language in very different ways. An American smile is usually a sign of amusement; a Japanese smile may indicate embarrassment. Questions in English normally provoke an immediate response; questions in Chinese require a certain amount of thought from the person responding. Students will interpret your eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal messages by the American system, and you will interpret theirs through your own. Different systems are likely to cause misunderstandings and misjudgments.

✧ Study how American students and instructors interact. Note the signals that show they're listening and the expressions that show agreement or disagreement, interest or boredom, understanding or confusion. Use as many of these signals as you can. If you regularly use nonverbal behaviors from your culture that might cause misunderstanding, tell your students what they are and what they mean. As soon as you can, have your class videotaped and consult with your supervisor, an

American friend or a TRC staff member to analyze how effectively you communicate with your American students.

✧ Do all you can to improve your English. Pick up a copy of "Things To Do If You 'Have No Time'" from the Teaching Resource Center. Even though it is much more comfortable to spend most of your time with people who speak your native language, seek out English-speaking roommates, office partners, lab partners and friends or sign up for a "Conversation Partner" through the International TA program at the TRC. If possible, sign up for a pronunciation or oral communications course through the English as a Second Language Program. The TRC training course, "Classroom Communication for International Teaching Assistants," can help you examine specific areas of weakness so that you can improve.

✧ Openly acknowledge on the first day of class that you and your students may have difficulty understanding each other because English is not your native language. Everyone will feel more comfortable. Ask your students to let you know immediately when they don't understand. Tell them you may sometimes need to ask them to repeat or rephrase what they have said.

✧ In class, if you're not sure what a student has said, restate it to confirm your understanding. Do not pretend to understand or try to answer an unclear question. If students find you to be confident of your knowledge of the material, well prepared for class, and interested in them, they will overlook many of your language difficulties.

✧ Use the blackboard or overhead projector regularly to write key words that may be misunderstood and to emphasize their importance. Give your students verbal signals to let them know what you are doing, or where you are in your organizational plan as you lecture. Words such as "first," "next," or "an example of this" help students organize their notes and their thinking along with yours.

✧ Ask your students to comment on the course three or four weeks into the semester. A short evaluation of the progress of the class gives you valuable information about what students understand and what you can do to improve communication while you still have time. Sample comment forms and individual help are available in the Teaching Resource Center.

✧ Read other useful tips in Althen, *Manual for Foreign Teaching Assistants* (1988), available in the TRC.

How Can You Expand Students' Cultural Awareness?

Students' ignorance about your country and international affairs in general may surprise you. Partly because the United States is large, many Americans are sadly ignorant of the rest of the world and may imply that the United States is superior to other countries. Frequently unaware of the geography, the politics, or even the levels of technical and cultural advancement in other countries, most students eagerly want to learn about them. Help educate them by answering questions and acting as a representative of your country. Their prejudices against foreigners aren't related to you personally; in fact, you can best overcome them by allowing students to know you. Through their encounters with you, American students defeat some stereotypes by getting to know a compassionate, intelligent person who is not an American.

Conclusion

Improving teaching skills is an ongoing process that many instructors find challenging and rewarding. Although some of the demands made on international TAs are different from those facing American TAs, others are similar. Thus the Teaching Resource Center sponsors programs throughout the year to respond to your general needs, as well as a special ITA training course where you can examine teaching issues, practice techniques, and improve your communication skills.

In your department, you can obtain help from your supervising faculty member and experienced TAs. If you establish a reasonably friendly relationship with your students, they can help you with the English language, especially slang.

You are needed and welcome in the U.Va. community as a graduate student, beginning scholar, instructor, and representative of another way of viewing the world; you contribute to the University's educational system by sharing a cooperative learning relationship with your students. While teaching your discipline, you can eradicate stereotypes by acting as a well-educated, thoughtful representative of your country. We hope you find your TA experience at the University of Virginia positive and rewarding.

I have never believed good teaching is a natural gift, like good hand-eye coordination. Nor am I persuaded it requires acting talents, comedy skills, or a personality of extroversion. Instead, I have looked to models, mentors, written sources, and taping of lectures to improve and develop my own classroom endeavors.

—Kenneth Elzinga, Economics



VI. ANALYZING AND IMPROVING YOUR TEACHING

SECTIONS:

Attending Workshops
 Consultations to Analyze Teaching
 Consulting with a Colleague
 Consulting with TRC Staff
 Students' Help
 Assessing Students' Learning
 The One-Minute Paper, or the Muddiest Point
 Background Knowledge Probe
 Pro and Con Grid
 Seeking Students' Comments
 Comments Forms
 Teaching Analysis Poll (TAP)
 Final Evaluations
 Teaching Portfolios
 Analyzing Teaching and Your Career

As academics, we are trusted to make intelligent decisions, to learn because we love learning and the understanding knowledge gives us, and to act conscientiously toward our colleagues and students. Of course, with that autonomy comes responsibility for our personal and professional growth. This section offers ideas to help you keep growing as an instructor, including ways to analyze and develop your perspective and skills as a teacher, to share ideas with colleagues, and to find out what your students *really* are learning and how you can better help them.

Attending Workshops

You may well find attending interactive workshops to be the most efficient, engaging way to discover new approaches to teaching and to reconsider your own teaching. Teaching Resource Center workshops are

frequently interdisciplinary: faculty consistently find that they learn new ideas from colleagues in other disciplines. But workshops for a specific department or for TAs in a particular course also provoke enlightening exchanges and inspired teaching. To request a workshop on a particular topic, contact the Teaching Resource Center; to receive regular e-mail announcements of upcoming events related to teaching, ask to be on the TRC list of interested teachers. Attending workshops and applying the ideas you discover there not only makes you a stronger teacher but expands your personal connections at U.Va.

Conversations with colleagues in disciplines different from my own have prompted me to reconsider the very meaning of "teaching philosophy." I now regard my own teaching principles as developing guidelines rather than fixed and normative rules. I see them as both informing and being informed by everyday teaching practice.

—Cristina Della Coletta, Italian

Consultations to Analyze Teaching

To decide why your teaching works well and what improvements can be made, you need to look at it objectively, by yourself or with a sympathetic advisor. You can find such consultants in your supervising faculty member if you are a TA, the colleague with whom you team teach, peers in any department, or Teaching Resource Center staff members. Whether you work with a consultant or alone, resultant analyses and evaluations are *formative* in nature: they exist to help you improve, not to compare you with anyone else or judge the value of your work.

Some teachers tend to care so deeply about their teaching that it becomes synonymous with themselves. Such an instructor may equate feeling unsuccessful in the classroom with some personal lack and thus recoil from scrutinizing what doesn't work or from allowing a colleague to see it. If you find yourself shrinking from the thought of analyzing your teaching, feeling that your classroom should not be "invaded" by any other instructor, take a bold step now. The longer you delay, the more difficult the change and the less likely you will become the really fine teacher you could. Read on; one of the suggested analytical methods may feel comfortable to you.



Ishmail Conway leading the workshop "Making it Work for Everyone."

Consulting with a Colleague

Acquiring information about your teaching from colleagues should not be unidirectional or hierarchical. The best collegial assistance works in both directions and at all levels. If you are at the lower end of the hierarchy, you will not, of course, be able to establish such a system; but you can initiate mutual classroom observations and/or videotapings that will benefit both you and your colleague. Here are some suggestions:

- ✧ Begin with someone you feel comfortable with.
- ✧ Request that the colleague visit your class or watch with you a videotape of one of your classes. Note aspects of your teaching you'd like an outsider's opinion about: How clearly do you follow your stated outline? How can you encourage all students to discuss? How could you better explain difficult concepts? Limit your points of observation to four.
- ✧ Meet with your observer for fifteen to thirty minutes to discuss your interests and decide exactly what the observer will look for. What evidence will help you analyze your questions about your teaching? If the issue is equal participation in discussion, the observer might note how you call on students, how much wait-time you allow, what eye contact you make with various students, how well students pay attention, and how well students have apparently prepared. Considering evidence rather than impressions keeps the analysis objective.
- ✧ As class begins, introduce the observer to the students in whatever way you prefer. Sometimes instructors are concerned about students' reaction to an outside observer or camera. But experience shows that although a videotaped or observed class is, no doubt, subtly changed by the presence of an unfamiliar person, students normally appear to forget the camera or observer after about ten minutes. In effect, if you aren't bothered by the camera, they won't be. Make it clear that the observer (or camera) will help you improve your teaching.
- ✧ As soon as possible after class, in a relaxed setting, review the observer's notes together and draw conclusions about what the evidence means. You may find that you focus your eye contact and questions on students in the front. The observer may have noted that the problematic non-discussants spent a lot of time flipping through assigned reading. By examining appropriate detailed notes, you can draw useful conclusions yourself: for instance, you may decide that students were flipping pages because they were confused.
- ✧ Finally, decide what *few* teaching changes you will make to solve each problem. For instance, talking

individually with the students who seem unprepared is a logical first step. Making a conscious effort to look more frequently at the students in back and calling on them directly may help.

If the observation goes well, as it will if you follow these steps, your observer may well reciprocate. Once there taking similar notes, you will see a number of valuable teaching strategies to try. Observing and discussing teaching with colleagues also quickly develops and extends collegial feelings between faculty and/or TAs inside and outside your department. If you can be observed by a supportive senior colleague, the ensuing dialogue about teaching can help develop a beneficial mentoring relationship.

Consulting with TRC Staff

The Teaching Resource Center exists to help individual faculty members and teaching assistants teach as effectively as they can. All consultations with TRC staff are confidential and available only upon request from individuals. You can go on line, call or email the TRC (<http://trc.virginia.edu/Consultations/>, 982-2815, trc-ua@virginia.edu) to request an in-class observation or videotaping. From then on, the procedure follows the interview, evidence-gathering, analysis, and evaluation stages explained above; TRC staff members emphasize what you want to discover about your teaching, although we can offer general reactions and suggestions if you like.

With videotape, what an in-class observer might have noted likely appears on screen, and you can more easily analyze your own teaching. The TRC has camcorders, blank videotapes, and staff members to videotape your class; if you wish, you may keep a copy of your tape or use your own tape for the original. (For more details, see <http://www.virginia.edu/Consultations/>)

To know anything well involves a profound sensation of ignorance.

—John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*,
vol. I, pt. I, ch. 2, 1843

Students' Help

As those who are meant to learn from our teaching, students sometimes seem logical evaluators. Nonetheless, just as children do not always choose the healthiest cereal, students do not always judge teaching properly. They cannot judge, for instance, how well you know the subject matter. For some students, teaching evaluation forms seem to be popularity contest ballots; for others, black balls from a club. Yet, although your students should not be the only ones to evaluate your teaching,

they are the recipients of your teaching and can offer insights different from those gained through classroom observation and videotape analysis (see McAllister, 1999). In fact, seeing what and how well your students are learning overall can tell you a great deal about your teaching. And there are a variety of methods to gather productive responses from students about your teaching.

Assessing Students' Learning

If you have prepared conscious goals and objectives for your course, you know what your students should know at the end of most classes and certainly at the end of each unit. To a large extent, you can deem your teaching and their studying effective if students have learned, and you don't have to wait until a quiz or exam to assess understanding. Assess your students' learning frequently and informally (ungraded and usually anonymously); here are some favorite techniques from Angelo and Cross (1993):

The One-Minute Paper or the Muddiest Point. Stop class a few minutes early, put a question on the board, and ask students to write an anonymous response on a half-sheet of paper or 3x5 card you distribute. Pose questions about content, in-class activities, assignments, or anything you're curious about. Check on factual understanding: "Which of the compounds described today are the most stable, and why?" Check on understanding and ability to draw inferences: "From what we've seen of French culture, why would you think French people often say that Americans have no friends, only acquaintances?" Or ask students to write what they found to be the muddiest or most confusing part of the lesson (Mosteller, 1989). It is essential that you read and analyze students' responses as a group, and then respond appropriately during the next class. You might review part of your previous lecture, give more information about a topic students understood, or solve more problems as examples.

Background Knowledge Probe. In order to collect more specific and useful information about students' prior learning, distribute short questionnaires at the beginning of the semester or before introducing a new topic, thus previewing what is coming and reviewing what students already know. Ask at least one question that most students should know, and at least one other question that is more difficult. Avoid unfamiliar vocabulary because it may obscure knowledge of fundamental facts or concepts. Emphasize that these are ungraded and are neither tests nor quizzes. Report results at the next meeting so that individual students will be able to gauge their level of preparation relative to that of the class as a whole.

Pro and Con Grid. To assess students' level of analysis and capacity for objectivity, ask them a question that will elicit thoughtful pros and cons in relation to an important issue, dilemma, or judgment in your course. To make their pros and cons more comparable, you can indicate a specific point of view they should adopt; and be sure to tell students whether to write in sentences or phrases. In analyzing students' responses, you can begin with a simple frequency count, looking at how students tend to perceive the issue. Or you can compare their lists with yours, or see how balanced their two sides are. Their responses may well provide you with a perspective to begin the next class.

With any of these assessment techniques, when you read responses soon after class, you will know more about your students. If you find many incorrect answers to factual questions, you know you're not getting your message across. If students can't draw inferences, you need to teach them how. The students' "muddiest points" may be ones you thought were clear; analyze the source of the discrepancy and figure out a better way to explain the point during the next class.

Student questions and facial expressions inform me about what issues to delve into in more depth, what examples to give, and what stories to tell. I attend to faces carefully. I tell a lot of stories.

—Dennis Proffitt, Psychology

Seeking Students' Comments

Assessing how much students are learning from your teaching does not preclude asking them directly what they think about the course and your teaching. To gain the most benefits from student comments, however, you must seek them *early* in the semester, preferably no later than a month after the course begins. Necessarily formative evaluations, since you are going to use them to make interesting and useful changes, these offer several advantages. First, you have the time to improve in areas where you and the students agree improvements are warranted. You can seek students' opinions about aspects of the course that most concern you. Students value the chance to give their opinions, and they notice and appreciate ensuing changes, often applauding such improvements on final course evaluations. Finally, devoting a little time to analyzing teaching increases the dialogue between you and your students about the course, motivating some of them to put more into it, too.

Comments forms. Use the One-Minute Paper format ("Do you prefer small-group or whole-class discussions,

and why?”), or create a brief form to gather precisely the information you need. It can be as short as three or four questions:

- How well are the assigned readings discussed in class?
- What can the teacher do to improve discussions?
- What can the other students do to improve discussions?
- What can you do to improve discussions?

Use only questions that require students to create an answer, and try to generate as many ideas as you can. Open-ended questions also work well: “I learn the most when we _____ because . . .” Of course, with such item types, you cannot statistically analyze the data; yet early in the semester you will have information and ideas. For help with questions or format, call the Teaching Resource Center; *How Am I Teaching?* by Weimer et al. (1988) offers sample forms directed toward various specific needs.

Ask your students to answer the questions anonymously during the last few minutes of class; questionnaires that leave the room rarely return. Announce that you will read comments immediately and summarize the results and your plans for the future. While reading students’ remarks, decide how you could incorporate helpful suggestions and why some proposed changes will not work. Via e-mail or during the next class, explain what you can and cannot change and why. Students who learn early on why a desired modification is not possible rarely complain about it later.

Teaching Analysis Poll (TAP). The Teaching Resource Center can also give you a summary of your students’ views about their learning in the course by conducting a Teaching Analysis Poll for you. To begin, you first discuss your course with a TRC consultant: format, objectives, students’ background and assumed motivation, and your concerns. Then, one day, thirty minutes before the end of class, you introduce the consultant, declaring that you have initiated a student-oriented analysis of the course and that you will talk about results with students during the next class. You leave the room, with an appointment to talk with the consultant soon.

The consultant gives groups of four or five students five minutes to answer three questions:

- What most helps you learn in this class?
- What impeded your learning?
- What suggestions do you have for improvements?

One student in each group writes on the board, in three columns, the answers most group members agree about. The consultant monitors responses to verify that a proposed solution accompanies any problem. With

the class as a whole, the consultant reviews comments on the board, clarifying ambiguities and keeping only those observations that a majority of the students approve. The consultant thanks the students and reiterates that the instructor will receive the summary of reactions remaining on the board.

During the follow-up meeting, the consultant conveys the students’ information, adding details from the conversation and discussing possible refinements and modifications. The consultant can help you decide what modifications to make, if any.

The TAP gives you more details than do individual written evaluations because students have time to discuss the course in a safe atmosphere and because the consultant prohibits vagueness. Furthermore, you know that the majority of students concur with the recommendations. Gone is the one negative remark that grates for days; gone are the ambiguities of written remarks contrary to fact: how does one explain the statement, “We didn’t have any small-group work,” when students worked in small groups at least once a week? The TAP is completely confidential, the consultant keeps no written notes, and a TAP can be requested only by the instructor involved.

Final evaluations. Use your departmental or school-wide standardized final evaluation form; you may include other questions as well. Of course, do not look at these student evaluations until after you have submitted final grades. Even if you don’t recognize individual evaluations, negative responses (including those with little foundation) can make it difficult to grade final papers objectively.

Do read your evaluations soon after submitting your grades. Make notes or highlight positive comments; list negative comments with the number of times each appears. If you have at least a dozen responses, you can probably ignore a negative comment that occurs only once unless the author offers a useful suggestion. Evaluate the positive comments alongside the negative ones; you will see contradictions, indicating that students are individuals—and human. Most importantly, assimilate the useful suggestions and analyze the source of any repeated negative comments: maybe you do talk too much during class discussions. *Decide how you will improve next time, and note your ideas.* If your evaluations frustrate or confuse you, discuss them with a supervisor, colleague, or TRC consultant. It can be enlightening to see them through the eyes of an objective observer. Evaluations should be helpful; they may be important to your career; you need to determine what they mean. Finally, if your department allows you to keep copies of your students’ evaluations, do so; you may need them when you’re nominated for a teaching award or write your teaching portfolio.



Conversation over lunch at the August Teaching Workshop, Old Cabell Hall.

Teaching Portfolios

Much of the documentation you gather in the activities explained above will be useful evidence in a teaching portfolio. Teaching portfolios are used for a number of different purposes:

- To allow you to reflect analytically upon your teaching
- To help you improve your teaching through a process of self-analysis and reconsideration
- To organize documents pertinent to teaching that you can mine later for grant applications or award nominations
- To document your effectiveness as a teacher
- To help you strengthen the relationship between your teaching and research
- To organize evidence of your professional expertise

Rather like the professional portfolio of an artist, composer or writer, the teaching portfolio shows the person's best work, and perhaps argues for better work to come.

—Robert Bruner, Darden

To create a teaching portfolio, you select, analyze, and comment on documents that demonstrate your teaching of your discipline. The brief narrative statement includes your reflections on teaching, summaries of what and how you teach, efforts toward improvement, and evidence of teaching effectiveness. Evidence supporting assertions appears in appendices or web links: for example, syllabi, students' work presented anonymously

(perhaps with your remarks or grades), students' comments, a videotaped class, colleagues' observation comments.

Although you can certainly create a teaching portfolio on your own (see Seldin, 1997 and Edgerton et al., 1991), many U.Va. faculty and TA colleagues recommend participating in the biennial TRC workshop because it offers individualized coaching, support from colleagues writing *their* portfolios, and wide-ranging interdisciplinary conversations about teaching ideas. Whether you plan to create a portfolio or not, think about what constitutes products of good teaching as you go about your teaching. You can quickly gather some of the information that you will find invaluable in analyzing or presenting your teaching. For ideas about what to collect, contact the Teaching Resource Center.

Writing a portfolio, I learned how to contextualize the values and philosophies, my style and methods of teaching, and my concerns in a healthy and positive way.

— Anonymous comment,
participant in TRC Workshop on
Teaching Portfolios, 1999

Analyzing Teaching and Your Career

College and university administrators want good instruction for their students; if you are entering or continuing in the academic job market, it should benefit you to convince search and promotion committee members of your excellence in teaching as well as in research. Spending some time and energy analyzing your teaching not only enhances your skills but also your self-confidence: you know why you are effective. The narrative statement from your teaching portfolio can tell a compelling story. Web-based portfolios are easy to access. Offering a videotape of a successful class as part of your dossier can make you stand out positively. Your letters of recommendation for the job market should also include details about how you interact and communicate with students in the classroom; if you have done collegial observations, you have a proficient letter-writer handy.

If you are a graduate student who plans a career other than teaching, your classroom experience can still hold you in good stead. Your future employer will be glad to learn that you present yourself well in front of an audience, that you have strong organizational and/or leadership qualities, that you meet deadlines, and so on. While improving your teaching, you are developing skills applicable to many endeavors. A supervisor who knows your successful teaching career at U.Va. can write directly about your abilities.

As an assistant professor, if you consistently spend even a little time considering your teaching with colleagues' assistance, you will assist senior colleagues with promotion and tenure decisions. As noted above, your colleagues should enjoy conversing with you about the intellectual challenges of teaching and research and want to keep you in the department. In addition, colleagues who have seen you teach can speak knowledgeably about your teaching; you will have a stronger dossier than one that comes simply from students' evaluations. A teaching portfolio organizes pertinent evidence for easy understanding.

Finally, never forget the personal satisfaction of teaching well: the excitement of a student who *finally* understands, the pleasure of constructing a balanced and organized presentation, the thrill of opening new vistas to curious minds. Teaching can counterbalance the loneliness sometimes inherent in scholarly pursuits and offer the scholar an immediate outlet for intellectual energy. If teaching well matters to you, work on it as you would any skill you want to acquire. In the academic world, teaching well matters more all the time.

A teacher affects eternity; he never can tell where his influence stops.

— Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1907

APPENDIX I

TEACHING AWARDS

Several University-wide teaching awards, fellowships, and endowed chairs are available each year at U.Va. to recognize exceptionally effective teaching. Award descriptions appear below, as well as at <http://trc.virginia.edu/Awards/> where you will also find the names and departments of all recent and previous award winners. Consult your department or school for various local awards.

The All-University Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

Under the auspices of the Teaching Resource Center, winners of approximately thirty GTA awards of \$250 are chosen annually through departments. These award-winners are considered for four \$1000 awards, with one award in each of the four areas of humanities (including architecture and the Engineering/Science, Technology, and Society), social sciences (including commerce and education), sciences (including engineering and nursing), and medicine. A faculty committee coordinated by the TRC selects the four major GTA awardees from this group.

The All-University Teaching Award

In a program supported by the Office of the Provost, three awards of \$2,000 each are given to outstanding faculty members teaching undergraduate students in each of three broad areas: humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Six additional \$2000 faculty awards are given for undergraduate, graduate, or professional instruction in any discipline. Nominations are solicited by the Faculty Teaching Awards Committee.

The Alumni Board of Trustees Teaching Award

Any faculty member who has been at the University no longer than nine years and who is a full-time untenured faculty member on a tenure-track is eligible for nomination. The Alumni Board of Trustees awards an outstanding teacher a \$2,500 cash prize and a \$1,500 research award. The Office of the Provost provides the winner with a one-semester leave at full pay.

The Alumni Association Distinguished Professor Award

The Distinguished Professor Award is conferred annually upon that member of the faculty who has, over a period of not less than ten years, excelled as a classroom teacher, shown unusual concern for students, and made significant contributions to the life of the University. The award consists of an inscribed and framed certificate, a cash prize of \$2,500, and a Life Membership in the Alumni Association.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Outstanding Faculty Award

This award recognizes excellent college and university faculty in Virginia on the basis of exemplary contributions to teaching, research, or public service. Winners of these state-wide awards are chosen by a committee made up of State Council leaders, business and community leaders, faculty members, and past recipients. The award consists of a \$5,000 cash prize.

The Cavaliers' Distinguished Teaching Professorship

Faculty members appointed to the Cavaliers' Distinguished Teaching Professorship because of enduring excellence in teaching devote attention primarily to enriching instruction in their discipline during the chair appointment and beyond. They work with the Teaching Resource Center to promote the general enhancement of teaching and normally teach a University Seminar.

The NEH Distinguished Professorship

In response to a proposal written at the Teaching Resource Center, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded U.Va. a Special Challenge Grant. That challenge met, the University now has three rotating, three-year chairs for distinguished faculty members in the humanities to pursue special projects related to teaching their disciplines:

The Richard A. and Sara Page Mayo DTP
The Horace W. Goldsmith DTP
The Daniels Family DTP

Distinguished Teaching Professors also regularly share their ideas generated interdisciplinarily through TRC-sponsored workshops.

The University Teaching Fellowship

With summer research grants of \$7,000 and ongoing, interdisciplinary discussions, the University Teaching Fellows Program aims to help our most intellectually sound and successful junior faculty members develop into exceptionally fine teachers. Under the auspices of the Teaching Resource Center, a committee composed of award-winning faculty members and former Fellows and Mentors annually choose six Fellows. They

participate in an off-Grounds retreat and monthly meetings to discuss aspects of teaching that interest them and consult about their course development projects.

The Teaching + Technology Initiative Fellowship

The Teaching + Technology Initiative (TTI) is a joint venture supported by the Provost and the Vice President for Information Technology. Through this program faculty are supported in creating or revising a course that makes use of emerging technologies. TTI faculty interactions, coordinated by the Teaching Resource Center in conjunction with the Instructional Technology Group, include a retreat at which Fellows identify their concerns in pursuing this work and regular meetings at which Fellows update each other on progress with projects and hear from experts on relevant topics. For further information, visit the TTI website: <http://nmc.itc.virginia.edu/tti/>

The Seven Society Graduate Fellowship for Superb Teaching

This \$7000 Fellowship funded through an anonymous bequest to the Seven Society recognizes a teaching assistant who embodies the highest ideals of teaching at the University: dedication to students, substantial knowledge of the subject matter, and skill in conveying passion for that knowledge. Nominations are made by undergraduates, and the selection committee is composed equally of faculty and undergraduate students.

The Dr. Frank Finger Graduate Fellowship for Teaching

Funded by a bequest of J. Huston McCollough, III in honor of Dr. Frank Finger (former Alumni Professor of Psychology), this Fellowship is awarded each year to a graduate teaching assistant from the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, in recognition of stimulating and organized classroom teaching. The fellowship amount is \$5,000.

The Class of 1985 Fellowship for Creative Teaching

Funded by a gift from the Class of 1985, this \$5,000 Fellowship is awarded annually to a U.Va. teaching assistant in honor of most creative teaching.

APPENDIX II

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

A. ACROSS GROUNDS

NB: For more details about particular services, see “Where Can I Find . . . ?”

**To the best of our knowledge, all of the following services, locations, and URLs were correct and up to date at the time of publication. As technology continues to change, some websites may be moved or updated. If you have trouble locating a particular site, you can always perform a web search from the U.Va. homepage (<http://www.virginia.edu>).

Office of African American Affairs

Luther P. Jackson House (924-7923)
<http://www.virginia.edu/oaaa/>

The Office of African American Affairs offers a wide range of services and programs to create a welcoming and nurturing environment for African American students. Among them is the nationally recognized Peer Advisor Program, which provides first-year and entering transfer students individualized, sensitive, and caring support through formal interactions with U.Va. administrators, faculty, and staff. The Faculty/Administrator Mentoring Program provides second- and third-year students with faculty mentors. The Student Leadership Program offers students leadership education training and development. In addition, the OAAA works in collaboration with schools, departments, other Student Affairs' offices, student organizations, and the Charlottesville community to provide cultural activities and educational programs to benefit the entire University community.

Arts & Sciences Center for Instructional Technologies (ASCIT)

Cabell Hall 219 (924-6874, 924-3470)
<http://ascitweb.clas.virginia.edu/>

The Arts & Sciences Center for Instructional Technologies at the University of Virginia supports use of technology in teaching in the College of Arts and Sciences. This includes consultation with faculty on creative ways to enhance classroom instruction with technology. They also provide an extensive equipment loans service and are the home of the Language Laboratory, a digital facility delivering authentic resources for language learning and teaching.

Associate Provost for Classroom Management and Academic Support (924-3728)

Contact this office for physical accommodations (such as a room with carpeting or air conditioning, a separate exam room, or a location change for a public lecture) or for special access needs (a temporary ramp, outlet for an electric wheelchair, etc).

Center for Alcohol and Substance Education (CASE)

2400 Old Ivy Road (924-5276)
<http://www.virginia.edu/case/>

CASE is dedicated to providing the University of Virginia community with education activities and prevention programs related to substance abuse concerns. By providing outreach, trainings, consultation, and group classes, CASE aims to increase knowledge and

awareness of alcohol and other drug issues and to decrease the negative consequences associated with high risk drinking and illegal drug use.

Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities/ Ombudsman

Washington Hall, East Range (924-7819 General U.Va. TTY Relay: 982-HEAR).

The coordinator holds primary responsibility for the University's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and works to further program and physical accessibility at U.Va.

Center for American English Language & Culture (CAELC)

B019 Garrett Hall (924-3371, caelc@virginia.edu)
<http://www.virginia.edu/provost/caelc/>

CAELC helps international students and faculty members who are non-native speakers of English become linguistically and culturally fluent. To do so, CAELC provides a number of services, including the SPEAK test, courses in English pronunciation, writing and conversation, the Language Consultant Program and the International Teaching Assistant Program. The Language Consultant Program matches international graduate students and scholars with native English-speaking U.Va. students to offer non-native speakers weekly practice in conversational English and American academic culture. The student volunteers also provide information about US academic culture as well as feedback and a realistic audience for ITA's practice teaching sessions. As a part of the ITA program (administered by CAELC, the TRC, and the Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Science [GEAS]), CAELC conducts the SPEAK test to evaluate the spoken English skills of prospective ITAs upon their arrival or if requested by their department. Based on the results of the SPEAK test, a prospective ITA may be advised to complete further language training by enrolling in oral English courses offered through CAELC.

Center for Diversity in Engineering

351 McCormick Road (924-0604)
<http://www.seas.virginia.edu/diversity/index.html>

This office strives to increase the recruitment and retention of first generation and underrepresented students pursuing degrees in engineering and applied sciences at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Center also seeks to develop a pre-college network that will encourage knowledge of and interest in engineering at both the primary and secondary levels.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Elson Student Health (243-5150)

<http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/caps.html>

The Center provides a broad, comprehensive range of psychological services: psychological and psychiatric assessment, referral, individual, couples and group psychotherapy, emergency walk-in and crisis consultation, 24-hour on-call crisis consultation, and consultation to administrators, faculty, students, families, and allied professionals. A substance abuse clinician provides consultation and treatment to students concerned about their use of alcohol and other drugs, or who are affected by another's substance abuse. CAPS provides suicide prevention programming and psycho-educational outreach.

Office of the Dean of Students

Peabody Hall (924-7133)

<http://www.virginia.edu/deanofstudents/>

The Office of the Dean of Students provides advising services and co-curricular programs to enhance student life and development, working to create an academic environment where diversity is valued and encouraging students to become responsible, active members of the University and local communities. Included under this office are Deans of Asian/Pacific Student Affairs and Hispanic/Latino Student affairs. For more information, contact the main office. Deans also deal with discipline problems inside and outside the classroom.

Electronic Text CenterAlderman Library (924-3230 or extext@virginia.edu)<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>

The Electronic Text Center combines an on-line archive of tens of thousands of SGML- and XML-encoded electronic texts and images with a library service that provides hardware and software suitable for creating and analyzing text. The Center supports teaching and research projects and offers ongoing training sessions.

Equal Opportunity Programs Office (EOP)

Poe Alley, West Range (924-3200)

<http://www.virginia.edu/eop/>

The EOP Office implements the University's nondiscrimination and equal opportunity policies. A faculty member, staff employee, or student having a concern about discrimination based on race, age, color, sex (including sexual harassment), religion, national origin, foreign citizenship, disabilities, veteran's status, political affiliation, or sexual orientation may contact the EOP Office informally or to file a formal complaint.

Geospatial and Statistical Data Center (Geostat)

Alderman Library (924-3169)

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>

Geostat helps the University community identify, acquire, and use digital data sets for statistical and geographic analysis. Working closely with the instructor, Geostat can provide classroom instruction in the use of the Library's large data holdings, which include government collected data as well as the archives of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. Geostat also provides reference services based on statistical data and maps and hosts a

computing lab devoted to the analysis and electronic mapping of issues studied in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

Hispanic/Latino Programs and Services

Peabody Hall (924-7438, 924-7133)

<http://www.virginia.edu/deanofstudents/latino/>

This organization, stemming from the Office of the Dean of Students, distributes information relevant to the Hispanic/Latino community (including people of Latin American origins and all those interested in the community, culture, or issues). In collaboration with other University offices, the Office of the Dean of Students works with Hispanic/Latino students and organizations to strengthen their interconnectedness and their ability to benefit from, and contribute to, the life of the University and of the wider community. The website provides links to a variety of programs designed to support Hispanic/Latino students.

Honor Committee

Newcomb Hall, 4th Floor (924-7602)

<http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>

Comprised of members elected from the schools of the University, the Honor Committee is responsible for maintaining and strengthening the University's community of trust. Each academic department is also assigned an Honor Committee liaison with whom faculty and TAs may consult.

Information Technology and Communication (ITC)

235 Wilson Hall (924-3731 or consult@virginia.edu)<http://www.itc.virginia.edu>

ITC provides a wide range of computing support services to U.Va. faculty and students, including research computing support, Instructional Toolkit (<http://toolkit.virginia.edu/displaydocs.html>), electronic test scoring (<http://www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/unix/docs/u022.testscor.html>), and short courses on a variety of computing and web-related subjects. Students and faculty can obtain information and assistance at the helpdesk and in the on-Grounds computer labs.

Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH)

Alderman Library (924-4527)

<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/>

The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities supports computer-mediated faculty research projects in the humanities and can help develop teaching resources based on those projects. Projects are selected in an annual application process, and support includes office space, teaching release time, technical support, and access to high-end computer equipment. The Institute does not provide walk-in service, nor help develop resources unrelated to its research projects, but faculty members are invited to discuss potential research projects with the Institute's Director.

International Center

21 University Circle (924-7983)

<http://www.virginia.edu/iso/ic/>

The Lorna Sundberg International Center provides a dynamic environment where members of the

University and local communities can come together and learn about the cultures of the world. The Center offers support services, development and execution of cultural and education programs, outreach services, and learning opportunities for individuals, both international and American, to share and enhance their cross-cultural knowledge and leadership skills. The Center also features a multi-cultural library available to students and Charlottesville community members. In addition, the Center coordinates short-term lodging for international students and faculty.

International Studies

<http://www.virginia.edu/iso/>
208 Minor Hall (982-3010)

International Student and Scholar Program staff advises international students, research scholars, and visiting faculty from abroad about visa regulations, employment, and any individual concerns. Overseas Study Program staff offer information to undergraduate students who study and do internships abroad.

Learning Needs and Evaluation Center (LNEC)

Elson Student Health Center (243-5180)
<http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/l nec/>

LNEC provides support services for students with disabilities in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. These services include reasonable academic accommodations and assistance with enrollment and residence life, including group instruction in specific learning and study skills during the academic year. In addition, their psycho-educational evaluation services for students with unexplained academic difficulties help diagnose learning, attention, and/or emotional disorders and plan appropriate treatment. LNEC also offers learning and study skills workshops during the academic year and their services are available to all undergraduate and graduate students.

LGBT Resource Center

435 Newcomb Hall (982-2843)
<http://indorgs.virginia.edu/lgbtrc/>

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center provides students and faculty with the opportunity to attend programs, evaluate resources, and talk to peers regarding concerns or questions. This resource exists for questioning and LGBT students, as well as everywhere else in the spectrum. The Speaker's Bureau is available for presentations in classrooms and the Resource Library is available for browsing and check-outs. Their website also provides additional information and links on LGBT groups and issues within the U.Va. community.

Mathematics Tutorial Center

Kerchoff Hall (924-4919)

The Mathematics Tutorial Center primarily helps first-year students in elementary calculus and pre-calculus programs but also serves students who need help in other areas. The tutors are mathematics students selected by the Department of Mathematics. The free tutorial sessions are held in Clark Hall.

Peer Health Educators

Student Health, corner of Brandon and Jefferson Park Avenues (924-1509)
<http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/phe.html>

Trained University students provide comprehensive health promotion programs through outreach, patient education and special events enabling students to make well-informed health decisions.

The Robertson Media Center (RMC)

Clemons Library, 3rd Floor (924-7474 or mediacenter@virginia.edu)
<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/clemons/RMC/>

The RMC combines both analog and digital media services supported by the Library and ITC. Here you can gain access to extensive collections of video, audio and digital media and view analog or digital media in carrels, small group rooms or classrooms. You will also find facilities for scanning, digitizing, CD burning, HTML and multimedia production. Formal support for instructional technology is available on site.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Southwest Wing, Rotunda (924-7984)
<http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/services.html>

Students who have a disability covered under the ADA/Section 504 guidelines can receive reasonable accommodations, such as classroom reassignment, transportation services, or other modifications to physical structures. Contact the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center for audio or visual aids, note takers, readers or interpreters (LNEC 243-5180).

Sexual Assault Education Office (SAEO)

UVA Women's Center (982-2774 or saeo@virginia.edu)
<http://sexualassault.virginia.edu>

The SAEO's goal is to increase awareness of sexual assault issues and strategies for personal safety through educational programs for students, faculty, and staff. The SAEO works on strengthening University policies and procedures, provides advocacy for students, staff, and faculty dealing personally with sexual assault or domestic violence issues, and maintains a network of appropriate referral resources while working closely with University groups. SAEO staff provides guidance for students who are exploring their options both outside the University (criminal and civil courts) and internally (adjudication or more informal meetings). We consult with faculty who are concerned about particular student problems, or who have questions about how to infuse these issues into the curriculum. The SAEO library has resources covering a broad range of issues including books, videotapes, journals, and clipping files. The website is a rich resource both for students conducting research for papers, and for individuals seeking information for personal reasons. The Coordinator, Claire Kaplan, can also speak to classes as an alternative to canceling a session if the instructor is away.

U.Va. Speech Language Hearing Center

2205 Fontaine Avenue (924-6354)

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/commdis/clinicvoice.html>

Run by the Communications Disorders Program, the Speech-Language Hearing Center offers a variety of services to the community, including accent modification for nonnative speakers of English.

Student Health Service

Elson Student Health Center (924-5362)

<http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/>

The Student Health Service is responsible for all aspects of health care of enrolled University students' with valid IDs. Its facilities include General Medicine, Allergy, Gynecology, Counseling and Psychological Services, Health Promotion, Learning Needs Evaluation, a clinical laboratory, and pharmacy. Please call ahead for an appointment.

Summer Session

210 Miller Hall (924-3371)

<http://www.virginia.edu/summer/>

Most Summer Session courses equal fall and spring semester courses both in character and in credit value and include undergraduate- and graduate-level courses leading to degrees in the schools of arts and sciences, architecture, commerce, education, engineering and applied science, and nursing. Special courses lead to teacher certification in Virginia.

Tutorial Program

B-11 Garrett Hall (982-2273)

http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/undergrad/special_programs/aap.php

The Tutorial Program of Student Academic Support offers group tutorial support when requested by students or faculty for courses centered in the College of Arts and Sciences. (Additional support is available through the Office of Minority Programs in the School of Engineering, and through LNEC.) The focal points of the College program are first- and second-year mathematics, sciences, economics, accounting and finance, and foreign language. Other options are available if requested, including private tutoring. All tutoring is dependent on the availability of qualified graduate or undergraduate tutors. Students must sign up in the Office of Student Academic Support (Garrett Hall, B-11). The office maintains a list of qualified tutors in many fields and students may make private financial arrangements for individual tutoring.

University Career Services (UCS)

Bryant Hall, 2nd floor (924-8900)

<http://www.virginia.edu/career/>

UCS assists undergraduate and graduate students with attaining their career-related goals. Services include an extensive career library, individual career advising, EXTERNships and job fairs, pre-professional advising for students interested in law or medicine, as well as panel discussions, career information days and workshops. The Minority Career Fair, held in the fall semester, also provides a unique recruiting opportunity targeted towards minority students but open to all. Although

primarily focusing on non-academic employment assistance, graduate career services include teaching portfolio reviews for the academic job search.

University Registrar

Carruthers Hall (924-4122)

<http://www.virginia.edu/registrar/>

The Office of the University Registrar provides services related to the creation and maintenance of academic records. The office oversees student enrollment and registration, coordinates course rolls and grade submission, operates the Integrated Student Information System (ISIS), and maintains the academic transcripts. The office also maintains the *Undergraduate and Graduate Records* (catalogs) on-line, provides diplomas and intermediate honors certificates, administers enrollment verifications and loan deferrals, and assigns classroom space.

UVA Pride<http://indorgs.virginia.edu/uvapride/>

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Faculty, Staff & Graduate Student Association was founded in the spring of 1992 to serve the needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of the University of Virginia community. By providing advocacy, education, social events and an open forum, UVA Pride hopes to foster a more tolerant and diverse atmosphere both in the community and at the University.

Virginia Relay Center

(1-800-828-1140/1120)

<http://www.varelay.org/>

The Virginia Relay Center allows deaf, hard of hearing, and speech-impaired persons to communicate with hearing persons over the telephone. For more information, see the website.

Writing Center

314 Bryan Hall (924-6678)

<http://www.engl.virginia.edu/wctr/>

The Writing Center offers free individual tutoring in writing to all undergraduate and graduate students. Each tutor is a graduate student in the English Department with experience teaching composition or tutoring. Tutors recommend students call in advance for appointments but can sometimes accommodate walk-ins. The Writing Center is open Monday through Friday, with hours and procedures posted each fall.

Women's Center

The Corner Building, University Ave. (982-2361)

<http://womenscenter.virginia.edu/>

The Women's Center offers education and service to University and community members. Programs include a scholars, artists and activist lecture series; personal counseling and workshops on topics of interest to women; and mentoring and leadership programs. The Women's Center also publishes *IRIS: A Journal About Women*, manages the First Year Resource Center and administers the HUES program, which provides business development skills and career-focused guidance to women of color.

B. WHERE CAN I FIND . . . ?

A. ROOMS

Who assigns classrooms?

Office of the Registrar Facility Coordinator,
Carruthers Hall (924-4132)

Who cleans classrooms?

Facilities Management, 575 Alderman Road (924-1777)

How do I have the temperature in my classroom adjusted?

Facilities Management, 575 Alderman Road (924-1777)
Health Sciences Center Physical Plant
Sub-basement Hospital West, Room 5306 (924-2267)

How do I arrange for a room to hold a large function, meeting, or film?

Facilities Coordinator's Office, Newcomb Hall (924-3203)

How do I arrange for a room to show a film to my class?

Robertson Media Center, Clemons Library (924-7409)

B. PRINT MEDIA

Where can I have printed materials copied or receive FAXes for a fee?

Alderman Library Copy Center, 1st floor
ph: 924-3785 fax: 924-0516
Bookstore Copy Center
ph: 924-3634 fax: 924-3635
Cabell Hall Copy Center, Room 237
ph: 924-7022 fax: 982-2002
Carruthers Hall, lower level
ph: 924-7716 fax: 924-3105
Chemistry Building Copy Center
ph: 982-2098 fax: 982-2099
Primary Care Center, Room G-512
ph: 924-5681 fax: 982-1828

Where can I read and get paper copies of microfiche and microfilm?

The following libraries have both microfiche and microfilm readers and printers:
Alderman Library Periodicals & Microforms Room
Third Floor Alderman Library (924-3516)
Chemistry Library Reserve Room (reader only) (924-3159)
Clemons Library (reader only) (924-7029)
Fiske-Kimball Fine Arts Library
Microforms Room (924-7024)
Graduate Business Library (924-7321)
Health and Science Library Learning Resource Center
(microfiche reader only) Reference Desk (924-5444)
Law Library Media Department (924-3495)

Music Library, Old Cabell Hall (924-7041)
Physics Library (reader only) (924-6589)

C. COMPUTING FACILITIES

Where can I obtain information about mainframe computing?

ITC Help Desk, Wilson Hall 235 (924-3731)
Informational documents, consulting services, short courses, and the Academic Computing Newsletter.
<http://www.itc.virginia.edu/>

Where can I have my tests scored by computer?

ITC Help Desk, Wilson Hall 235 (924-3731)
<http://www.itc.virginia.edu/desktop/unix/docs/u022.testscor.html>
Administrative Computing Services, ITC
Carruthers Hall (924-7840)

How can I create and manage classrolls, maintain an electronic gradebook, place materials on electronic reserve, and order textbooks online?

<http://toolkit.virginia.edu/>

How can I receive an email list of students enrolled in my course?

<http://www.virginia.edu/registrar/hbcourse.html#electronic>

D. AUDIO-VISUAL & DIGITAL MEDIA

Where can I obtain a movie or slide projector; laser disc, DVD, VHS, CD, or record player; or tapes and a tape recorder?

Depending on your department or school, audio-visual equipment is available at the following locations:
Arts and Sciences Center for Instructional Technologies (ASCIT)
219 Cabell Hall (924-3470)
<http://www.virginia.edu/~asmedia/>
Darden School Instructional Technology Group
Darden School (982-3076)
Educational Technology Center
Curry School of Education
207 Ruffner Hall (924-7086)
Health Sciences Library, Learning Resources Center
(924-5521 or 924-5444)
Law Instructional Technology Center
(924-7174)
Robertson Media Center
Clemons Library (924-7409 to reserve a classroom or video; 924-7286 for digital media needs)
<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/clemons/RMC>

Where can I have audiotapes made?

Audio recording, editing, and copying are available at the following locations:

Arts and Sciences Center for Instructional Technologies

219 Cabell Hall (924-3470)

<http://ascitcweb.clas.virginia.edu>

Darden School Instructional Technology Group

(982-3076)

Educational Technology Center

207 Ruffner Hall (924-7086)

Health Sciences Library, Learning Resources Center

(924-5521 or 924-5444)

Law Instructional Technology Center

(924-7174)

Robertson Media Center

Clemons Library (924-7474)

Where can I burn CDs or edit videos?

Robertson Media Center

Clemons Library (924-7286)

<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/clemons/RMC/DML/index.html>

E. CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGIES**Where can I learn how to set up a web site?**

ITC Help Desk

Wilson Hall 235 (924-3731)

<http://www.itc.virginia.edu>

Robertson Media Center

Clemons Library (924-7474)

Where can I digitize photos?

Robertson Media Center

Clemons Library (924-7474)

Where can I find multimedia resources for use in class (audio and video materials, electronic texts, maps)?

Robertson Media Center

Clemons Library (924-7409 or 924-7474)

Electronic Text Center

Alderman Library (924-3230)

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>

Geospatial and Statistical Information Center (Geostat)

Alderman Library (924-2630)

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/>

Where can I find a scanner?

Robertson Media Center

Clemons Library (924-7286)

F. PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICES / PRINTS, SLIDES AND MAPS**Where can I have slides and photographic prints made for class?**

Customer Service, Newcomb Hall Bookstore (924-3721)

Alderman Library Copy Center (924-0517)

Medical Photography (924-5296)

Where can I get slides?

Arts and Sciences Center for Instructional Technologies

219 Cabell Hall (924-3470)

<http://ascitcweb.clas.virginia.edu>

Where can I obtain large maps?

Geospatial and Statistical Data Center (Geostat)

Alderman Library (982-2630)

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/>

Government Documents

Alderman Library Third Floor

(924-3133)

Reference Room Atlas Collection

Alderman Library (924-3021)

G. TEACHING SKILLS**Where can I obtain information about programs to develop teaching skills or simply discuss my teaching?**

Teaching Resource Center

Hotel D, 24 East Range (982-2815)

<http://trc.virginia.edu>

Where can I arrange for videotaping of my class and practice presentations?

Some departments will videotape your class upon request; check with your departmental administrator.

Teaching Resource Center staff will videotape a class session for any teaching assistant or faculty member who wants to consult about the class. You must give one week's advance notice.

Hotel D, 24 East Range (982-2815)

trc-uva@virginia.edu

H. PERSONAL**Where can I get advice about handling personal and academic difficulties?**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

204 University Way (243-5150)

I. EVALUATION

Where can I obtain help in constructing questionnaires for evaluating teaching?

Teaching Resource Center

Hotel D, 24 East Range (982-2815)

<http://trc.virginia.edu>

Where can I find out about instruction and course evaluation?

The *Dean of the Faculty* of each school oversees the process of instruction and course evaluation

J. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Where can I find University policies on the web?

The Honor System, as explained by the Honor Committee:

<http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>

The University's Sexual Harassment Policy:

<http://www.virginia.edu/eop/harass.html>

The University's Conflict of Interest Policy:

http://www.virginia.edu/provost/docs_policies/conflict.htm

The University's Policy on Academic Fraud:

<http://www.virginia.edu/honor/proc/fraud.html>

The Faculty Handbook:

<http://www.virginia.edu/provost/policies.html>

Other policies:

<http://www.virginia.edu/uvapolicies/>

Graduate Record:

<http://www.virginia.edu/registrar/records/gradrec/>

Course Offering Directory:

<http://www.virginia.edu/cod/>

Undergraduate Record:

<http://www.virginia.edu/registrar/records/ugradrec/>

APPENDIX III

TIME MANAGEMENT

Here are some techniques that have helped others manage their time well:

Try a Time Log.

✧ First, list your activities: studying, classroom teaching, preparing, grading, reading for pleasure, relaxing or goofing off, performing household tasks, building personal relationships, sleeping.

✧ Then, throughout the day for several days, note how much time you spend in each category, adding as much detail as you like, and adding categories when necessary. Of course, your time log will not be completely accurate, but it should give you a good idea of how much time you give to different activities and how closely your ideal matches reality.

✧ Consult with a friend or colleague to see how to rearrange your schedule to accomplish more each day: Do you think best in the mornings or at night? Are you losing time by lingering in the department when you might accomplish more at home or in the library? Are you having enough fun to be productive?

Make a Plan for Action.

With or without your personal time log, you need to manage your life, perhaps by setting up a plan for action:

✧ First list your long-term career goals and your short-term work goals, remembering to include goals imposed from the outside (qualifying exams or compositions to grade, for instance).

✧ On each list evaluate the importance of each goal to you, from “A” (highest) to “C” (lowest and, in fact, perhaps not really necessary). Consolidate goals that are similar and reconcile goals in conflict with each other.

✧ Identify the actions necessary to accomplish each goal, and list those tasks in order.

✧ Consider what resources you need to accomplish each task (time, money, people), and decide when you hope to accomplish each step. This final list—complete with goals, tasks, necessary resources, and time line—constitutes your plan of action from which you fill out part of your calendar and your daily “To Do” list.

✧ Concentrate on your “A” and “B” goals, remembering that you cannot successfully schedule more than half your time without becoming frustrated. High achievers commonly have a plan and priorities for each day and are thus less inclined to muddle through their days.

Reassess When Necessary.

Certainly, even the best-conceived, goal-oriented action plan will not always make your days run smoothly. The end of the semester is a high-pressure time for most academics. When faced with more than you feel you can possibly do, decide what you absolutely must do and let the rest slide. If, on the other hand, you find that you often procrastinate or rarely finish your “To Do” list, reevaluate your plan of action. Do you truly care about the goals you have set for yourself? Have you set a number you can expect to accomplish in the time allotted? Are you avoiding a particular type of task? If you find you dodge writing activities, for example, seek help for writer’s block.

If you feel overwhelmed by all you have to do, spend the time necessary to set up a system like this one. If, on the other hand, you are satisfied with the way your days go, you are probably managing time effectively in a less structured way or even unconsciously. In either case, you should find yourself controlling rather than controlled. (For more information, see Hedrick, 1990, or Winston, 1991.)

APPENDIX IV

COLLEGE STUDENTS' QUESTIONS—WITH THE RIGHT ANSWERS

NB: For details about regulations, consult the *Undergraduate Record*, *Graduate Record* or *Faculty Handbook*, as appropriate. Here are answers to frequently asked questions in the College of Arts and Sciences.

I'd like to change the grading option in this course to CR/NC. Would you please approve this request on a petition to my dean?

The deadline for changing the grading option is always the same as the end of the ADD period, i.e., two weeks into the semester. This date is NOT flexible.

I just realized I'm taking this course CR/NC, and I need it for an Area Requirement course. Will you authorize a change in the grading status?

The Deans do not approve late requests for changing the grading basis of a course.

I just realized I'm taking this course CR/NC, and I need it for a major (or minor) requirement. Will you authorize a change in the grading status after the deadline has passed?

Such changes are normally not approved. The student must petition the relevant Department for credit toward the major, but the grading option will remain CR/NC. An individual instructor can always inform the department of the student's grade.

I want to drop this class, but it's past the deadline. Will you approve my petition?

The deans rarely approve petitions for late drops. If the deadline for withdrawal has not passed, a student may withdraw with the instructor's approval, receiving a notation of W. The student asks the instructor to complete a Grade Indicator Form and has the dean sign it.

Since I just got my exam back now and discovered I need to drop this class, isn't this justification for a late drop?

No. Decisions cannot be based on return of exams. There must be an enforceable deadline.

If I take an Incomplete, by when must it be finished?

Students have ONE MONTH to finish their work. Incompletes not approved in writing will convert to F's. Students must pick up a form to authorize an incomplete in Garrett Hall, have it signed by the instructor, and return it to Garrett Hall for authorization.

I need a better grade for this course to count for credit in my major. Can I submit additional work after the grade has been submitted?

No. See the grade change policy statement in the Undergraduate Record. Grade changes are allowed only for errors in transcription or in calculation.

How late can I withdraw from a class?

The final withdrawal date is set at ten class days before the end of classes. After that, students must complete the work on time or through an Incomplete.

I have to take a plane to _____ over the break to see my family (or to be in a wedding, etc.). To get a reservation, I had to make one before the end of finals. Can't I PLEASE take your final early?

College policy is that there are NO early exams. The instructor might allow a student to mail an exam in later, take an Incomplete, or complete the exam as a take-home.

How do I postpone an exam because of an overcrowded exam schedule?

Students must go to Garrett Hall to complete the Exam Change paperwork.

I was ill and missed a quiz. How can I make it up?

Instructors make their own decisions about make-up exams. Do not send students to the dean for an excuse.

From an instructor: Several of my students are doing really poorly. How do I find their association deans to discuss the situation?

Call 924-8863 with a student's name or U.Va. ID number and request the student's association dean. You can learn the dean's office hours, leave a message, or talk with the dean's secretary.

FURTHER READING AND VIDEOTAPES

These works are available for consultation and/or loan in the Teaching Resource Center, Hotel D, 24 East Range, or through the TRC web site, as noted. Videotaped workshops on many of these topics are also available for loan, though not listed here. Handbooks for teaching assistants have been created for several departments; a current list and some samples are available at the TRC.

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