The Fundamentals of College and University Teaching

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1 The Science of Learning

Many people mistakenly believe that great teachers are born, not made. To be sure, some people are born with an intuitive gift for teaching. But every instructor can benefit from an understanding of how students learn. Here, we look at what recent research in neuroscience, cognitive and developmental psychology, and assessment has taught us about student learning and how can we best apply these findings to improve teaching.

Topics:

1 Glossary

Scholars of learning have developed a technical terminology to describe the factors—cognitive, affective, and pedagogical—which contribute to robust student learning. Here is a list of key terms and concepts used in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Active Learning
Techniques that actively engage students in learning. These may include inquiry and problem-based learning activities. Examples:

- ***Hypothesis Generation:*** Ask students to generate a hypothesis.
- ***Brainstorming:*** Present an open-ended problem for the class to solve.
- ***One Minute Question:*** Ask students to describe a concept in the reading or lecture that was especially difficult or confusing.
- ***Sequencing:*** Ask students to order a series of events or developments.
- ***Decision Making:*** Have students identify critical junctures and the decisions that they would make at each juncture.
- ***Concept Mapping:*** Have students create a graphic representation of the relationships among concepts.
- ***Problem Solving:*** Present students with real life problems to which they must apply content knowledge and theory.
- ***Make It Personal:*** Ask students to identify a real world example of a particular concept or theory.

Alignment
Ensuring that activities and assessment meet your learning goals.

Assessment
Tools for measuring student progress toward and achievement of your learning goals.

Backward Design
Designing instructional materials by first setting learning goals then determining what outcome would illustrate achieving those goals, and then designing classroom activities to help students meet those goals.

Bloom's Taxonomy
A hierarchy of six levels of cognition—knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation.

Constructivism
A theory developed by David Ausubel that people learn by constructing conceptual frameworks.

Inquiry Based Learning
Engaging students in the process of exploration.

Learning Goals
What students should know, understand, and be able to do.

Learning Outcomes
Specific, measurable learning goals.

Metacognition
The process through which students monitor and assess their own understanding.

Prior Knowledge
The skills and understandings and misunderstandings that students bring to class.

Problem-Based Learning
An approach to teaching driven by a question or problem, which uses a variety of methods of inquiry to research and address the question.

Rubric
The criteria by which a work will be evaluated.

Scaffolding
Supporting a student's learning just beyond the level the student could do alone.

2 What We Know About Student Learning

In recent years, a model of higher education that emphasized the transmission of knowledge and skills has given way to a new paradigm, which shifts the focus from the instructor and toward the student. This is a shift from transactional to transformative teaching.

In transactional teaching, an instructor conveys information and students are expected to assimilate and synthesize new knowledge on their own.

Transformational teaching, in contrast, is much more self-conscious about its objectives and methods. It adopts a learner-centered rather than an instructor-centered approach. It makes students privy to the instructor's larger goals and expectations. It prepares students to understand that they will receive challenging feedback. It cultivates reflective learning by giving students opportunities to reflect on the learning process. It gives students assignments that they find meaningful, involving case studies, real-world data and problems, research and inquiry, and encourages them to public display their findings. It requires instructors to monitor what their students are learning and to adjust their pedagogy if students are not developing an adequate command of the material.

Several key principles underlie the new transformational teaching paradigm:

- That it is not enough for students to master certain facts and procedures; learning is enhanced if students develop a deep conceptual understanding of a particular topic
- That instructors must build on students' preconceptions and prior knowledge.
- That teachers must teach key concepts and skills in multiple ways.
- That students need to develop a capacity to accurately assess and reflect upon their own learning.
- That students acquire deeper knowledge when they engage in "authentic practice," a process of inquiry using discipline-specific methods of research, analysis, and reporting.

Teaching can be **didactic**, emphasizing the transfer of information. It can be **philetic**, in which the teacher serves as role model and mentor. It can be **evocative**, assisting students in discovering the personal meaning of a topic or text, rather than seeking some larger truth. Then there is **heuristic** teaching, which engages students in a process of inquiry and discovery to help them develop the habits of a particular discipline.

3 Learning Theories

During the past century, educational psychologists have advanced a number of theories about how students learn. During the nineteenth century, a set of ideas known as "faculty psychology" dominated. It likened the mind to a muscle and considered education a way to strengthen the intellect so that it could control the will and emotions. This view was challenged first by behaviorists, who emphasized the power of repetition and positive and negative reinforcement in learning, and subsequently by social learning theory, which stressed the importance of observation, imitation, and modeling, and by cognitivism, which shifted attention to the "mental maps" or schema that individuals acquire or create, and which can be revised as learners acquires new information. Many ideas that are now commonplace were advanced by cognitivists:

- That information that is relevant and meaningful is easier to remember than information that isn't.
- That practice or rehearsal makes it easier to retain an idea.
- That prior knowledge or preconceptions can advance or hinder future learning.
- That memory is improved when a learner categorizes ideas or concepts (for example, by using mnemonics).
- That memory is context dependent; that is, it's easiest to remember an idea in a particular context than outside of that context.

Jean Piaget developed a particularly influential cognitivist model which held that cognitive capacities and forms of logic and modes of thinking develop through a series of bio-psychological stages.

A more recent development is constructivism, which argues that learning is an active process in which individuals construct their own frameworks of conceptual understanding.

There is, of course, more to learning that what takes place in the cognitive domain. Other contributors to learning include the affective domain – especially in the area of motivation – learning style preferences, and the learning environment, including instructor-student and classroom dynamics

4 Learning and Cognition

No silver bullet will, by itself, boost student achievement. Nevertheless, recent research has identified certain factors that do enhance or inhibit student learning, influencing students' motivation, memory, attention, and higher-order thinking skills, including the ability to synthesize and evaluate information, apply concepts and skills in multiple contexts, and to create generalizations and predictions. Here is a list of 16 cognitive factors that empirical research has demonstrated to have an impact on student learning.

Cognitive Disequilibrium
Contradictions, anomalies, gaps in knowledge, and impasses stimulate inquiry, curiosity, thinking, and deep questions, which in turn lead to deeper learning.

Cognitive Flexibility
A student's cognitive flexibility increases when the student is aware of multiple viewpoints, perspectives, and points of view about a phenomenon.

Cognitive Load
Excessive or extraneous information can make it difficult for students to process and assimilate information.

Deliver Information in Multiple Modes
Information is better remembered when it is delivered in multiple ways (verbally, visually, etc.) than when delivered in a single medium.

Generation Effect
Learning is enhanced when learners produce answers rather than simply recognizing answers (for example, on a multiple choice test).

Grounded Cognition
Whenever concepts are introduced, it is essential to ground them in real-world experience.

Higher Order Questions
Deeper understanding is elicited by questions such as why, how, what-if-and what-if not, as opposed to shallow questions that require the learner to simply fill in missing words, such as who, what, where, and when.

Mental Modeling
Explanations that consist of causal analyses of events, logical justifications of claims, and functional rationales for actions provide coherence to the material and justify why information is relevant and important.

Metacognition
Metacognition refers to one's self-awareness of one's own thought processes. It also involves the ability to monitor comprehension and accurately evaluate one's learning. Metacognition helps students avoid distractions, sustain effort, and modify their learning strategies based on their awareness of the strategies' effectiveness.

Multiple Examples

An understanding of an abstract concept improves with multiple and varied examples.

Narrative
Stories and other forms of narrative are easier to read, comprehend, and remember than other types of learning materials.

Organization Effect
Outlining, integrating, and synthesizing information produces better learning than rereading or reviewing the materials.

Spaced Learning
Long-term retention of information is greater when it is spaced out over time rather than concentrated in a single class session.

Testing Effect
Frequent testing keeps students engaged in the material.

Testing Expectations
If students expect a comprehensive exam, they are better able to retrieve the information.

Zone of Proximal Development
Learning is enhanced when learners have to organize the information themselves or exert additional effort during acquisition or retrieval than in conditions in which the information to be learned or retrieved does not require effort. Teachers should present the to-be-remembered information in formats that require effortful processing.

5 Emotional Factors Affecting Learning

There is an affective as well as a cognitive dimension to learning. Motivation, attention, and persistence are strongly influenced by emotional factors. Here are four emotional factors that influence the assimilation, processing, retrieval, and application of knowledge and skills.

Engagement
Whereas some earlier learning theorists underscored the importance of positive and negative reinforcement as motivators for learning, intrinsic motivations appear to be even more important. Intrinsic motivations might include curiosity or the desire to solve a problem. Engagement tends to decline if an activity is motivated by the promise of a reward (as opposed to an intrinsic motivation, such as a desire to increase one's competence). Motivation is also reduced if individuals engage in more than one activity at a time, or if they attribute their failure to a lack of ability (rather than a lack of effort).

Regulatory Fit
Learners have distinct styles that influence learning. Especially important is whether a student has a prevention and promotion focus. A student with a prevention focus is especially sensitive to negative outcomes, seeks to avoid errors, and is driven by security concerns, while a student with a promotion focus is more sensitive to positive outcomes. Learning is enhanced when there is regulatory fit, when fit when the manner of in which a student engages in an activity sustains their goal orientation or interests regarding that activity.

Stereotype Threat
Fear that one's behavior will confirm an existing stereotype of a group with which one identifies has a negative effect on student performance.

Student Learning Styles

We frequently hear that students have disparate learning styles: That some are auditory learners, while others are visual or tactile or kinesthetic learners (who learn by manipulating objects or engaging in projects) or analytical learners (or prefer information presented in sequential steps), or global learners (who do not like to be bored and prefer various kinds of stimulation). Then there are other learning styles: competitive, collaborative, independent, dependent, participatory, resistant, and avoidant. Rather than placing students in rigid categories, it appears that most students learn in multiple ways and that it is best, therefore, to present information in multiple ways.

6 The Psycho-Social and Developmental Dimensions of Learning

In addition to the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning, instructors need to be aware of the influence of psycho-social and developmental factors upon learning.

Learning involves a process of personal transformation within specific social contexts. Maturation as a learner requires a student to develop a capacity for self-direction, self-monitoring, and self-generation of ideas, and to shed earlier ways of thinking and earlier forms of self-expression. Because the process of intellectual maturation involves fundamental transformations in a student's self-perception and thinking, it is often emotionally wrenching.

Students must also construct a conceptual framework that allows them to integrate and organize new knowledge into a coherent structure. Conceptual learning involves something quite different than the learning of skills or the mastery of content and concepts. It involves the discovery of meaningful patterns, the formulation of generations, and constructing arguments that are located in a larger disciplinary conversation.

The Classroom as a Site of Interpersonal Interaction
Learning generally does not take place in isolation. Rather, learning involves interpersonal interactions in a social setting. Students assume certain roles and adopt certain distinctive styles. We might term this the "sociology of the classroom."

That students fall into certain stereotypes—jocks, grinds, party animals—is part of the conventional wisdom. Among the roles students commonly adopt are the compliant, the annoyingly argumentative, the habitual rebels, and the discouraged and fatalistic. Other student types include careerists, intellectuals, strivers, and the disconnected. It is sometimes postulated that first and second generation immigrant students often fall into certain categories: assimilators, accommodators, and resisters.

The Natural History of a Classroom
Classes tend to go through certain predictable stages, or what we might term a "life course" or a "developmental cycle." Many classes, which begin with a great deal of enthusiasm, find the level of energy declining around midterm, before ending on a note of sadness as the end of the semester approaches and the learning community that had been established breaks up.

Learning and Students' Psychological Development
Students' psychological development does not end at adolescence. Indeed, it is clear that the college years are just as important in students' cognitive, emotional, moral, and social development. How does college affect students? It influences their verbal, quantitative, and subject matter competence, their cognitive skills, their identity, self-concept, and self-esteem, and values and attitudes.

• The peer group is the single most important source of influence on students' development: on personality development, attitudes and values, behavior patterns, career development, and satisfaction with college.

• The extent of peer interaction is strongly connected to overall satisfaction with college.

• Women's attendance at women's colleges and African American students attendance at predominantly black colleges is positively related to success and achievement in later life.

• The degree to which faculty are student oriented is second only to the influence of the peer group on students' growth. Measures include interactions outside of class, student engagement in research under a faculty member's supervision, and feedback on papers.

Feminist Pedagogy and the Psycho-Social Dimensions of Learning
The psycho-social aspects of learning have been a particular concern among feminist pedagogues, who argue that learning is context sensitive. Proponents of feminist pedagogies view the classroom as a site of power, privilege, and hierarchy, and regard teaching as an inherently political act. Yet the politics of the classroom, these scholars maintain, remain obfuscated.

Within the traditional classroom, these scholars argue, certain ideas, perspectives, and forms of behavior, discourse, and argumentation are favored. The conceptual design of a course tends to remain hidden and unexamined, while the selection of topics and readings reflects unspoken ideological presumptions. Meanwhile the approach to teaching in the traditional classroom, whether involving lecture or discussion, takes the significance of a particular text or topic for granted and fails to model the range of alternate interpretive or analytical approaches. All of these factors lead some, if not many, students to feel marginalized, discouraging deep learning.

7 Applying the Science of Learning to the Classroom

Most teaching is wholly uninformed by empirical research into student learning. How can we translate the findings of the Science of Learning into practical and effective teaching strategies? Here are some suggestions.

Anchored Learning
Learning is enhanced when students, individually or in groups, try to solve a challenging practical problem that matters to them.

Cognitive Disequilibrium
Students' motivation and learning is increased when they must explain a contradiction or anomaly, fill a gap in knowledge, or overcome an impasse.

Cognitive Flexibility
Students ability to apply knowledge, concepts, theory, and skills develops when they have the opportunity to solve problems that vary in content and complexity.

Cognitive Load
An instructor can facilitate student learning by eliminating clutter, extraneous information, or excessive numbers of points to assimilate.

Deliver Information in Multiple Modes
Students will remember more if information is delivered in multiple ways (verbally, visually, etc.).

Generation Effect
Learners should be given opportunities to produce answers rather than simply being told an answer or being provided an answer (for example, on a multiple choice test).

Grounded Cognition
After introducing an abstract concept, instructors should provide concrete examples.

Higher Order Questions
Instead of relying on recall questions, teachers should ask open ended question that involve applying knowledge or concepts or skills, making predictions, constructing generalizations, or evaluating interpretations or theories.

Mental Modeling
You can help your students draw mental models by asking them to offer causal explanations and provide justifications or rationales for certain arguments.

Metacognition
Strategies for encouraging metacognition include having students:
- Ask reflective questions;
- Recount their thought processes as they attempt to solve a problem; and
- Make graphic representations of their thoughts and knowledge (e.g. concept maps, flow charts, semantic webs).

Multiple Examples
An instructor can help students understand abstractions by providing multiple and varied examples.

Narrative
Stories and other forms of narrative are easier to read, comprehend, and remember than other types of learning materials.

Negative Suggestion
By providing immediate feedback on exams and quizzes you can prevent students assuming that incorrect information is correct.

Organization Effect
It is helpful to have students outline and synthesize information rather than simply reviewing or re-reading it.

Spaced Learning
Spread out important information over the course of the semester rather than concentrating it in a single class session.

Testing Effect
Frequent testing encourages study, enhances student engagement, and helps student retain essential information.

Testing Expectations
By creating an expectation that students will be responsible for information later in the semester, they are more likely to remember it.

Zone of Proximal Development
Students should create assignments that require effort to process.

2 Learner-Centered Course Design

A “transmission” model dominates thinking about teaching in colleges and universities. An instructor transmits a body of knowledge to the students who are expected to master the subject matter. Teaching evaluations reflect this conception of teaching. The questions focus on an instructor’s content knowledge, preparation, and clarity.

A learner-centered course places the student, not the instructor, at center stage. It shifts the focus from content delivery to student learning, from memorization and regurgitation to “deep learning.”

In learner-centered course design, an instructor asks how every element of a course—from the syllabus to the final exam—contributes to student learning. The objective is to produce students who do not passively absorb content, but actively acquire skills, conceptual frameworks, and disciplinary habits of mind.

Topics:

1. Designing a Dynamic, Coherent, Memorable Learner-Centered Course
2. Creating a Learner-Centered Syllabus

1 Designing a Dynamic, Coherent, Memorable Learner-Centered Course

In designing a learner-centered course, an instructor begins by identifying the course’s learning objectives—the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the course is intended to convey--then "works backwards," asking how best to help students achieve those objectives. This approach, which is called “Backward Design,” makes it much easier to plan your class calendar and to identify the activities, assignments, and tests that you will incorporate. It encourages you to think rigorously about what your students need to learn and helps you avoid the “coverage trap,” by encouraging you to include only those topics that will contribute to student mastery of your learning goals.

Here are the steps your can take to create a learner-centered course.

Step 1: Don’t Reinvent the Wheel
Examine how others have taught the subject. Look online. Peruse syllabi, reading lists, assignments, handouts, and examines. Ask yourself why the instructor organized the course in a particular way—and how you might do this differently. Don’t simply copy another course: Innovate!

Step 2: Identify your Learning Objectives
Don’t overwhelm your students with content. Ask what you want to take away from your course. This will, of course, involve content knowledge, but also skills, conceptual frameworks, and disciplinary values or habits of mind.

Set learning objectives with concrete, measurable outcomes. Phrase your goals in terms as “Students will be able to….” Use active verbs that signal higher order thinking skills: analyze, interpret, evaluate

Step 3: Give students a conceptual framework on which to hang the course’s major ideas, information, and methods.
Ask yourself: What are the unifying principles, themes, theories, logic, and assumptions that underlie the course?

Step 4: Develop a timeline.
Create a calendar of topics and readings. Arrange the sessions logically. A history or literature course might be organized chronologically, but other courses might follow a different logic:

- Micro to Macro or Macro to Micro: Begin with a theory or phenomenon and then at a case study, or vice versa
- Distal to Proximal or Proximal to Distal: Describe a contemporary problem and then look at the problem's origins, or vice versa.

Step 5: Spell out the questions and topics that you will address in each class.
Identify the themes and issues you will address. Make sure that each class session has a coherent theme or purpose.

Step 6: Consider How You Will Motivate Students
Ask what activities will engage your students and best prepare them for your assessments. These might include discussion, lab activities, inquiry and problem solving activities, small group work, and writing exercises.

Step 7: Adopt a student-centered, goal-centered, rather than a teacher-centered, approach.
A teacher-centered approach exposes students to what you know. A student-focused approach emphasizes developing the skills and habits of mind characteristic of your discipline. Identify activities that support your learning goals. I urge you to consider incorporating active forms of learning into your class. These might include:

- Discussion
- Case Studies
- Film Clips and Visual Aids to Prompt Discussion
- Role playing
- Problem Solving Exercises
- Student Reports
- Small Group Activities

Step 8: Take advantage of new technologies.
Incorporate simulations, demonstrations, and audio-visual materials in your class. Consider using a discussion board, a blog, or a wiki to promote outside-of-class communication.

Step 9: Establish your course policies.
Is attendance required? How will you handle late work or missed tests? Will there be extra-credit opportunities?

Step 10: Consider how you will evaluate student learning.
How will you determine whether students have fulfilled your objectives? Consider various approaches: Exams, quizzes, writing assignments, presentations, and projects. But don't overwhelm yourself!

Considering assessing student learning in multiple ways. In addition to quizzes, exams, and papers, you might consider some other activities:

- **Real-time assessment:** A growing number of large classes use "clickers" to assess student comprehension. An alternative is the ConcepTest, a series of questions presented during class with multiple possible answers.
- **Minute papers:** A concise response to a problem that the instructor poses in class.
- **Oral presentations.**
- **Small group projects**

Creating a Learner-Centered Syllabus

Not long ago, an acceptable syllabus listed little more than the course's number and title, the instructor's contact information and office hours, the reading assignments, and the test dates.

It told a student nothing about the course themes, goals, and objectives or course policies (for example, about attendance or grading standards). Nor did it provide a class-by-schedule or a description of what a student needed to do to succeed.

A learner-centered syllabus, in contrast:

- Offers tangible evidence that you have thought seriously about the course's objectives, content, and organization.

- Articulates the class's conceptual framework, its content and scope, and your course policies, requirements, and assessment techniques.

A learning centered syllabus provides:

- A concise description of the course.
- Weights given to various assignments and exams.
- Policies regarding attendance, grading, late assignments and make-up exams, accommodation for students with disabilities, classroom behavior, and academic dishonesty.

A well-planned syllabus is well worth the time required to prepare it.

What You Need to Include in Your Syllabus:

1. Basic course information: The course number, title, and semester taught

2. Contact information: office address, office hours, office phone, email address, course web page, class hours and location)

3. The course description
The description should offer a well-grounded rationale for your course

4. Course objectives

5. Required and recommended readings

6. Course requirements

7. Grading policies, including the percentage weight assigned to each requirement

8. Other course policies: Attendance, participation, missed exams, late assignments, academic dishonesty

9. Calendar of course topics, readings, and assignments

Optional:

- Succinct summaries of the topics, themes, and issues you will cover in each session or week.

- Suggestions for success; study guides and handouts; available support services

3 The Art of Teaching

When asked how they evaluate instructors, students say that they value:

1. Presentations that are clear, understandable, and well organized;

2. Classes in which they feel that they have learned something of significance; and

3. Instructors who stimulate their interest in the course, encourage questions and discussion, are open to students' opinions, and are sensitive to students' concerns, confusions, and progress.

Effective teachers aren't boring. They grab students' attention, bust myths, focus on problems and puzzles, and bring abstractions to life. They care about their audience, and are well-organized, clear, and expressive. They also have a distinctive voice, which expresses their personality, approach, and style. Above all, they convey the excitement and the significance of their topic.

Topics:

1. 10 Principles to Enhance Student Learning
2. Ensuring Students Come to Class Well-Prepared
3. Leading Stimulating, Substantive Class Discussions
4. Effective Lectures
5. Integrating Active Learning into Your Teaching

1 10 Principles to Enhance Student Learning

Teaching Fellows play an essential role in undergraduate education at Columbia.

▪ As discussion section leaders in large lecture classes, Teaching Fellows amplify and clarify concepts covered in lectures, answer student questions, and provide students with the opportunity to actively engage the course material and apply what they have learned.

▪ As leaders of recitation sections in large science courses, Teaching Fellows not only help students understand and apply material introduced in lectures, but also teach students how to solve problems.

▪ Lab assistants assist students with experiments and other hands-on activities and help students understand the theoretical basis and significance of experiments.

Here are ten principles that will help you make your sections or your courses more successful.

Principle 1: CONNECT
Build rapport with your students. Students who feel connected to you are much more willing to devote time and energy to your class.

One effective way to develop a connection with students is to use one or more ice-breakers in the first class session:

- Have students introduce one another.
- Have students write down two adjectives describing themselves.
- Have the students say something memorable about themselves.
- Ask students why they are taking the class.

Principle 2: ENGAGE
Arouse student interest in your class' topics. Remember: There is no learning without engagement. Begin your class with a bang: Consider starting off each session with:

- A provocative quotation or statistic
- An anecdote
- A paradox
- A problem
- A news story.

You might trigger engagement throughout your session with audio-visual materials including art works or film clips, or with simulations.

Principle 3: FOCUS
Formulate clear objectives for each class session and present your students with a well-organized agenda. Students crave clarity, substance, and organization.

Principle 4: VARY
Present information in multiple ways. Your pedagogical approach might include lectures, discussions, visuals, problem solving, short readings, and other activities.

Principle 5: INCLUDE
Involve all students in classroom activities. Effective methods for encouraging participation include brainstorming, small group work, debates, classroom surveys, and role playing exercises.

Principle 6: INVOLVE
Foster active participation. After all, students learn most when they are actively engaged in inquiry, rather than passive recipients of information.

You can get students involved in various ways, such as case studies and activities emphasizing inquiry and problem solving. Asking questions is another way to engage students, but note that there are effective and ineffective ways to ask questions.

Avoid "guess what I'm thinking" questions, in which you have an answer in mind. Also avoid rhetorical questions (Does anyone have any questions?) and questions with yes or no answers. Rather than relying on questions that emphasize recall, use questions that involve higher order thinking:

• ***Prediction:*** What will happen next?
• ***Justification:*** What evidence led you to conclude that…?
• ***Rationale:*** What is the reason…?
• ***Generalization:*** What can you generalize…?

Principle 7: SHARE
To give students ownership of the course material, share your grading rubrics and your learning strategies and tips with them.

Principle 8: ALIGN
Align your assignments and exams with your learning objectives.

Principle 9: ASSESS

Monitor student learning throughout the semester and adapt your teaching based on your findings.

Principle 10: REFLECT
Create opportunities for students to reflect on their own reasoning and learning.

2	Ensuring Students Come to Class Well-Prepared

To ensure that your students come to class well prepared, consider requiring a think piece to be submitted prior to class. Examples include:

1. A reading abstract: A succinct summary of a required reading.

2. A reading annotation: A brief evaluation of an articles' strengths and weaknesses.

3. A response paper: A reaction to specific elements in a reading: the effectiveness of the argument, the quality of the data, and the validity of the research design.

4. A position paper: A student's point of view on an issue.

5. A discussion starter: A key issue or questions raised by the readings.

6. A reading evaluation: An assessment of a newspaper or journal article's accuracy, use of evidence, and conclusions. Each of these papers will ensure that students have read and thought critically about the course material.

Warning: Be explicit about what you want the students to do. Provide the students with a sample. Identify the issues that they need to cover.

How to Get Your Students to Read What You've Assigned

A surprising proportion of students fail to complete the required reading even in discussion classes. Here are some practical steps that you can take to convince them to do the reading and to retain what they have read.

1. Sell your students on the reading
Explain why you selected the reading. Describe its purpose and value and relevance to the course. Be explicit about the connection between the reading and other class projects and assignments.

2. Situate the reading assignment in a broader intellectual context.
Whether the book is fiction or non-fiction, it is part of a larger cultural conversation. Help your students understand where it fits in.

3. Teach expert reading strategies
Help the students become expert readers. You know how to
read efficiently; share your tips.

If it is a work of non-fiction, you know how to identify the author's thesis and trace the development of the reading's argument.

If it is a work of literature, you know the importance of asking questions. Here are a few: Why did the author choose a particular title? What is the setting? Who's the protagonist and does the protagonist evolve over the course of the work? What is the relationship between the protagonist and the narrator? What themes or issues does the work explore? What motifs run through the work? What characters, actions, or situations beg to be taken symbolically?

4. Provide study questions.
Study questions help students focus their reading.

5. Make students responsible for completing the reading.
Consider requiring a response paper or an online posting. Or you might begin your class by asking students questions based on the reading.
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Teaching Your Students the Secrets of Effective Reading

Over the course of your academic career, you have learned how to assimilate substantial amounts of reading. Your students will thank you if you share your "trade secrets" with your students.

Secret 1. With works of non-fiction, read from the outside in.

1. Start with the title. What does it suggest about the book's argument?

2. Look at the table of contents. How is the book organized?

3. Read the introduction and conclusion. What is the book's thesis and its place in a disciplinary debate?

4. Read chapters' first and last paragraphs, and then the topic sentences. What are the chapters' major themes and arguments?

Secret 2. Ask What? Why? Where?

1. What is the book's controlling argument?

2. Why is the author making this argument? To challenge a rival interpretation? To advance a political agenda?

3. Where is the argument weak or unconvincing?

Secret 3. With works of literature, read the text from multiple perspectives:

1. The aesthetic: How does the author uses language, style, tone, and characterization to engage and manipulate the reader?

2. Read between the lines: What subtexts, deeper meanings, allusions, and symbolism do you see?

3. The "human condition": What does the text tells us about the human condition: about human nature or love or families or growing up?

4. The "politics of literature": What political or ideological beliefs, values, and ideas underlie the text?

5. Cultural criticism: What assumptions does the text make about femininity or masculinity, whiteness or blackness, civilization or nature, race or class? Does the text support the dominant views of its time or subvert them?

6. Reader response: How might different readers—male, female, African American, Latino, working-class, gay or lesbian—read and experience the text?

7. The ethical: What are the moral implications of the ideas advanced in the texts.

3	**Leading Stimulating, Substantive Class Discussions**

Discussion adds a personal dimension to the learning process. It stimulates students to more actively engage in the course materials. It also helps students develop their reasoning and communication skills. Discussion encourages collaborative thinking and attunes students to a multiplicity of viewpoints and perspectives. In addition, it allows an instructor to get prompt, continuous feedback on students' understanding or misunderstanding of the course material. Above all, discussion can help students gain confidence in their intellectual abilities and learn how to evaluate a theory, read a text, or synthesize ideas.

But successful discussions are hard to stimulate. Students tend to consider discussion inconsequential. How can you ensure that the discussion is substantive?

1. Remember your role
You are responsible for:
- setting the agenda
- clarifying concepts and issues
- promoting discussion
- keeping students engaged and the section on track, and
- handling problematic behavior

But remember that you are a facilitator and coach, not a lecturer. Your role is to guide, focus, and structure the discussion. But the students themselves must have a chance to express their ideas and arrive at their own conclusions.

2. Preparation is the key to a successful discussion
Preparation requires setting specific objectives and designing activities and questions to meet those goals.

3. Begin your class with a bang
This might involve starting with a problem, a controversy, or an illustration

4. Preview the material you will cover

Give an overview or share an outline. This helps *you* stay on track, too.

5. Don't stick to words
Use the blackboard. Use diagrams, charts, and other audio-visual resources to bring the material to life.

6. Make the discussion goal-oriented
Explore questions and have outcomes.

7. Vary what you do in class
- Use images, film clips, and new stories

- Stage debates, break the class into small groups, have student presentations. Brainstorm: Have the students suggest ideas and then have the class build on the ideas, embellishing them and suggesting improvements and modifications.

- If the students are discussing a text, ask them to identify a question that they found significant; to write down one question raised by the text; or to identify a scene or image that stands out in their memory.

Asking Effective Questions [1]

One of a TA's primary responsibilities is to facilitate discussion. But this is harder than it might at first appear.

[1] For more information, see Jennifer Barton, Paul Heilker, and David Rutkowski, "Fostering Effective Classroom Discussions," http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/english/tc/pt/discussion/discussion.htm

Sometimes, getting students to speak will feel like pulling teeth. Frequently, a handful of students will dominate discussion. And it's often the case that students will direct their answers to you, rather than engaging in discussion with classmates?

If you want to have animated, substantive discussions, then you need to know how to ask effective questions. Here are some practical tips

1. Discuss the elements of a successful discussion.
From television talk shows, students have acquired the notion that a discussion is a heated debate. But truly successful discussions aren't necessarily adversarial. Certainly, students might challenge an idea that has been presented, but they might also analyze the idea or give examples or discuss questions raised by another student's comments.

2. Brainstorm
One stress-free way to break the ice and get students talking is to ask them to brainstorm about a topic. Your role is to record their ideas on the blackboard.

3. Rearrange Your Classroom
A square or a horseshoe encourages students to speak to one another and not to focus their attention exclusively on you.

4. Pause.
A class shouldn't resemble a game show in which those who raise their hand first are the winners. Give students time to process a question and formulate an answer. And don't feel compelled to call on the students who raise their hands first.

5. Avoid unproductive questions.
Certain kinds of questions are fruitless:

- ***Recall questions:*** Don't ask questions to which the answer is obvious.
- ***Rhetorical questions:*** Don't ask questions solely for dramatic effect.
- ***Yes or no questions:*** Don't ask questions that inhibit discussion.
- ***Leading questions:*** Don't ask questions that aren't open-ended.
- ***Guess What I'm Thinking questions***: Don't ask questions where you've already formulated the answer you want.

6. Ask the kinds of questions that stimulate discussion:
Ineffective questions involve recall or simple agreement or disagreement. Effective questions, in contrast, are open-ended and involve higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, interpretation, application, prediction, generalization, and evaluation.

- ***Ask for students' input:*** What should ___ have done? What would you do in this case?
- ***Ask "how" and "why" questions:*** How might this argument be made more persuasive? Why do you think that ____ made this argument?
- ***Ask evaluative questions:*** How compelling is ____'s argument?
- ***Ask prediction questions:*** What will happen next?
- ***Ask justification questions:*** What evidence led you to conclude that…?
- ***Ask rationale questions:*** What is the reason…?
- ***Ask generalization questions:*** What can you generalize…?
- ***Ask students to bring their own questions to class.***

7. Facilitate, don't orchestrate

Resist the temptation to respond to student comments yourself. And use the techniques that get discussions going:
• Ask other students if they agree or disagree with the previous student's comments.
• Collect multiple responses to the same question.
• Ask students to comment on a previous student's comments.
• Redirect a student's question to the other students.

8. Encourage students to respond to one another.
Require students to respond to the previous students comments before adding their own comments. For example, the students might challenge or question or analyze the previous comment or elaborate on it.

9. Give students the opportunity to lead a discussion.
Your role might be to summarize the discussion before presenting your own thoughts.

10. Build in reflection.
Occasionally, ask: "What did you learn from this discussion?"

Getting Students to Participate

Students are often hesitant to participate in discussions. Sometimes they are unprepared or bored or aren't paying attention. At other times, they don't understand the question or need time to formulate a response. Silence is a form of student feedback. How should you respond?

1. Wait
Give students time to digest the question and an opportunity to respond.

2. Give a hint
Invite students to refer to the book, their notes, or a peer.

3. Vary the kinds of questions you ask and use invitational, not inquisitorial, questions
There are a many kinds of questions that you can ask.

- **Information questions** ask where, when, who, or what.
- **Diagnostic questions** ask what is going on behind the scenes.
- **Challenge questions** ask students why do you think that; how would you explain that; what's the evidence to support that.
- **Action questions** ask students: What would you do in so-and-so's shoes?
- **Summary questions** ask students to summarize the most critical issues that have been discussed.
- **Generalizing questions** ask students: What generalizations can we make?

Some questions require deduction. Others might ask for hunches or imaginative leaps. Questions with many valid answers reduce anxiety over being wrong.

4. Encourage students to draw upon their feelings, perceptions, and life experiences.

Help students relate these to class topics (rather than just share their own opinions).

5. Build a sense of classroom community
Have students introduce themselves and work with partners or small groups.

6. Reward student contributions and provide feedback
- Look attentive. Make eye contact and the student's names if possible.

- Paraphrase what the student said and ask a follow-up question.
- Comment on the student's thinking process and point out what was valuable in the student's contribution.
- Invite other students to add their reactions or reflections.

4 Delivering Unforgettable Lectures

Public speaking is at the top of almost every Top 10 list of American phobias. But effective lecturing is not genetically determined like eye color or a receding hairline. The most common reason for bad lecturing isn't phobia; it's that professors don't value the craft enough to hone their skills.

The face-to-face lecture is the basic mode of communication in the academy. At most universities, 25 percent of intro classes have more than 125 students. As long as universities use the assembly line model of instructor, lecturing will be central to the educational process. And lecturing is also the key to successful conference presentations.

Lecturing offers a highly efficient way to cover course material. But successful lecturing is not easy to do. It requires an instructor to be very clear, well organized, and engaging.

Here are some of the basic principles that highly effective lecturers follow. They:

1. Grab students' attention and keep them engaged

2. Highlight key points and articulate them in more than one way.

3. Write key terms on the board or in a PowerPoint presentation.

4. Give students breathing room by illustrating key points anecdotally rather than packing too many ideas and factual support into their presentations.

5. Provide written handouts for key ideas and instructions.

6. Vary presentation methods and forms of student-teacher interaction.

7. Supplement oral presentations with visual material.

8. Build various kinds of questions into lectures. These include:

> **Initiating questions:** Questions designed to provoke students
> **Probing questions:** Questions that encourage students to elaborate
> **Divergent questions:** Questions that have many plausible answers; e.g. What are the real-world implications of this material?.

9. Periodically review and ask questions about main points.

10. Monitor students understanding and don't assume students "get it."

How Can You Make Your Lectures Memorable?

In general, students capture only 20-40 percent of a lecture's main ideas in their notes. After three weeks, most students remember less than 10 percent of what was said in the lecture.

So what can you do to guarantee that students learn and remember what we teach? How can you create and deliver lectures that stay with students long past the last few minutes of class?

Step 1. You need to capture the listeners' attention.
We orient our attention selectively. Other things are always competing for our attention. So how do you do this? You can use attention grabbing gimmicks. Open with a provocative question, startling statement, unusual analogy, striking example, personal anecdote, dramatic contrast, powerful quote, short questionnaire, demonstration, or mention of a recent news event.

But you don't need to be a performer or entertainer or comedian. You need to focus listeners' attention.
You can do this by focusing on particular questions or problems.

Step 2. Listeners need to organize the material into a coherent structure or framework.
Otherwise, your listeners will be overwhelmed. Students need to absorb, record, and understand the steady flow of auditory and visual information. Because the content is new to students, it can be difficult for them to identify which ideas are critical and which are peripheral.

How can you help students attend to the most important information, so that they understand and remember the key points of each lecture? The solution is to make your lecture's organization explicit and to provide listeners with a conceptual framework, so that they can direct their attention to the most important information.

1. Provide a roadmap
Describes your lecture's objectives and the questions you will consider

2. Provide a conceptual framework for understanding the material.

Step 3. Don't overload your listeners
Listeners are not sponges and cannot immediately "absorb" new information. Give your listeners short breaks throughout lecture to review their notes and ask questions. Short breaks will revitalize the audience's attention.

Step 4. Give your listeners opportunities to review and apply what they are learning.
You can have students tackle the problem or issue in pairs at the end of the lecture, or work alone and then vote on a solution or position. You can also create a think-tank situation by inviting volunteers to talk through their thought processes as they try to solve the problem or respond to a question.

Ask students at the end of class to write down the three most important things that they learned.

How to Prepare a Successful Lecture

Lecturing is so central to the academy that it's a form of masochism and sadism not become good at it. Here are some simple rules that will make sure your lectures are successful.

Rule 1: Lectures must begin with an attention grabber.
You might lead off with a news story; a paradox; a provocative problem; an illustration; a cartoon

Rule 2: Lectures should have clear objectives.
Ask yourself: What precisely do you want your students to come away with? What do you want them to know? What skills do you want them to acquire?

Rule 3: Don't be boring.
Talk to your audience, not to the screen or the blackboard. Give your audience "roadmap" (an overview or outline) of your talk near the beginning. Make your talk interesting with good examples, relevant anecdotes, and significant details.

Rule 4: Lectures must be interactive.
Since the attention span of almost all listeners is between 10 and 15 minutes, you can expect to lose most of your audience if you lecture for 50 minutes straight.

How can you make your lectures more interactivity? By taking activity breaks. These can be simple: You can ask a question or pose a problem. Or you can ask your students to turn to a classmate to discuss a question. Or consider using a visual aid: An illustration or a film clip A case study can really enhance a lecture.

Rule 5: Lectures must not repeat the textbook or outside reading.

Rule 6: Effective lecturers present material in multiple ways.
You might make a point abstractly, then provide a concrete example, and then visualize the point.

Rule 7: Monitor student learning
It is really important to make sure that students understand what you are teaching. Watch your audience's body language. Learn to recognize the symptoms of "eyes glazing over" when students are becoming passive recipients rather than active participants. That may signal the time for one of your prepared anecdotes, or better, for a task for students to tackle.

Practical Tips

Not long ago, educated people studied rhetoric and oratory. No longer. And it shows. But by following a few basic principles, all of us can become more effective speakers.

1. Find your voice
There is no one correct way to teach. Don't feel that you must emulate your own professors. Maybe you can't tell jokes. Or you don't have a booming voice. Or you don't feel comfortable speaking extemporaneously. Your teaching style needs to reflect your personality.

2. Don't be boring

3. Identify questions that the lecture will address.
Share these questions with your audience.

4. Give lectures that are easy to outline
Let your audience know what you are going to talk about and why. This is your "battle plan." By laying out exactly what your are going to do, you eliminate a lot of listener confusion. You don't want your audience to spend an hour wondering: Why is the speaker talking about that?

5. Don't just use the transmit-receive model.
Variety is the spice of life in lectures

6. Minimizing mental lapses during lectures
Audiences frequently get lost during lectures. They suffer four kinds of listening lapses:

1. Short term memory overload: (Too much information in too short a time to adequately process).

2. Momentary misunderstandings: (temporary confusions).

3. Translation troubles: (The audience has to translate what you are saying into concepts and language that it understands).

4. Sidetracks (The listeners become distracted).

How can you minimize mental lapses?
1. Pause periodically.

2. Use the blackboard

3. Use demonstrations and dramatic devices

A fifty or eighty minute lecture needs to be interrupted every fifteen minutes or so with a "different" type of activity. Incorporate changes of pace and shifts in focus to reawaken listeners' interest Demonstrations and dramatic devices will greatly increase student attention, interest, understanding and learning.

7. Integrate active learning into lectures.

1. Ask your audience to select the best response to a question.

2. Ask the listeners to identify an error.

3. Ask them to complete a sentence.

4. Ask them to support a statement.

5. Ask them to reorder the steps in an argument

6. Ask them to rephrase an idea

Using Visuals Effectively

Visuals can reinforce essential points. But visuals can also be deadly. This is especially true of PowerPoint. So beware PowerPoint's perils:

1. PowerPoint is inflexible.
2. PowerPoint is a crutch.
3. PowerPoint is boring.
4. PowerPoint distracts listeners. Why should they listen to you when they can read your slides?

So follow the Zen of PowerPoint:

1. Less is more. Use PowerPoint slides only when necessary:

    • Turn off the projector at appropriate times.

    • Don't use too many slides.

    • Avoid complete sentences

2. Use PowerPoint strategically

    • To preview your main points

    • To illustrate things too difficult to draw on the board

    • To illustrate important concepts

Quick and Easy Ideas for Better Lectures

Bad lecturers violate nearly every rule of good communication. They're disorganized. They never vary their pace or pitch. They either stare at their notes or ignore them altogether and ramble onto whatever topic comes to mind. They never make eye contact with their audience. They never, ever show the slightest bit of life when discussing the very subject that supposedly excites them.
So follow good communication practices.

1. Don't be defensive.
Project confidence.

2. Never, ever, ever interrupt your lecture to say, "I'm going to skip some pages here in the interest of time,"
Write your lecture to fill the allotted time. A 20 minute talk is ten pages long. It's never 35 pages long.

3. Convey your enthusiasm for the material.

4. Don't talk into your notes
Look at your audience frequently and remember to smile. If you read your lecture, your audience will wander off.

5. Use concrete, simple language.
Avoid jargon and unnecessary qualifiers.

6. Keep your audience engaged.
Make your lecture as interactive as possible.

The Formula for Success

There is a simple formula for effective lectures:

1. Explicitly state you objectives
You explain why are you giving the lecture and the major points that you want to get across. You tell your audience where you're headed. This need be no more complex than "Today I want us to consider…" or, "The major thesis of today's lecture is…." Remember: People hear quite differently than they read. Distill your intentions to essential points.

2. Work from a written plan.
It can be as elaborate as a verbatim script — as long as you don't read it — or as spare as a bullet-point outline on a note card, but map out where you want to go and the route you'll take to get there. The real skill in lecturing is how well you assemble and organize material, not how arcane, esoteric, or exhaustive it is.

3. Make your points in multiple ways.
Reinforcement is basic to learning. An effective tactic is to step back and ask: "Why am I telling you this?" "What's the point here?" Or, better yet, "How can we use this?"

4. Conclude with a forceful summary
At the end of the lecture restate, in capsule form, the major points you've covered.

The Secrets of Becoming an Effective Lecturer

If you asked students to re-design Dante's inferno, the worst punishment in hell would be to listen to lectures for all eternity. The sad fact is that a sizable number of students lapse into instant narcosis the moment their professors take the podium.

Why? Too often, lectures are boring. They seem irrelevant. The objectives aren't clear. Students want classes to be stimulating, substantive, entertaining, interactive, not boring.

Yet lectures can be a highly efficient and effective way to teach. Often, it is discussions, not lectures, that are the least useful class sessions. An effective lecture is filled with intellectual excitement.

1. Provide students with a framework for each lecture

- Aim for three to five main points in each lecture.
- Begin the lecture with a high-level question that the upcoming information can answer.
- Prepare a handout of the lecture's main points.
- During lecture, be explicit about what students should focus on.

2. Don't overload students

- Give students short breaks throughout lecture to review their notes and ask questions.
- Include a formal activity or assignment after every 15-20 minutes of presentation.
- Don't use too many different types of presentation materials at once.
- Don't give students two conflicting things to attend to at the same time.

3. Students are also more likely to remember information that relates to ideas or experiences they are already familiar with.

- Use examples from student life, current events, or popular culture.
- Ask students to generate their own examples from personal experience.
- Tell students how new information relates to previous lectures in your course.
- Show students how specific skills can be applied to real-world problems.
- Create activities and assignments that ask students to fit new information into the overall themes of the course.

5 Integrating Active Learning into Your Teaching

Students learn best when learning is active: When they are mentally involved, when they engage in hands-on activities, when they are involved in a process of inquiry, discovery, investigation, and interpretation. Thus, learning is enhanced when students repeat the information in their own words or when they give examples or make use of the information.

When students are passive, their brain doesn't do an especially effective job of processing or retaining the information. But real learning involves more than memorization. Students need to reflect on their learning. They need to actually do biology or chemistry or literary criticism or sociology.

Students need to undertake inquiries and solve problems and apply what they have learned. One strategy that you might adopt is to present concepts and information as puzzles. Here you will get some concrete advice about how to integrate active learning into your classroom.

Questions about Active Learning

Q. Is active learning simply fun and games?
A. No. Active learning presents students with problem solving challenges that require hard work.

Q. Doesn't active learning require lots of time?
A. Yes—but its worth it. It gives students opportunities to apply and reflect on what is being learned.

Q. Won't students regard active learning as a waste of time?
A. Some will. Some prefer that you simply deliver relevant information to them. A challenge is to convince them that they will benefit from active learning in the long run.

Injecting Active Learning into Lectures

According to some recent studies, an instructor generally says 100- 200 words a minute and a student only hears 50-100—half. Worse yet, in a typical lecture class, students are attentive just 40 percent of the time.

1. Ask pre-planned questions and have students write down their answers.

2. Survey your students: E.g. Raise your hand if you agree….

3. Have your students turn to a partner to discuss a point you just made.

4. Explicate a brief text.

5. Ask your students ast the end of the class to summarize the lecture's most important points.

6. Give a brief quiz at the end of class over the factual and conceptual issues you raised.

Inserting Active Learning into Discussions

1. Use discussion triggers

These might be a film clip, a visual image, or a short reading.

2. Use a questionnaire to survey student attitudes and assumptions.

3. Introduce a case study.

4. Have students role play.

5. Formulate questions that encourage student engagement:

- ***Descriptive questions:*** What did you see? What happened?
- ***Definition questions:*** What does…mean?
- ***Procedure questions:*** What will we have to do to find out…?
- ***Prediction questions:*** What will happen next?
- ***Rationale questions:*** Why?
- ***Possibilities:*** What is another possible explanation?
- ***Justification:*** What evidence led you to conclude?
- ***Generalization:*** What can we generalize from these findings?

6. Foster active participation through:

- ***Learning spirals:*** Have individuals write down their solution, then have them discuss their answers in pairs or trios, and then have them share their findings with the class.

- ***Learning circles:*** Have a series of students who sit next to one another express their point of view on a given topic.

- ***Peer teaching:*** Have students present material to a small group or to the class.

Examples of Active Learning

Statistics:

Statistics involves drawing inferences from data. Among a statistics instructor's goals is to teach students statistical
concepts and how to tease information from data. You can make statistics relevant to students by incorporating
real-life examples and problems into your classroom.

Statistical Literacy: Are one in 4 young people abused?
Do half of marriages end in divorce?

Correlation: Was there a correlation between level of education and support for withdrawal from Vietnam?
--Did opposition to the war spread from the intelligentsia to the rest of the population?

Linear Regression: Do tall people have higher incomes?
Were Vietnam era draftees taller or shorter than non-draftees?

Probability: How likely is a space shuttle disaster?

Logarthms: How can we best illustrate global population growth?

History:

History involves the interpretation of various kinds of primary source evidence. Bring one or several pieces of evidence into the classroom--an advertisement, a film clip, a map, a painting, a photography, or a political cartoon—and ask students to interpret the evidence.

Ads can illustrate the strategies that marketers use to sell products. They can also illustrate shifting conceptions of
masculinity, femininity, beauty, ethnicity, and race.

Films not only contain messages about class, ethnicity, gender, they can record the look and atmosphere of a period,
construct historical myths, and shape our view of history.

Maps can illustrate the growth of geographical knowledge; but they can also serve as political or ideological documents.

Photographs can document historical. But photographs are not simply objective reproductions of the external world. It is important to ask why and for whom a picture was taken?

Political cartoons use caricature, symbols, humor, ridicule, and exaggeration to make arguments and comment on
political events.

Songs helped laborers to cope with the hardship of their tasks and synchronize their movements. Many social movements, including the labor movement, the women's suffrage movement, and the Civil Rights movement, created a repertoire of protest songs.

Literature:

Almost no student enters college having received explicit instruction in hermaneutics, the principles of literary interpretation. Only vaguely do they know about Marxian, Feminist, or Freudian interpretation, let alone Queer Theory, Postcolonial Theory, or the New Historicism. Nor do students arrive at college knowing much about the conventions of literary genres or the language of interpretation. Have students read a passage from a text, then ask them to:

Describe the political or ideological system of beliefs values and ideas that underlie the text.

Explain why the text tells us about the human condition: about human nature or love or families or growing up.

Analyze how the author uses language, style, tone, and characterization to engage and manipulate the reader.

Explore what a text says about certain cultural assumptions, about femininity or masculinity, whiteness or blackness, civilization or nature, race or class, and whether the texts supports the dominant views of its time or subverts them.

Relate how different readers—male, female, African American, Latino, working-class, gay or lesbian—might read
and experience the text.

Sociology

Consider using real life examples to illustrate how sociologists understand social stratification, social interaction,
culture and deviance.

Dramaturgy: Have two students stage an interaction and have the other students interpret the performance.

Gender: Examine a couple's household division of labor

Gender Socialization: Examine the toys for sale in an online catalog.

Group Decision Making: Have a group of students make a decision and then analyze the dynamics and the factors
that influenced decision-making.

Social Institutions: Compare family budgets at various income levels

Spatial Analysis: Map census data

Stereotypes: Analyze stereotypes about race, ethnicity, or gender orientation a particular visual image

Stratification: Explain why incomes vary among a list of occupations

4 Effective Classroom Management

Creating a classroom environment where learning can flourish isn't easy. You must establish your authority and credibility, develop a rapport with your students, establish clear ground rules, and create a classroom culture that encourages learning. Here you will learn classroom tested strategies designed to minimize classroom management problems and build positive instructor-student relationships.

Topics:

1. Handling Common Classroom Challenges
2. Inclusive Teaching
3. Dealing with Challenging, Troubling, and Disruptive Student Behavior

1 Handling Common Classroom Challenges

Teaching can be the most fulfilling part of being a professor or a graduate student. It is extraordinarily satisfying to share your knowledge and insights and watch your students grow intellectually. But teaching can also be extremely stressful and dealing with students can be exasperating.

As an instructor, you will encounter a wide range of inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, and it is your responsibility to deal with this behavior so that it doesn't become a distraction.

Some behavior is simply rude; for example, students might text or check their email or engage in side conversations. Other behavior—such as grandstanding or heckling or the use of profanity—can be disruptive. Still other behavior might be a sign that a student is suffering from emotional distress.

Common Challenges

1. How can I handle my nervousness?
Don't be surprised if you experience stage fright before your first class. Even the most experienced instructors feel queasy at the start of a new semester. Symptoms of stage fright include nausea, trembling, a loss of vocal control, an inaccurate sense of time, exhaustion, difficulties concentrating, and babbling.

What should you do?

1. Before class, undertake some relaxation exercises
Stretch your arms. Recite nonsense.

2. Start your class with something entertaining

3. Remember: Teaching is performance.
Rehearse. Look confident. Smile and make eye contact. Vary the tempo of your speech. Display enthusiasm.

4. Decenter your class
You do not need to make yourself the center of attention.

2. How can I establish my authority and credibility with my students?
You need to establish your credibility and control over the classroom. The most effective way to do this is to maintain professional distance from your students. This doesn't mean that you can't be enthusiastic, accessible, supportive, and friendly. But it does mean that you aren't your students' friend, mother, or therapist.

How can you do this?

a. Tell students about yourself, sharing academic and professional interests.

b. Make your expectations of their performance clear.

c. Convey seriousness.

d.. Dress professionally.

e. Get into the essential substance of the class early.

f. Have a clear agenda or roadmap for each class session.

3. How can I build rapport with my students
One of the traits of outstanding teachers is their ability to nurture rapport with their students. The term refers to an emotional connection between student and teacher, and a sense of participating in a community of learning.

a. Find out who your students are.
Consider using index cards to collect information on their background, goals, and interests, or consider having a class survey.

b. Spend some time before and after class interacting with your students.

c. Learn your students' names as quickly as possible—and address them by name.

d. Smile, be humble, be respectful, offer verbal praise, express enthusiasm, and make eye contact—without staring or glaring.

e. Use Icebreakers

- Icebreakers are activities designed to encourage student participation.
- Ask students to anticipate what the class will be like
- Have students fill out a background questionnaire
- Conduct a class survey
- Pair students up to interview and introduce one another
- Make a game of learning students names

4. How do I handle disruptive or disrespectful students who chat or pass notes or sleep in class, interrupt, heckle, challenge your authority, arrive late to class or leave early?

1. Define your expectations and policies clearly in the very first class.

2. Get to know something about your students and use their names so that they don't feel anonymous.

3. Make direct eye contact with students and physically move to the area where the disruptive students are.

4. Vary your teaching style. Move into group work, for example.

5. Be positive rather than negative

5. How can I maintain order in my classroom?

1. When students get off-topic, re-focus their attention back to the subject.
Consider using visual aids, such as writing on the blackboard.

2. When a student rambles, say: "Would you summarize your main point please?" or "Are you asking...?"

3. If a student heckles you or becomes argumentative or grandstands, acknowledge the student's positive points and redirect the topic back to the group or to supportive students.
Say: "I appreciate your comments, but I'd like to hear from others," or "It looks like we disagree."

6. How do I motivate apathetic students?

1. Give students some kind of assignment before each session.

2. Pose questions that make students think about the subject matter, even if they have not read the material.

3. Use real world examples to illustrate your points.

4. Present material as problems to be solved.

5. Share your enthusiasm and incorporate interesting anecdotes or demonstrations.
Make your class interesting.

7. How can I best deal with late papers or missed quizzes or tests?

1. Have a clear policy for missed, failed or late assignments and tests—and stick with it.
Deduct points based on how late a paper is handed in. An instructor might subtract five points for every day an assignment is late.

2. Recognize that some excuses are acceptable.

3. Encourage students to stay on track.
For the most part, students miss deadlines because they waited until the last moment to complete an assignment and discovered that it was more difficult and time-consuming than they had assumed. One way to deal with this is to require students to submit portions of a larger assignment in stages.

4. Be flexible-but don't be a push-over.
Don't hesitate to require evidence.

5. Require students who must miss a test to notify you beforehand.

6. Create alternates.

Allow students to drop one quiz or test. Or create an optional test or final exam, or require students with less than a B average to take the final, while excusing those with a higher average.

8. How can I best handle grade disputes?

1. Establish and explain your grading criteria

2. Provide students with written comments on their work.

3. Show a student your grading criteria.

4. Don't feel pressured to make a decision on the spot.

5. Don't change a grade out of sympathy or compassion (or to end the dispute) or because of a student's personal needs.

6. Have the student explain why your original grade was wrong.

7. Tell the student that you will re-grade the entire assignment, not just one portion, and that the final grade could be lower rather than higher.

8. Tell the student how to raise the grade in the future.

9. How can I create a more inclusive classroom environment?

1. At the beginning of your class, establish a "respect your classmates" rule.

2. Get to know your students.

3. Be sensitive—to language, terminology, and diversity issues.

Be wary of assuming that all students share certain cultural reference points (e.g. that everyone knows about the TV show Friends) or a common set of values and orientations.

4. Never ask a student to speak for an entire group.

Treat students as individuals, not as representatives of a gender, race, or ethnic group.

5. Don't let a comment that maligns a particular group pass without notice.

6. Give all students equal attention.

7. Increase the amount of time that you wait before calling on students.

This allows more students to formulate an answer to a question in class.

8. Solicit student opinions. Encourage questions and encourage critiques of the course itself.

10. How do I deal with controversial topics or with "hot moments" in the classroom?

1. Introduce controversial topics in impersonal terms.

Rather than asking a student, for example, "Do you think high schools should make contraception available to students?" present the arguments usually made for and against contraception in high schools and ask students to critique or support the arguments.

2. When "hot moments" arise, turn them into a learning opportunity.

Explore different views about the topic that provoked the hot moment. Listen for the sub-text. Get students to view the hot issue from multiple perspectives.

2 Inclusive Teaching

College classrooms have never been more diverse. Yet too many students feel isolated and express concern that their experience is marginalized or their viewpoints are trivialized.

Here you can find out how to make your classroom a more inclusive learning environment, so that none of your students feel excluded. A good way to begin is by learning the diversity do's and don't's.

Don't…

1. Assume that:

a. Students who are members of a particular group

- are experts on issues related to that group
- are comfortable serving as representatives and sources of information about that group
- share a common outlook.

b. All forms of diversity are visible.

Many forms of diversity, such as sexual orientation or religious affiliation, are not.

2. Single out students as spokespersons for a particular group or viewpoint.

3. Assume that all students share common cultural or historical reference points.

4. Makes sweeping generalizations about any cultural group.

5. Equate student silence with satisfaction with your class.

A student might be unhappy with the absence of alternate perspectives or inaccurate or incomplete information and not say anything. It's important to monitor or probe their attitudes.

Do…

1. Be acutely sensitive to terminology and to matters of importance to your students.

There is no reason to offend students or to be insensitive to their deeply held beliefs.

2. Be aware of potentially problematic assumptions.

We are all susceptible to bias. And if we are not self-conscious, we can assume that all members of the class share certain common assumptions about what is normal or what is good or bad.

3. Anticipate potentially "hot" topics.

4. Avoid crude binaries.

Binaries discourage students from recognizing complexity and nuance.

5. Recognize your own biases and preconceptions.

Do you assume that athletes are satisfied with lower grades? That poor writers are unintelligent? That students from historically under-represented groups need to be protected? That students from particular groups can only relate to examples drawn from their own racial, ethnic, or other group? Assumptions like these discourage instructors from giving

all students an equal opportunity to learn.

6. Recognize that students have very different styles of self-presentation and argumentation.
Some students are aggressively argumentative. Some like to bring their own personal experience into discussions. Others are more reticent or more indirect in their modes of expression. Make it clear that you want all students to participate in discussion and that civility requires everyone to be sensitive to multiple modes of self-presentation.

7. Be aware of your classroom's dynamics.
Do certain students, perhaps unconsciously, dominate discussion or badger or interrupt others? Do you respond differently to students depending on some facet of their identity, for example, their gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation? It is essential that you treat students even-handedly and convey the same level of confidence in the abilities of everyone in your class.

Respecting Individual Difference

Diversity in the classroom takes multiple forms. We often think of diversity in demographic or group terms, such as age, class, culture, disabilities, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. But the most common involves individual difference: in background, levels of preparation, learning styles, interests, and abilities.

You aren't simply teaching one students with twenty different faces; you are teaching twenty different students, each with distinctive needs and talents, and different levels of motivation, attention, knowledge, time to devote to your class, and maturity.

Many instructors fear that the very diversity of our classes means that talented students aren't sufficiently challenged and that the weakest students determine the class' pace.

How can you provide an optimal learning environment for every student? Instead of asking whether you should teach to the top or to the middle, consider ways to meet the needs and build on the strengths of all your students. Here are some practical suggestions.

1. Get to know your students
Nothing undermines stereotypes or misconceptions quicker than simple knowing your students. Learn something about their strengths, talents, and interests and draw upon those in your interactions with them. And remember, students who feel connected to you work harder.

2. Make sure your students know why the material is worth learning.
Students who are engaged and motivated will put more effort into your course.

3. Create a classroom where student input about content and pedagogy is welcome.
No doubt you will feel uncomfortable when students criticize an aspect of your class or your teaching style. But if you are to reach them effectively, you need to encourage them to reflect critically on their own learning.

4. Vary your presentation style.
Because students have diverse learning styles, consider using a variety of instructional approaches: lectures, discussion, PowerPoint presentations, audio (including music), video, charts and graphs, simulations, and images.

5. Highlight critical concepts and skills.
Make sure that all students master key concepts and skills.

6. Approach the material interactively.
Inquiry-based instruction, hands-on experiments, project and problem-based learning.

7. Integrate small group learning into your teaching.
Collaborative and team-based learning, including pairs and small group activities, allow students to learn from their peers.

8. Don't get locked into "lock-step" teaching.

All students don't need to be doing exactly the same thing at the same time. You might adopt "differentiated instruction," where one group pursues one activity while you work closely with another group on particular skills or concepts.

9. Create a support system.
Some students need additional help if they are to succeed. You can refer them to student support services, but also consider holding special sessions or creating online tutorials to address struggling students' special needs.

3 Dealing with Challenging, Troubling, and Disruptive Student Behavior

As an instructor you will encounter students who have problems or behaviors that might cause you concern or discomfort. Sometimes, these behaviors are simply odd or eccentric. At times, however, these behaviors will provoke a more intense concern. A student might seem unusually sad or anxious or irritable or lacking in motivation and concentration. A student might regularly fail to attend class or arrive late or depart early. A student might make angry outbursts or be verbally antagonistic toward you or the other students. You might detect slurred speech or a confused sense of reality or extreme suspicion of others. Especially disturbing are veiled references to suicide or homicide.

You are in a unique position to observe changes in a students' mood and behavior. You might notice a sharp decline in a student's achievement or sudden, frequent absences or changes in interaction patterns with peers. You may fear that a student is suicidal, clinically depressed, paranoid, or potentially violent. Or you may think that a student is under the influence of psychoactive drugs or alcohol. Or you may learn that a student is suffering from an eating disorder or abuse or assault.

If the problem seems to be mild, you might speak with the student in private and discuss your observations and express your concerns directly and listen carefully to what the student tells you. If the problem seems severe, you should definitely consult with appropriate individuals, such as a dean, an adviser, or the counseling center.

The Extent of Mental Health Problems Among College Students

Distressingly high numbers of college students suffer from sleep deprivation, substance abuse, relationship and family problems, depression, and anxiety, mood, and behavior disorders. According to recent surveys. [2]

- 28 percent of freshman polled in a national survey reported feeling frequently overwhelmed.
- nearly 16 percent of female college students and nearly 9 percent of males had been diagnosed with depression at some point in their lives.
- 15 percent acknowledged falling asleep in class.
- 44 percent engaged in heavy drinking in the preceding two week.
- 11 percent had considered suicide in the previous 12 months
- 30 percent had used marijuana and 15 percent another illicit drug in the previous year.

[2] HERI, UCLA, 2000; National College Health Assessment. Spring 2003 survey, http://www.acha.org/projects_programs/ncha_sampledata_public.cfm; Wechsler, H.; Lee, J.; Kuo, M.; and Lee, H. "College Binge Drinking in the 1990s: A Continuing Problem. Results of the Harvard School of Public Health 1999 College Alcohol Study." Journal of American College Health 48 (2000): 199–210; Mohler-Kuo, M.; Lee, J. E.; and Wechsler, H. "Trends in Marijuana and Other Illicit Drug Use among College Students: Results from 4 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study Surveys: 1993–2001." Journal of American College Health 52 (July/August 2003): 17–24)

Dealing with Students Suffering from Emotional Distress

In your interactions with students, you will observe behavior that suggests that a student is experiencing severe emotional distress. **Signs of distress** include:

- Deterioration in classroom performance
- Excessive absences
- Frequently falling asleep in class
- Repeatedly requesting special accommodations (such as extensions or make-ups)
- Written work or comments that indicate extreme hopelessness, isolation, rage, or despair
- Dramatic mood swings
- Unprovoked and excessive expressions anger or hostility
- Tearfulness
- Garbled, slurred, or rambling speech
- Loss of contact with reality
- Inappropriate, threatening, or harassing communications

Instructors are often the first to detect signs of emotional distress and are in a position to intervene before problems deteriorate. Here are some ideas that might guide your response.

1. ***Recognize signs of troubled behavior and treat these signs of distress seriously***

2. ***Reach out to the student and meet with the student individually.***

3. ***Express concern for the student's well-being and tell the student you are concerned.***
   - Focus on specific behavior.
   - You might say: "I've noticed… I'm concerned about you" or "You seem upset" or "tuned out"

4. ***Listen attentively and empathetically to the student's response and acknowledge the student's feelings***

5. ***Encourage the student to seek help from student services.***
   - Inform the student about appropriate support services. In urgent cases, you can say: "We can walk over to the counseling center right now." The center will see the student immediately.
   - Avoid becoming the student's sole source of support.

6. ***Don't:***
   - Promise confidentiality.
     Instead assure the student that you will keep the information as private as possible.
   - Minimize the student's concerns.
     Don't say: "Don't worry," "Crying wont help", "It can't be that bad," or "Everything will be better tomorrow."
   - Give advice outside of your expertise.
   - Chastise or lecture or criticize.

7. ***Know your limitations and maintain clear boundaries.***
   You are not a therapist. You will know that you are becoming overwhelmed if you feel:
   - stressed or overwhelmed by the student's problems
   - afraid or angry
   - you can "rescue" the student

If you feel overwhelmed, you might say to the student: "Excuse me, I need to attend to other things right now".

8. ***Convey your concerns to the student's dean.***

9. ***Follow up.***
   Ask the student if she or he has utilized the appropriate student services.

Dealing with Verbal Abuse

Don't be surprised if you encounter students who challenge your authority or who try to trip you up. The "sniper" or "sharpshooter," who disagrees with much of what you say and who sometimes attacks you personally, is, unfortunately, a not uncommon classroom type.

1. ***If you don't know the answer to a question, don't respond defensively.***
   - You might say that you will research the question and provide an answer at the next class session.
- Or you might ask the person who posed the question (or others in the class) to come up with an answer to the question.

2. ***Acknowledge the student's positive points, then you might say:***
   "I appreciate your comments, but I'd like to hear from others," or "It looks like we disagree."

3. ***If the student is very abusive, avoid escalating the situation.***
   - Don't embarrass a student in front of other students.
   - Don't threaten or humiliate the student.

4. ***Keep the class focused on the topic at hand.***

Dealing with Belligerent, Threatening or Potentially Violent Behavior [3]

1. ***Avoid:***
   - Becoming defensive
   - Touching the student or infringing on the student's personal space

2. ***Do:***
   - Remain calm

   Speak in a calm tone of voice.
   - Acknowledge their anger.
- Rephrase what the student is saying and identify the student's emotions.
   - Be firm about what behavior you'll accept.

You might say: "I can't listen to you when you're yelling" or "You can be angry but breaking things isn't okay"

3. ***Help defuse the situation by offering an action plan.***
   - Brain storm with the student about possible options.
   - But don't make promises, for example, about grades, that you can't keep.

4. ***Consult, refer, follow-up***
   - Get advice from appropriate student services.
   - Refer the student to the appropriate student service.
   - Ask whether the student has followed through and accessed the service.

[3] Adapted from Mary Morris Billings, "Helping Students in Distress: What You Should Know," http://www2.aamu.edu/public_relations/docs/Distressed.pdf

5 Integrating Writing into Your Teaching

Writing is integral to student success. Throughout their academic career, students will be asked to produce term papers and write answers to essay exam questions. Yet surprisingly little attention is paid to the craft of writing outside of required rhetoric and composition or literature classes. As a result, few students learn how to write within the conventions of a particular discipline.

Writing is not merely a mode of communication. It is also a method of reflection, thinking, and analysis. It is a way for students to learn a discipline's habits of mind and to reflect on their own reasoning process. The goal of writing assignments is not only to transform your students into better writers, but into better biologists, political scientists, or sociologists.

There is no greater gift you can give to your students than to strengthen their writing skills and to help them become self-critical writers. Writing is not simply a method of imparting information or demonstrating understanding, but the most nuanced and sophisticated way to order, analyze, apply, and synthesize information. Through your writing assignments, you can enhance your students' ability to evaluate data and methods, to formulate hypotheses, to predict, to generalize.

Topics:

1. Myths about Writing
2. How to Strengthen Student Writing
3. Creating Effective Writing Assignments
4. Responding to Student Writing
5. Sample Grading Rubrics
6. Common Writing Problems

1 Myths about Writing

Certain myths and misconceptions make writing problems worse and discourage you from incorporating writing into your teaching.

Myth 1: Skilled writers write effortlessly.
Every writer procrastinates, gets anxious, and loses focus. The Pulitzer Prize winning historian Richard Rhodes offers a simple, if crude, piece of advance: Keep your ass to the chair.

Don't wait until the last minute to complete assignments. Model writing on weight loss: Strive for small, daily advances rather than attempting to do everything all at once. The way to learn to write is, simply, to write a lot.

Myth 2: Skilled writers write from carefully plotted outlines.
There is nothing wrong with brainstorming and carefully organizing your ideas. But in fact writing is messy. It is not a linear process. Writing is thinking. It is during the writing process itself that you will come up with your best ideas.

Myth 3: There are two stages to the writing process: writing a draft and then editing it to correct grammar and delete typos and extraneous words.

There is no writing, only re-writing. And re-writing generally requires significant re-organization and rethinking.
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Myth 4. Writing instruction requires you to sacrifice time better devoted to other things.
Writing does not have to take up too much class time. Nor must it require extensive time for grading and commenting.

- Much of the writing that I suggest is impromptu or brief or takes place outside of class.

Myth 5. Instructors must have extensive training and expertise in writing instruction.
You don't need to be an expert in grammar. You aren't the department of corrections.

- Make it clear that the burden of proofreading belongs on the student.

- The main goal of the assignments is to enhance students' analytical skills and promote student learning.

- Consider peer editing

- Use short hand for various kinds of comments.

2 How to Strengthen Student Writing

Given that you have no formal training in composition, how can you strengthen student writing? Given your need to communicate content, how can you devote additional attention to writing instruction without sacrificing course material? And given other demands on your time, how can you possibly grade students' writing efficiently and effectively? Here's how.

1. Have students write regularly and frequently.
Frequent writing helps to break down students' writing inhibitions and make them more comfortable in expressing their ideas in written words. Don't worry: You don't have to grade every writing assignment. You might simply scan some of these assignments.

2. Focus less on mechanics than on the thinking and writing skills central to your discipline.
Your job is not to teach the basic mechanics of writing. By the time your students reach you, they will already have had a great deal of instruction in grammar, syntax, word choice, organization, and other aspects of writing. If they continue to have problems with mechanics, let specialists, in the Writing Center, help them.

3. Stress the "pre-writing" process.
"Pre-writing" is the process through which a writer asks questions of the material and devises (or brainstorms) strategies for analyzing the material. You might ask the students to summarize a particular reader's argument or describe a debate within the scholarship or formulate a thesis or draft a compelling introduction to a topic. Pre-writing is a great way to overcome writer's anxiety and get ideas flowing.

4. Vary the assignment's purpose and audience.
Students write best when they have a clear sense of the purpose of the writing and of their audience. You might ask your students to write for an audience other than you. For example, in a Political Science course, you might ask them to write a memorandum to a political campaign or a brief to the Supreme Court.

5. Tailor your assignments to the skills and conventions of your discipline.
In the social sciences, for example, students must evaluate quantitative data and critically evaluate methodologies and distinguish between correlation and causation. Therefore, you might give your students

an assignment in which they must analyze a data set, evaluate a methodological approach, or assess whether a correlation is spurious or causal.

6. Build assignments around focused "prompts."

A common mistake in disciplinary-based writing is to give assignments that are too vague and unfocused. Instead, consider build your assignment around a specific disciplinary skill. For instance, in a History course this might involve weighing evidence or evaluating conflicting interpretations of a particular historical event.

7. Integrate peer review into your class.

That doesn't necessarily mean asking students to grade other students' written work. It might involve having the entire class discuss anonymous excerpts from students' writing or having a small group of students review the literature on a topic and draft a hypothesis.

8. Create sequential assignments that build on one another.

Each assignment should add a layer of complexity or broaden the range of students' writing experiences. For instance, you might ask students to begin by writing a literature review. Then you might ask them to critique the literature, and then craft a thesis of their own.

9. Focus your criticism.

Instead of asking a student to correct all the errors in a paper, focus on the most glaring. Identify a particular problem before moving on to other difficulties.

3 Creating Effective Writing Assignments

There are many reasons to include writing in your classes. Writing not only communicates information, it also clarifies thinking and helps students learn the value of abstracting, synthesizing, formulating hypotheses, and evaluating conflicting interpretations.

But if you are to avoid receiving lousy papers, you need to be proactive. Provide your students with examples of strong and weak papers. Spell out your grading criteria (or rubric).

What, then, makes a good writing assignment?

1. The task has a specific purpose

- To help students learn foundational concepts
- To check students' understanding of material
- To develop their critical thinking and reading skills
- To practice the conventions of writing within the discipline

2. The elements of the task are clear, including format and documentation.

3. The grading criteria are spelled out in advance.

4. You provide samples of strong and weak papers.

Kinds of Assignments

Here is a list of brief assignments that will strengthen your students' writing skills.

1. A reading journal:

Makes students more conscious about what they are reading
Summarize arguments; identify main ideas; not key details

2. Reading abstracts:
An article summary

3. Annotation:
A brief evaluation of an article's strengths and weaknesses

4. Response paper:
A reaction to specific elements of a reading: the quality of the data, the validity of the research design, the effectiveness of the argument

5. A position paper:
A student must express a point of view on an issue

6. A literature review:
A students is asked to write about several readings and identify the issues and ideas that these present

7. A discussion starter:
Students identify key issues or questions raised by a reading.

8. A learning log or a laboratory notebook:
Students spend five minutes summarizing lecture material, noting key points in a discussion, restate concepts in their own words, and respond to questions raised in class.

9. A process analysis:
In writing, students trace the steps required to solve a problem.

10. A problem statement:
After introducing a concept in class, ask students to identify a theoretical or practical problem that the concept might help solve.

11. A Solution to a Real Problem
Students write about a problem—derived, for example, from a newspaper article, and propose a solution.

12. Pre-test warm-ups:
Student might generate problems for an upcoming test or draft answers to sample essay questions.

13. Write a sample proposal or recommendation:
In a letter of application or a policy brief, students learn how to explain concepts, positions, policies, and recommendations.

14. An evaluation a newspaper or journal article
Select on or two articles on an issue, problem, or research question and have th stuents evaluate the article's accuracy, use of evidence, and conclusions.

15. Evaluate a thesis, concept, or methodology:
Have students summarize the arguments in support AND in opposition to the thesis, concept or methodology.

16. An analysis of events:
Post-hoc analysis: Ask students to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and the event's implications.
What if: Ask students to speculate about how an outcome might have differed if one or more conditions had changed.

17. A project notebook:

- ***Research Question*** – Have students draft a research question.
- ***Process Analysis*** – Have students describe the process that they go through as they work on a project—research design, data collection, model building, and hypothesis testing.
- ***Problem-solving*** – Have students describe the problems they encountered in the course of the project and their solutions, successful and unsuccessful.
- ***Literature review*** – Have students succinctly summarize the material that they consulted.

18. An interview transcript or oral history:

- Have students list questions that they propose to ask.
- Have students complete an interview transcript.

19. Formats that mimic professional writing:

A lab report, a position paper, an interpretive essay, a literature review, a grant or project proposal, a formal lecture.

4 Responding to Student Writing

Nothing is more disconcerting than spending time writing comments on a student's paper or exam, and then watch the student glance at the grade without even looking at the comments. Written comments are time consuming, but often have limited impact.

So how, then, can you break through students' criticism barrier? How can you provide constructive feedback that won't exasperate your students?

Effective responses require much more than identifying errors in mechanics. Comment on the central issues: Focus, development and arrangement of ideas, the quality of argument and evidence, and whether the student takes account of counter-arguments.

And focus your comments. Don't comment exhaustively. Comment on the most important points raised by the paper.

Remember, the primary purpose of your comments isn't to justify grades or to identify errors. It is to help the student improve.

So what works?

1. Share your criteria for success

Provide examples of good work and give your students a copy of your grading criteria.

You might ask your students to read the first paragraph of an essay, then stop and respond to the following questions:

- "Are you interested in continuing to read? Why or why not?"
- "What do you think the essay will discuss?"
- Does the opening paragraph clearly identify the paper's theme and focus?

Then you might have them read the rest of the essay and respond to these questions:

- What unanswered questions remain in your mind when you've finished the essay?
- How would you strengthen the essay's argument?
- What objections might be raised against the argument?
- What suggestions might you give the writer of the paper?

2. Teach your students to be their own best readers

Encourage students to ask the questions that you ask when you grade an assignment.

- Is the opening lively and interesting?
- Is the argument clear?
- Is the argument situated in a larger scholarly conversation?
- Is the argument compelling? Is it supported with concrete and convincing examples?
- Is the essay's organization logical?
- Does the essay take adequate account of counter-arguments and alternate interpretations?

3. Set a positive tone

Include positive feedback as well as corrective feedback. Start and end with a compliment. You might begin by noting something that you learned from the essay.

Remember the hamburger rule: When offering a critique, you begin by complimenting something the student does well (This is the fluffy bun part). You then get to the meat of the matter: the constructive criticism part. Finally, you end with another constructive compliment (i.e. the other half of the fluffy bun).

4. Use affirming language

"It might make sense to…."

5. Prioritize

Avoid critical overload. Focus feedback on the most important issues. Concentrate on argument, content, and organization, not on syntax, grammar, and typos.

6. Be specific.

Don't talk in generalities.

Feedback should be an ongoing process, not a one time, hit-and-run event. Develop an action plan.

7. Create a dialogue with the student

- Ask for clarification: "What do you mean when you write…"
- Tell the student what you understood: "First you said X, so I thought you were arguing Y…."
- Pose possibilities: "How would this apply to….?"
- Ask questions: "How do you think this theory would alter your interpretation?"

8. Provide advice to guide the student in improving the work rather than simply implementing your suggestions.

- How might you frame this topic as a problem? (E.g.: It is widely believed that X is the case. In fact, this belief is wrong or incomplete. This mistaken belief has had the following implications….).
- Give the student options. Suggest alternative ways that the argument or organization can be improved.

9. Give students opportunities for practice and revision.

10. Offer continuing support

5 Sample Grading Rubrics

A rubric clearly identifies the criteria that you use in grading an assignment. Here are some sample grading rubrics.

Grading a Laboratory Report

▪ **Purpose:** The hypothesis or goal of the experiment is clear with an emphasis on the scientific principle involved.

▪ **Introduction:** The introduction includes sufficient background of the experimental rationale and explains the appropriateness of techniques.

▪ **Methods:** The description of the procedure is clear and includes appropriate references so that others can reproduce the work.

▪ **Data:** The format of the experimental data is easy-to-follow and appropriate, e.g., tables and graphs, with correct units and explanatory headings and legends.

▪ **Results and Conclusions:** The results and conclusions drawn follow logically from the data collected with an appropriate and supported discussion of alternate explanations and error analysis.

▪ **Mechanics:** The report is generally free of spelling, typographical, syntactical and grammatical errors, and follows conventional usage styles.

Grading an Essay

Questions to ask as you read an essay:

- Does the paper have a point or problem or guiding question to explore?
- Does the paper have a thesis which is clearly expressed near the beginning? Or is it only partially expressed? Or did you have to ferret it out?
- Does the thesis have a basic flaw? Is it insufficiently specific? Are key terms poorly defined?
- Does the paper go in the direction the introduction leaders you to believe it will go?
- Is there an unstated idea in the paper, perhaps an assumption, that if stated explicitly would make the paper clearer?
- Does the paper simplify issues too much? Does the paper deal with the full complexity of a subject?
- Is there enough evidence to make the paper more than a series of assertions?
- Does the paper make effective use of evidence?
- Are there gaps in the argument?
- Are conflicting evidence or opposing arguments omitted?
- Would a re-ordering of the paragraphs make the paper more compelling?
- Are there enough signposts and transition sentences to keep you on track as a reader?
- Can you hear the author's voice and opinions?
- Does the paper present a foregone conclusion? Does the paper pass the "so what" test?

A Rubric for Grading an Essay

1. An "A" Paper
It teaches me something new. It offers an original idea or synthesis of ideas that takes course material beyond the lecture or discussion. It advances a provocative arguments that is effectively developed and supported with compelling evidence. The prose is clear and there are no mechanical or grammatical or syntactical errors.

2. A "B" Paper
It capably engages ideas covered in class. It engages the assignment, but in a limited way. The thesis is there, but it is too broad or not concisely stated. Support for the paper's argument is sparse or sometimes unconvincing. Counter-arguments or alternative explanations aren't taken into account.

3. A "C" Paper
The paper does not demonstrate much critical thought. Potentially productive ideas are hampered by imprecise language or poor organization. The thesis is superficial. The arguments have little evidentiary support

6 Dealing with Common Writing Problems

Here is practical advice about how you can help your students deal with some of the most common writing problems, from writer's block to procrastination and a simple inability to find something significant to say.

1. "I've got nothing to say"

Academic writing—whether this is an essay, a lab report, or a problem solving exercise-- involves taking part in an argument, conversation, and debate. The student's job is to persuade a reader that the student's position is appropriate and sensible take on the issue.

▪ The first step is to ***identify the larger conversation surrounding an issue***. Try to figure out how whatever you're writing about—an event, text, experiment, finding or whatever—fits into your larger subject or field.

▪ Then ***problematize the conversation***: Look for questions, tensions, and unresolved issues. These provide openings for something new to say.

▪ ***Develop a thesis***—a distinctive stance within the conversation.

Have an angle--a slant that gives your paper focus. Advance a provocative thesis that speaks to larger controversies. How do you do this? Use the magic formula: Become part of a broader conversation or controversy.

- Refute an argument
- Refine an argument
- Reveal a gap
- Fill a gap
- Ask a new question or refine an older question

Unlike a legal brief, an academic argument must be fair-minded and balanced, based on evidence and taking account of alternate interpretations and counter-arguments.

2. Awkwardness

We'd like student writing to be original and elegant and their arguments nuanced and sophisticated, but often we'd be happy if their writing was clear.

Instead of writing with concision, short active verbs, and a smooth flow of sentences, their writing is wordy, filled with the passive voice and with arguments that are jumpy and undeveloped.

Students can gain clarity by:

- ***Breaking sentences into easier-to-understand pieces***.
  Simplify. Cut out excess nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

- ***Using active verbs and attaching verbs to clearly identified actors***.
  Minimize the use of the words "was," "were," and "is."

- ***Avoiding nominalizations—actions expressed as nouns***.
  Examples include argument instead of argue; analysis instead of analyze; performance instead of perform.

- ***Using transition phrases and words***
  Transitional phrases:
  I will begin by...
  Before I say what is wrong with..., I will first...
  At this point, we need to consider the following objection...
  Although I have shown..., I still need to...
  Next, I will offer support for what is perhaps my most controversial claim, that...
  Further support for this claim comes from...
  Having argued that..., I need to consider rival views...

  Transitional words.
  To give multiple reasons: In addition, Also, In the first case
  To explain: Because, Given, Since
  To conclude an argument: Therefore, Hence, Consequently
  To illustrate your argument: A case in point, To illustrate
  To provide a specific example: Specifically, Namely
  To intensify: Above all, Moreover, Furthermore, More importantly
  To emphasize: Of course, Indeed, Certainly
  To compare: Similarly, Likewise
  To contrast: However, On the other hand, Even so
  To speculate: Let's assume, Let's suppose
  To concede an argument: Of course, Doubtless, While recognizing that...

- ***Using tenses consistently***.

- ***Establishing an academic tone***.
  The student must establish a reasonable, open-minded tone that promises honest consideration of a question.

- ***Be careful about the beginnings and ends of paragraphs***.
  These are natural emphasis points.

3. So What?

A paper can be clearly written yet trivial. The question it grapples with may be insignificant or its argument simplistic. Here are some suggestions for making arguments more powerful and persuasive.

- ***Engage the reader.***
  The opening paragraph must grab the reader's attention.

- ***Crystallize the argument in a single sentence.***

A paper must present a strong argument. But too often the thesis is weak, absent, or confusing.

- ***Remember the power of 3.***
  In classical rhetoric, this is the tricolon. Lists are more powerful when they contain at least three items.

- ***Don't sweep contrary evidence or alternate interpretations under the rug.***
  Engage the counter-arguments. Use words like admittedly, clearly, at first it may seem, in fairness.

4. Misusing quotations

Misuse of quotations in rampant in undergraduate papers. Sometimes, students quote too much—or too little. Sometimes, they blur their voice and those of the sources they quote. Often, they assume that quotations speak for themselves.

- Explain the quotation's point.
- Integrate the quotation into the text.

5. Weak conclusions

In oratory, the peroration is the conclusion of a speech or discourse. It is the place where the speaker recapitulates the argument and presses it a final time with renewed vigor. It provides an opportunity to remind, to reflect, to inspire, to leave the listener with a bit of wisdom—to sum up with panache. Mediocre student essays simply recapitulate the paper's argument. Strong endings provide a larger vision or context, and broaden the implications of the paper's argument. They provide a fresh twist or a broaden the perspective. Often, they "close the circle"—connecting to the paper's introduction.

6 Testing and Grading

It's a common quip: We'd teach for free, but have to be paid to grade.

Designing effective assignments and tests and grading student work are among the most demanding and unpleasant tasks instructors face.

Topics:

1. Effective Testing
2. Assignment and Test Design
3. Effective Grading
4. Dealing with Disappointed Students

1 Effective Testing

Instructors' most thankless and perhaps most difficult task is to test and assess student performance. Yet it is also a vital task. A well-designed test gives a good measure of how well students are doing in mastering a subject. It can help an instructor identify deficiencies—in student skills and understandings, but also in the instructor's delivery of course material. An effective test can also motivate students to strive for excellence.

So how does one create a well-designed test? Identify your instructional goals, including the content you want students to master and the skills you want them to acquire. The test's questions should measure whether the students have accomplished these goals. The questions should not be biased or ambiguous. And they should evaluate higher-order learning skills, including students' ability to apply knowledge.

Some of the most effective advice about testing and grading is simply a matter of common sense.

1. ***Test what is covered in class and in the reading.***

2. ***Create tests that are appropriate for your students' knowledge and sophistication.***

3. ***Discuss the test format in advance.***

4. ***Update tests frequently.***

5. ***Combine a variety of testing methods.***
These might include multiple choice questions, true-false questions, matching exercises, and short-answer and essay questions.

6. ***Write questions that involve skills other than recall.***

7. ***Grade and return tests promptly.***

2 Assignment and Test Design

As a Teaching Fellow, you may be asked to design as well as grade assignments and tests. If you are designing assignments, ask yourself:

- What do you want the students to learn?
- What are the goals and objectives of the course?
- How does the assignment contribute to those goals and objectives?
- What skills to you want students to employ: to solve, to argue, to create, to analyze, to explain, to demonstrate, to apply?

To determine if an assignment is effective, ask yourself:

1. How well focused is the assignment? Are the instructions clear and concise? Does the assignment give the students a clearly defined, unambiguous task?

2 Do you want students to engage in research that goes beyond the course content or do you want them to stick to the course materials? What should the assignment format be? When will the assignment be due and how long will you need to grade it? When will the assignment be returned to students?

3 Will you allow students to rewrite the assignment if necessary?

4. Can this assignment be realistically completed given the knowledge, ability, and time constraints of the students? Is it clearly related to the course content? Are the research materials needed to complete the assignment available in sufficient quantity?

5. Is it possible for you to grade this assignment effectively, given your workload and other commitments?

6. How is this assignment going to contribute to the student's final course grade?

If you are asked to design a test, there is certain information to keep in mind. Some tests simply measure student recall of information. More sophisticated tests seek more reasoned answers. These tests assess students' higher-order thinking skills: Their ability to apply knowledge, analyze and manipulate information, solve problems, and develop supportable generalizations.

Effective tests do not simply ask students to parrot back material from course lectures and readings. Effective tests promote student learning.

If you are asked to make up a test, you should begin by clearly identifying your instructional objectives and then writing questions appropriate to these learning objectives.

Objective questions – including Multiple Choice, Matching, True-False, Short-Answer, Identification, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Number questions – offer an especially efficient way to measure students' command of the subject matter, such as their recall of key terms, facts, and principles. Well-written objective questions may also allow an instructor to assess students' ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, and apply concepts and formulae.

In designing objective questions:

1. Make sure that the question does not simply test students' vocabulary and reading comprehension.
2. Make sure that the wording is straightforward. Avoid extraneous detail and the use of negatives.
3. Answer options should be about the same length and parallel in grammatical structure.

Essay questions require students to construct a response rather than merely select a response. Essay questions can be time consuming to score and difficult to grade fairly. But these questions allow an instructor to assess students'

abilities to reason, create, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. Effective essay questions often present students with a "real-world" problem to solve, rather than simply selecting a solution from a limited list of possibilities. Compared to other kinds of test questions, essay questions require more systematic and in-depth thinking.

Effective essay questions are particularly difficult to write. Students need to know exactly what is expected of them. The essay question should also encourage complex thinking and original responses.

1. An effective essay question should not only require students to recall facts, but to make judgments and to explain the reasoning behind the judgment.

2. Effective essay questions are built around a "directive verb" such as: compare and contrast, defend, describe, define, evaluate, explain, identify, interpret, predict, propose (a solution), or trace.

3. An essay question should provide students with clearly defined task or focus.

4. Include a limited number of essay questions in a test because of the time required for the students to respond to them and the time required for the instructor to grade the responses.

5. Tell the students the criteria for grading. Write a model answer and construct a grading rubric.

Examples of effective essay questions:

1. Ask students to summarize and evaluate an argument.

2. Ask students to summarize and evaluate an article's methodology.

3. Ask students to infer the significance or unique contribution that a text, object, or event has for our understanding of a particular event or the development of scholarly literature.

4. Ask students to compose an explanatory narrative, saying how some event, institution, idea, or attitude came to be and why, explaining causes or the main results, or the role that a certain element played in the story.

5. Ask students to evaluate a hypothetical or counterfactual narrative.

6. Ask students to undertake a comparative analysis.

7. Ask student to take a position on a given issue or question.

8. Ask students to apply or test a theory, model, definition, method, or category to some data.

9. Ask students to contextualize an event, work, or debate, saying how its circumstances (artistic, cultural, biographical, or institutional) played a role in making it what it is, or how we understand it differently, knowing this context, than we otherwise might.

10. Ask students to recommend a course of action.

3	**Effective Grading**

Many students complain that grading is arbitrary, inconsistent, and unfair. Meanwhile, many instructors grumble about grade inflation, the excessive amount of time devoted to grading, and the many complaints that grading prompts.

One way to ensure consistency in grading and to reduce student complaints is to construct and use grading rubrics. A rubric specifies the criteria used to evaluate a student's performance. It divides an assignment into a variety of component parts and objectives, and provides a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable levels of performance in each dimension.

A rubric provides students with a clear guide to how their work will be assessed. By spelling out evaluative criteria, a rubric greatly reduces subjectivity in grading and makes the grading process more transparent.

In constructing a grading rubric, an instructor must think systematically about a course's objectives and the skills and content a student is expected to master. The first step involves establishing a set of evaluative criteria, such as clarity of expression, command of the course material, and quality of argumentation. By reading through the papers or examinations quickly, the instructor can get a sense of what constitutes high quality, given the time constraints that the students were working under.

The second step is to read the assignments more carefully, appending comments that help students understand their strengths and weaknesses. A rubric will help you identify those strengths and weaknesses. Here is an example of the criteria that might be found in a rubric in a humanities course. Each category would then be evaluated in terms of the extent to which the student has met the rubric.

Criteria	
Mechanics	Spelling Punctuation Grammar
Quality of Writing	Persuasiveness Clarity Structure
Research	Accuracy Thoroughness
Quality of Content and Analysis	Originality Sophistication of analysis

3	**Minimizing Student Unhappiness**

It's no secret that many students care much more about their grades than knowledge and learning. This is a fact of life that instructors need to respond to. How can we reduce the unhappiness and stress that accompanies grading?

1. Prepare students in advance.
To reduce student anxiety and apprehension, explain your grading criteria. Consider showing them sample answers, or have them respond to a sample question in class.

2. State clearly what you expect students to demonstrate.
This might be problem solving. Or it might be stating and substantiating a thesis. Or evaluating and applying conceptual models or methodologies. Or analyzing data.

3. Briefly describe what constitutes "A" work, "A-" work, and so on.
Make your expectations clear.

4. Model how you would approach a question or solve a problem.
Or better yet ask the students to do this.

5. Identify likely problems in advance.
These might include: Poorly crafted thesis statements; stating facts rather than advancing an argument; using vague, imprecise terms; rambling; writing in the passive voice.

6. Following the exam, identify problems that cropped up repeatedly.
Suggest strategies that students might adopt to deal with these problems.

4 Dealing with Disappointed Students

When you begin to teach, there is a tendency to personalize interactions with students. You are overjoyed when they admire you, and you are hurt or irritated when they are withdrawn or hostile. Remember, students are not your children or friends or enemies. They are your clients. Your job is to help them to learn.

As an instructor, you will repeatedly have to deal with students who aggressively challenge your grading and who refuse to give up. How can you best deal with disappointed students?

1. Mandate a "cooling off" period

2. Listen attentively and patiently to the students' concerns.
You need to establish a professional relationship with your students. You are not their friend or a big pal; nor are you a distant authority figure. You might think of your students as your clents.

3. Try not to respond defensively.
Do not regard the student's anger, frustration, and emotion as a personal attack on you.

4. Place the "burden of proof" on the student
Do not try to placate the student. Ask the student to explain how their work fulfills the requirements of your grading criteria.

5. Be future oriented:
Help the student better prepare for the next assignment or exam. Adopt a "formative" approach: Suggest how students can study more effectively and do better on the next exam.

6. Let your students know that you believe in their capacity to develop and do well in your course.

7 Ethical and Legal Issues in College Teaching

The ivory tower is not a walled garden insulated from the ethical and legal dilemmas of the outside world. Ethical and legal issues constantly surface, involving such issues as confidentiality, freedom of speech and expression within the classroom, instructor-student relationships, the use of copyrighted materials, and a host of other topics. You need to think about these issues before they crop up.

Topics:

1. Ethical Responsibility

2. Legal Issues in College Teaching
   - Academic Freedom in the Classroom
   - Accommodating Students with Disabilities
   - Grading
   - Intellectual Property
   - Letters of Recommendation
   - Sexual Harassment
   - Student Privacy

3. TA-Student Relationships

1 Ethical Responsibility

As an instructor, you have multiple responsibilities. In addition to leading discussions or running labs, you evaluate student performance, provide academic advice, and serve as a scholarly role model. You may also be asked to provide personal advice.

Through these roles, you occupy a position of considerable power and authority—including the power to grade—largely free from direct oversight. You enjoy a large degree of academic freedom—but with power comes responsibility. Your actions have a considerable impact on your students' lives, just as your mentors' actions profoundly influence yours. Such authority can easily be abused.

There is, in short, an ethical dimension to college teaching— although it is a dimension seldom discussed or scrutinized. Some ethical issues are easy: One may not make racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks in class or exchange grades for money or sexual favors. Papers and exams must always be graded and returned to students in a timely manner. But many issues are tougher.

Here are a few of the ethical issues you will confront as an instructor.

Academic Freedom

Does the principle of academic freedom allow you (or your students) to:

- use language in class that some might find offensive?
- discuss unrelated topics in the classroom?

Must you remain neutral when teaching controversial issues or do you have an obligation to present opposing perspectives on a particular topic (for example, evolution)?

Academic Honesty
Must you report every case of plagiarism or cheating to the course instructor, or can you resolve the problem informally?

Advising and Mentoring
What should you do if you have a problematic relationship with your mentor, or with a student?

Confidentiality
What should you do if a student tells you something in confidence that raises concerns about the student's mental well-being? Can you discuss a particular student with other TAs or with faculty?

Grading:
How do you fairly grade a student who has ticked you off or offends you? How can you assure that your grading is fair and not arbitrary or biased?

A Hostile Learning Environment
Is an instructor justified in making students' feel uncomfortable in the interest of promoting critical inquiry and reflection? What should you do if you think an instructor is biased, for example, on the basis of gender or sexual orientation?

Intellectual Property
What are your obligations, when teaching, in acknowledging ideas that you obtained from others? Can you use another instructor's syllabus, handouts, or tests without acknowledgement?

Interpersonal Relationships
What kinds of personal relationships with students are appropriate?

Letters of Recommendation
Can you refer to a student's race or ethnicity in a letter of recommendation? Can you decline to write a letter on behalf of a student? Can you write a negative or mixed letter of recommendation?

Research Ethics
What should you do if you suspect a lab mate is fudging or fabricating data? How should credit be allocated in publications?

2	**Legal Issues in College Teaching**

Disclaimer: This guide is for instructional purposes only, and should not to be regarded as legal advice. If you have specific legal questions, you should seek the advice of counsel.

Academic Freedom in the Classroom

Speech by professors in the classroom at public institutions is generally protected if the speech is "germane to the subject matter." However, the right to freedom of speech is not absolute if it compromises a student's right to learn in a hostile-free environment. For example, the courts have held that professor's use of vulgar language is "not germane to the subject matter." The courts have held that instructors must avoid indoctrinating or proselytizing. Students, too, have a right to academic freedom, including the right to free discussion, free inquiry, and free expression.

A major current source of controversy involves balancing student and faculty rights Professors are allowed to select readings to assign in their courses without having to provide "equal time" for every competing viewpoint, so long as this reflects a genuinely academic decision. Students do not have the legal right to demand that classes be viewpoint neutral or "balanced." An instructor teacher may require a student to write a paper from a particular viewpoint, even if it is a viewpoint with which the student disagrees, so long as the requirement serves a legitimate pedagogical purpose.

In general, the courts defer to the professional judgment of faculty to determine what is pedagogically appropriate in the college classroom so long as such academic decisions are not a pretext for some unlawful form of discrimination.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

One recent study estimated that one college student in eleven reports having a disability. How should you best handle requests for accommodation by students with special needs?

Federal law requires public and private colleges and universities to provide the necessary services and support for students with special needs to participate in all campus activities and programs, where these are academic or social. However, the students must notify, and in some cases provide documentation of disability, before they assert the need for an accommodation, and must not wait until the last minute.

As an instructor, you have a responsibility to refer students who request an accommodation to the proper campus office. This office will meet with the student, review the required documentation, and recommend an appropriate accommodation that does not alter the course's academic standards or content. You are required to make reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability.

The EducationQuest website (www.educationquest.org/swdaccomodations.asp) provides a list of potential accommodations:

- Assigning the student a notetaker or tutor.
- Making the course readings available in alternative form, such as Braille, large print, and audio-tapes.
- Giving the student access to educational materials in advance, such as class syllabus and study guides.
- Providing sign language, oral interpreting, and real-time captioning services.
- Giving the student alternatives to the standard way of delivering an examination, such as extended time, taped tests, oral tests, an alternate test site, elimination of computer scored answer sheets, and use of a computer or spell-checking device for quizzes and exams.
- Providing the student with access to adaptive equipment such as closed caption devices, amplified telephone receivers, low vision reading aids, tape recorders, Brailleing devices, and computer enhancements.
- Giving the student the opportunity to make up quizzes, exams, or assignments if the absence was disability-related.
- Providing the student with preferential seating in the classroom.
- Extending the timelines for completion of specific courses or for the completion of certification or degree requirements.
- Giving the student permission to take less than full-time credit and still be eligible to receive financial aid.

- Providing foreign language course substitutions, such as the option to take foreign culture class instead of a foreign language.

Grading

Can you be sued over the grade that you give a student? A paralegal seeking bachelor's degrees in legal studies and sociology at the University of Massachusetts filed a 15-count lawsuit in US District Court in 2007 after a teaching assistant graded a political philosophy class on a curve and turned the student's A-minus into a C. The student contended that the university violated his civil rights and contractual rights and intentionally inflicted "emotional distress."

The suit was ultimately dismissed. But cases like this one have struck fear in many instructors. Evaluating a student's performance is an integral part of higher education. But as grading has assumed heightened significance (for example, in determining eligibility for scholarships), grading disputes appear to have grown more frequent. The general counsel for the American Council on Education, which represents more than 1,600 college and university presidents, said such suits are rare and almost never successful, and generally reflect an unrealistic fear that a single grade can torpedo a student's professional goals. Still, it is essential that grades not be arbitrary and capricious, excessively skewed, or reflect bias. And some courts have held that it is proper for an institution to insist that an instructor comply with a particular college or university grading policy (such as grading on a prescribed curve).

Some courts have ruled that there should be procedures for handling disputed grades; and that an instructor must enforce grading standards evenhandedly. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recommends that grading appeals should be heard by faculty members in the department or closely related field and that the standard should be whether the faculty member used "inappropriate criteria" "in determining the grade" or "did not adhere to stated procedures or grading standards.

Intellectual Property

Who owns your intellectual property? Who owns your syllabus, lectures, classroom handouts, research data and website? It is generally assumed that professors own the copyright to scholarly books and articles or creative works that they produce, even if they use university facilities and resources. Thus, any royalties flow to them. Lectures are also generally assumed to belong to the professor. Thus, companies are generally barred from selling lecture notes without the professor's permission.

Work by students belongs to the students and faculty need the students' permission to distribute their work.

Ownership of syllabi and online and distance education materials, however, is a gray area.

What are your rights under "fair use" of copyrighted materials? There are special conditions--including criticism, teaching, and criticism--in which the law allows for limited copying of copyrighted materials without the permission of the rights holder. However, the fair use exemption is vague and unclear, depending on specific facts and circumstances. Under some circumstances, including satire, parody, negative and positive commentary, discussion-triggers, illustration, and archiving, the use of copyrighted material could be legal.

In evaluating whether the use of material is covered by the fair use doctrine, courts weigh four factors:

(1) Whether the material is being used for commercial or educational and non-commercial purposes;

(2) Whether the material is factual or informational or whether it is for primarily entertainment purposes.

(3) The amount of material copied and whether the material constituted the "heart" of a particular item.

(4) The effect upon the economic value of the copyrighted work.

In online courses, there must be measures in place to ensure that the copyrighted material is not accessible to students who are not enrolled in a particular class. Here are some simple guidelines:

- Keep any excerpts from copyrighted material brief.
- Cite the source of any copyrighted materials.
- Get permission to use the materials.

Letters of Recommendation

What can't you write in a letter of recommendation?

We've all heard the joke: That in letters of recommendation "good" means "mediocre," "shy" means "socially dysfunctional," ambitious means "overreaching," and solid means "plodding" and "unimaginative." There can be no doubt that for a number of reasons, including fear of defamation suits, hyperbole has become rampant and evasion and puffery abound in letters of recommendation.

Writing a letter of recommendation is an art. At stake is a letter writer's credibility-and a candidate's career prospects. Recipients of letters hope for candor and honesty, but often feel that they must read between the lines and look for code words.

An effective letter discusses a candidate's research, teaching, leadership potential, and impact on the field. It assesses
strengths and weaknesses. But given the high stakes involved, many academics resort to euphemism. This is the case even though very few letter writers have ever been sued.

Still, there are things to watch out for. It is one thing to discuss a candidate's research and teaching, but whether you should discuss a candidate's personality or collegiality is unclear. In instances where you might refer to a candidate's ethnicity or special needs, it is essential to obtain the candidate's consent.

Confidentiality is a question mark. Some universities (like those in the University of California system) operate under open records laws that allow individuals to read letters of recommendation (except for the letterhead, signature and identifying information below the signature. And even in instances where letters are not subject to open-records requests, information about the letters frequently seeps out.

Sexual Harassment

What constitutes sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is not confined to a quid pro quo, for example, an exchange of sexual favors for a higher grade. Any conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's academic work or which creates a an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment may constitute sexual harassment. Thus, abusive speech, lewd or sexually graphic language, gossip, pressure for dates, unwanted sexual looks or gestures, unwanted touching, and materials of a sexual nature in the workplace-all may create a hostile learning environment.

If you receive a complaint or hear even indirectly about a problem in your area that might reasonably be construed as sexual harassment, harassment, or discrimination, in many cases you are required to take some timely action. You may not ignore it.

Be aware of the following:

1. Harassment does not have to be directed at a particular individual. It is sufficient to create a hostile learning environment.

2. What is harmless joking to one person may be grossly offensive to another. Be sensitive to others.

3. Intent is not relevant in determining whether or not a behavior is sexual harassment. All that matters is the impact of the behavior on the work environment.

4. Avoid touching someone else unless you are sure it is welcome.

5. Retaliation after someone makes a claim of sexual harassment is strictly prohibited.

6. Certain forms of academic discourse are protected, if they are germane to the course. This might include reading and discussing literary works or student essays that contain material that might otherwise contain material that might, under other circumstances, be found offensive.

Are consensual romantic relationships between instructors and students permissible?

Various colleges and universities have adopted different approaches to romantic relationships between instructors and students. Some have banned such relationships entirely. Others prohibit relationships where there is a supervisory relationship. Still others strongly discourage such relationships; some require such relationships to be disclosed to the instructor's supervisor.

The American Association of University Professors has adopted the following policy:

Sexual relations between students and faculty members with whom they also have an academic or evaluative relationship are fraught with the potential for exploitation. The respect and trust accorded a professor by a student, as well as the power exercised by the professor in an academic or evaluative role, make voluntary consent by the student suspect. . . . In their relationships with students, members of the faculty are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and to avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias. When a sexual relationship exists, effective steps should be taken to ensure unbiased evaluation or supervision of the student.

Student Privacy

What information can't I reveal?

You cannot reveal a student's Social Security number. You can't publicize a student's grades. Nor can you discuss a student's academic performance with the student's parents. But can you intercede with troubled students? Who, if anyone, can you inform if you suspect that a student has serious emotional problems or exhibits signs of potentially dangerous behavior, while still respecting student privacy?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides that identifiable information from student education records cannot generally be released to any third party without the consent of the student. In Owasso Independent School District v. Falvo, the Supreme Court concluded that the common practice of asking students to exchange papers and grade each other's work did not constitute a violation of FERPA. The Court held that peer grading is a legitimate pedagogical tool, allowing students to learn from the grading process. Thus, faculty may use peer grading in the classroom without FERPA concerns.

Whether TAs teach independently or TA for a faculty member, Teaching Fellows are prohibited from having personal relationships, whether intimate or not, with students whom they also supervise or evaluate.

TAs evaluate papers and exams. They may assign grades. They develop and enforce policies related to class or section requirements, assignments, due dates, attendance, etc. TAs also determine consequences for students who fail to meet requirements or deadlines. TAs are asked to consider requests for extensions, change of grades, extra credit, and additional help, tutoring, and information. TAs must be able to carry out these responsibilities fairly; students need to know that their TAs are treating them all objectively and that interactions with them are based on a relationship that is developed solely around the content and conduct of the course.

Teaching Fellows will not be perceived as objective and fair if they have relationships outside the instructional role and responsibilities. And whether TAs believe they can be fair and objective is not as critical as whether students perceive their TA to be. Other students are unlikely to believe their TA gives them grades, resources, and opportunities using the same criteria as the TA does for students with whom the TA has a close or romantic relationship. Special relationships damage both professional identity and authority as well as the academic credibility and peer relationships of students whom TAs may favor with those relationships.

Any relationship between people with different degrees of power, such as the one that exists between instructor and students, mentor and protégé, advisor and advisee, is lopsided. What may appear as a consensual, reciprocal relationship may actually be experienced and viewed as pressure and coercion by students. It can even be argued that with unequal status and power in the TA-student relationship, the student is unable to consent freely to a relationship. All too often, when the relationship ends, accusations of harassment, intimidation, and worse (assault, rape) are leveled. Teaching Fellows must not place themselves at such risk.

In cases where faculty or students report that a TA is being unfair, showing favoritism, practicing discrimination, exhibiting unprofessional conduct, or intimidating or harassing a student, the TA's Director of Graduate Studies and GSAS will investigate the complaint. TAs can be, and have been, removed from their instructional responsibilities for showing poor judgment and inappropriate behavior as a TA.

We do not mean to imply that it is always easy to determine appropriate conduct, especially responses to student initiated behaviors. Can a TA accept a student's invitation to lunch, dinner, or for a drink? What if a group of students from a Teaching Fellow's class invites the TA out? Must it be an event or occasion that is open to all students in the class before the TA can agree to socialize with his or her students? We encourage TAs to discuss these issues with their DGS and faculty mentor.

We encourage Teaching Fellows to read Columbia's policy on sexual harassment (p. 78 in FACETS http://www.columbia.edu/cu/facets/0708_fulltext.pdf) and Columbia's romantic advisory policy (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/eoaa/docs/romance.html).

8 The Changing Academy

The academy has changed as much in the past 20 years as it did in the preceding half century. Many of the changes are obvious:

- More women, minority professors, and adjuncts joined the professoriate.
- Information technology and new media technologies altered the student experience in fundamental ways.
- The student body grew far more diverse.

Some of the academy's changes are less obvious. Here is a list of some of the most profound developments:

1. Higher education has grown more valuable economically.
Over the past two decades, the earning power of a high school degree has fallen 20 percent and the earning power of a college degree rose by 20 percent.

2. But the cost of a college degree has risen sharply.
Each year for the past quarter century, undergraduate tuition and fees have increased by an average of 2.5 to 3.5 percentage points above the inflation rate. Partly this is due to a decline in state appropriations. The share of state general funds going to higher education has shrunk by over a third over the past 25 years. On average, each dollar in private giving per student was met with a 20 percent cut in per student appropriations. Each dollar that tuition raised led to a one dollar cut in state appropriations.

3. And financial aid has failed to keep up with rising costs.
Most aid now comes in the form of loans, and students from lower income families are less willing than more affluent students to take on large loan burdens to finance their education. There has also been a movement from need-based aid toward non-need-based aid. Fewer than 15-20 private institutions provide financial aid based solely on students' financial need.

4. Much of the growth in college attendance has taken place at community colleges.
Half of all college students attend or previously attended a community college. 41 percent of first time freshman are community college students. But retention and graduation rates at community colleges are distressingly low. Half of community-college students leave after only one year.

There are now nearly 1,200 community colleges enrolling 11.5 million students (41 percent full-time).

- 58 percent are over the age of 22; 16 percent are 40 or older.
- 39 percent are the first generation to attend college.
- 27 percent are employed full time and 50 percent part time.
- 59 percent of nurses and 80 percent of firefighters and police officers are credentialed at community colleges

5. Among the fastest growing segments within higher ed at private, for-profit institutions
Small vocational institutions, with training programs which enrolled students with lower incomes than traditional universities for brief periods of time, have given way to a growing corporate for-profit institutions with longer programs that compete with community and public 4-year institutions.

The for-profit institutions tend to focus on areas that are profitable. Most degrees are in business, management, information science, and the applied arts, including graphic design, interior design, and fashion design. For-profit schools have identified types of students and programs that the traditional public and private nonprofit schools have

paid relatively little attention to: students older than 18-25 and students who hold full-time jobs that restrict their availability to attend courses during usual school hours. These institutions have been leaders in online education and putting no-frills classrooms in easily accessed locations with parking.

Despite the growth of for-profit institutions, the overwhelming majority of undergraduates—70-75 percent—still attend public colleges and universities.

6. A majority of faculty members now works outside the tenure system.
As of the fall of 2007, the tenurable comprised just one-quarter of the faculty population, down from one-third a decade earlier.

7. Post-doctoral fellowships and other non-tenure positions multiplied far faster than tenure track positions.
A smaller proportion of faculty members follow the once-standard model with traditional appointments and more are appointed on a fixed-term basis.

8. Expectations for junior faculty have escalated dramatically.
These include expectations about publications, teaching, and grantsmanship. In the humanities, faculty must become more entrepreneurial.

Topics:

1. The Changing Student Body
2. The Changing Professoriate
3. Issues in Contemporary Higher Education

1 The Changing Student Body

Over the past five decades, the characteristics of the college-going student body have changed profoundly.

1. The percentage of high school graduates enrolling in college is far higher than in the past
The percentage tripled between 1960 and 1975 and grew by another 23 percent until 1990, before stagnating

2. There is a glaring disparity in college attendance among higher and lower income students

3. There is a deepening divide in college attendance among female and male students
Currently, women comprise 57 percent of college students.

4. There has been a dramatic increase in student interest in business careers and a sharp decline of interest in school teaching, social work, nursing, the clergy, and other service careers

5. Time to completion has increased.
The mean time to completion in 1999-2000 was 55 months. Students who start at 2-year institutions and transfer to 4-year institutions take 71 months on average to complete their degrees.

6. There is increasing reliance on community colleges
Community colleges now educate more than half the nation's undergraduates. 4 out of 10 community college students transfer to another institution—half to a 4 year institution.

7. Our educational pipeline is leaky.
Of every 100 9th graders,
68 graduate from high school on time
40 immediately enroll in college

27 are still enrolled during their sophomore year
18 graduate from college in 4 years

Among 9thGraders
17 percent of 9th graders eventually earn a GED
65 percent earn a high school diploma
18 percent drop out
51 percent enter postsecondary education
49 percent do not

8. Remediation has become more common.
28% of entering freshmen enrolled in one or more developmental course at all postsecondary institutions. The figure is 40 percent at community colleges.

Proportion of Entering Freshmen
Math 22%
Writing 14%
Reading 11%

Students who take remedial courses are much more likely to drop out of college

Changing Student Demographics

1. Students' Demographic Profile and Outlook

1. Only 16 percent of the student population can be described as "traditional" in terms of entering college right out of high school, attending full-time, and living on campus.

2. A third are students of color. A fifth are immigrants or children of immigrants. Most of these come from bilingual homes or families in which English is not the primary language.

- The racial composition of faculty differs markedly from that of students. In 2003, about 15 percent of faculty were professors of color—compared to 29.5 percent of the students.

3. Many students are the first generation in their family to attend college. Many are significantly older than traditional students and must balance school with family or work responsibilities. More than 70 percent of students work, almost half are over the age of 25, and more than half are women.

4. Along with shifting demographics has come a shift in outlook.

- Many students seek a degree, first and foremost, as an occupational credential.
- Many have embraced the consumer mentality that regards instructors as service providers and assumes that because they have paid tuition, teachers should be responsive their needs.
- A surprising number of these 21st century students consider class attendance optional, convinced that they can master the course material on their own.

5. One of the most striking characteristics of 21st century students is that they are products of a technology-rich environment, which has shaped their educational expectations. They ar e natural multitaskers, who grew up doing homework, watching TV, listening to music, and instant messaging simultaneously, and who expect constant stimulation. These students:

- prefer visual modes of communication over speech or text alone;
- tend to scan large quantities of text, rather than simply focus intently on a single text;

- expect to quickly find the answer to any question online, usually through a search engine, often without evaluating the credibility or accuracy of the source;

- place a high value on interactivity and active learning and are comfortable with self-teaching.

2. Upcoming Changes in the Student Population

1. Between next year and 2015, there will be a sharp drop in the number of high school graduates in many states and a dramatic change in the racial and ethnic makeup of the student population.

- There will be a 10 percent decline in the number of non-Hispanic whites

- Minority enrollments are expected to rise from 30 percent in 2004 to 37 percent in 2015.

2. By 2022, almost half of all public high school grads will be members of minority groups.

3. Meanwhile, in Arizona., Florida, Georgia, Nevada, Texas, and Utah, there will be phenomenal growth across all racial groups, but particularly among Hispanic students.

3. Diversity Within Diversity

Racial and ethnic groups are not homogenous. Apart from differences in gender and sexual orientation, there are other pronounced differences in identity. A recent study identified through distinct profiles of Latino students at elite institutions:

- Assimilators (26 percent)
- Accommodators (32 percent)
- Resisters (43 percent)

4. The Millennial Generation

Born between 1980 and 1994, this generation, which consists primarily of the children of Baby Boomers, is nearly as large as that generation.

- Helicopter parents: hovering, heavily involved, highly protective parents
- Many bring a consumer mentality to the classroom: You are there to serve them.
- Many have felt enormous pressure to succeed
- They are used to multitasking.

5. The Millennials at College

1. They face much higher college costs than their predecessors.

2. Many don't come to college with skills that they need to succeed: note-taking, writing, and organizational and time management skills.

> The American Association of Colleges and Universities estimates that about 50 percent of entering college students are academically underprepared, lacking basic skills in either reading, writing, or math.

3. Many have little experience establishing priorities.

4. Many are shy about coming to office hours for help; you might consider requiring your students to come to office hours at the beginning of the term.

5. At elite institutions, 1500 is the new 1280. More than 50 percent of the students score more than 700 on the verbal SAT. In 1989, only one college in the top 30 had as many as 30 percent above 700.

How can we best meet the needs of students who are quite different from those we saw in the past?
A few answers follow.

- Sensitivity to issues surrounding ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation has never been more essential.
- There is often a substantial mismatch between faculty and student expectations for academic work; instructors must be very precise about the level of work they expect.
- Older students and working students expect instructors to be flexible and accommodating; it is important for faculty to specify policies regarding about missed classes and tests and late papers.
- Instructors need to consider adopting a hybrid form of instruction, in which certain forms of content are placed online, reserving more class time for discussion, inquiry, and participatory activities.
- Lectures might incorporate audio and visual resources, including charts and graphs, film clips, and simulations.
- A heightened emphasis might be placed on active, hands-on learning, including inquiry-based and problem-based activities.

Student Attitudes

1. Freshmen increasingly overestimate their own abilities, rating themselves as "above average" in virtually all academic areas
41% of students in 1997 rated themselves "above average" writer, compared with 27% in 1966.

2. A high degree of academic disengagement exists.
In 1997, some 36% of freshmen (compared with 26% in 1985) report having been frequently "bored in class" during their last year of high school.

3. In a national poll of 15- to 17-year-olds,
▪ 25% said the "ability to formulate creative ideas and solutions" was extremely important;
▪ 33% said the same of the "ability to understand the historical, cultural, and philosophical background of a current problem"; and
▪ less than 40% said being "able to write well" was extremely important.

2 The Changing Professoriate

1. The Shrinking Professoriate

a. Tenure-track and tenured professors are a minority on college campuses. They are outnumbered by adjunct and contingent instructors and by administrators.

b. Of the 1.3 million faculty members in 2005, 47.5 percent, were in part-time positions. That represents an increase in number and proportion from 2003, the last full survey of institutions, when 46.3 percent were part timers.

c. Of the 675,624 full-time faculty members at degree-granting colleges and universities in 2005, 61.4 percent, were either tenured or on the tenure track. That is down from 65.2 percent in 2003.

d. For the first time, more full-time college professionals are administrators rather than instructors. 22 percent had tenure, 9 percent were on tenure track, 10 percent were not on tenure track, and 7 percent were employed by institutions without a tenure system. The remaining 51 percent of full-time professionals did not have faculty status.

2. Increasing Reliance on Contingent Faculty

In recent years, the use of part-time faculty has increased sharply: from 33 percent of faculty in 1987 to 44 percent in 2003. Issues of concern include compensation (part-time faculty earn 27 percent of what fulltime faculty members earn), job security, workloads, and access to office space and travel funds.

The proportion of contingent faculty varies by the kind of institution and by discipline. Two year institutions employ the greatest proportion of part-time faculty. 67 percent of their instructors are part-time faculty.

	2003	1987
Engineering	29.6	1.1
Fine Arts	52.5	7.5
Humanities	46.9	13.2
Natural Sciences	37.2	5.4
Social Sciences	37.4	15.4

The average length of service of part-time faculty is high, average 7 or more years at 2-year and at private and public 4-year institutions. In 2003, part-time faculty received on average, $2399 per course at 2 year institutions, $2,773 at 4 year non-doctoral degree granting institutions, and $3,973 at doctoral degree granting institutions.

3. Academic Couples

A growing number of job candidates face a "two-body problem"—finding two professional jobs in the same geographical location. About 40 percent of academics are married to other academics, and many others have partners with Ph.D.s.

The two-body problem is particularly acute for women, who are more likely than men to have a partner who is also an academic. For example, 43 percent of married female physicists are married to another physicist, compared to just 6 percent of male physicists.

Anti-nepotism rules do not apply, since they would violate federal laws which prohibit a policy that has an adverse impact on job opportunities for women.

Can a couple find two jobs at the same institution?

A growing number of institutions (perhaps half) have formal policies regarding couples, and a majority of these policies apply to unmarried and same-sex as well as married partners. Many other institutions consider ad hoc arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Only rarely, especially at the junior level, do these policies involve a second tenure-track line. Much more common is career assistance, or offering an administrative position or a short-term adjunct or visiting post. A few will consider joint, split, or shared positions. In those rare cases where institutions do create a second tenure-track position, the cost is typically divided equally among the Provost or Dean's office and the departments of the partners. A college or university's size and location are the critical factors influencing an institution's response to academic couples, with research universities, especially those outside of metropolitan areas, the most willing to make accommodations.

For many institutions, the issues surrounding the hiring of couples are complicated. By hiring partners, an institution might attract more qualified candidates, diversify its faculty, broaden its curriculum, and retain valued faculty. But partner hirings also raise issues of fairness—whether these discriminate against other potential job candidates—as

well as issues involving departmental autonomy in setting priorities or selecting colleagues. Many departments worry that a partner hire will foreclose the opportunity to make a future appointment.

When Should You Inform the Institution?

Most couples wait until one partner has been verbally offered a job. Many fear that if they inform a department earlier, their application will be dismissed out of hand. Of course, the downside of this approach is that it leaves less time for an institution to devise an acceptable solution.

One exception involves small colleges, when couples are willing to share a single job. In this case, an institution might very well regard this as an opportunity to hire two scholars for the price of one.

Another exception involves exceptionally strong candidates, especially those who are applying to a geographically-isolated institution. These candidates sometimes inform the search committee early in the process, typically at the interview.

What Should You Say?

Before you say anything, see if the institution has a formal partner policy. This will give you a sense of what is possible. Also, figure out what you and your partner are willing to accept. If your willingness to accept a job offer depends on a particular accommodation, say so. Typically, candidates ask for a department's help in finding something for the partner, whether this is a replacement position, an adjunct job, or an administrative slot.

What Might You Expect?
You won't be the first candidate to ask for some kind of accommodation. Institutions are accustomed to such requests. Few institutions these days regard this as "bait and switch." But it helps to be proactive. When you speak to the department chair, ask how you can find out whether adjunct, replacement, or visiting positions or administrative jobs are available. Consider having the partner visit the institution to speak to the relevant department heads in person.

Securing two tenure-track positions rarely happens overnight. Sometimes, the process can take as long as five years. One not uncommon scenario is for the partner in a tenure-track position to become a valuable and productive colleague, who the institution wants to retain, while the other partner proves to be a perfect fit. Hopefully, your patience and hard work will pay off.

3 Issues in Contemporary Higher Education

Here is a brief list of some of the most controversial issues being discussed in higher ed.

1. Contingent Faculty: How should faculty respond to issues raised by the increase in contingent faculty, including compensation, job security, teaching loads, and access to office space?

2. 21st Century Students: How can we best reach students who bring high expectations to the classroom—about grades, interactivity, and technology?

3. The Faculty Generation Gap: How should junior faculty deal with the ratcheting up of expectations and requirements for new faculty?

4. Inequalities in Treatment based on Gender, Race, and Sexual Orientation: How might inequalities in hiring, salaries, rates of promotion, and service requirements best be addressed?

5. Assessment: Accrediting agencies and government are placing an increasing emphasis on measuring learning outcomes. How might assessment of students be used to improve educational practices and student learning?

6. Intellectual Property: How can we best protect faculty members' rights as creators and users of intellectual property?

7. International Students: The proportion of Ph.D.s received by international students has jumped from 10 to 26 percent over the past 30 years. How can universities best serve and support international students?

9 Teaching and the Academic Job Market

Topics:

2. Teaching and the Academic Job Market
2. Writing a Compelling Teaching Statement
3. Talking About Teaching in Your Job Interview

1 Teaching and the Academic Job Market

Teaching matters on the job market—and in securing tenure—much more than you might imagine. And this is true even at the most prestigious institutions

About half of all job questions at the most recent Modern Language Association convention involved teaching. Among the most popular questions were these:

- How would you teach an introductory class?
- What books would you assign and how many?
- What are the key themes or questions you would explore in class?
- What upper level undergraduate and graduate classes would you like to teach?
- How will you engage and motivate students?
- What kinds of assignments do you find most effective?
- How do you teach students to engage in a discussion in a civil and respectful manner?
- What do you consider the relationship between teaching and research?

Why so many questions about teaching?

In part this is because over half of Ph.D.s will teach at institutions in which teaching is as important, if not more important, than research. Departments in the non-Ivies need excellent teachers who can attract students—especially non-majors. They are looking for scholars who can not only publish, but who can teach successfully, and who can effectively advise and mentor students. Even Ivies are hearing the argument that undergrads should get more bang for the buck.

Another reason: Beginning in the 1960s a deepening divide took place in teaching and research. Many institutions loaded up with pure researchers and grant getters, some of whom did not contribute substantially to the department's everyday functioning. Some of these researchers attracted grad students; others didn't. Many refused to teach service courses, or if they did, failed to do so well. Now research universities are increasingly looking for faculty members who can combine successful teaching and research.

Most colleges and universities expect new hires to "hit the ground running." Few have the time or interest in providing on the job training in teaching. Even elite research universities have begun to attach a priority to teaching.

Many institutions have also discovered that teaching is a useful proxy for a wide range of issues that search committees consider important, including candidates' familiarity with the literature in a particular field as well as their conceptual skills and intellectual breadth.

2 Writing a Compelling Teaching Statement

According to an October 11, 2005, search on HigherEdJobs.com, of the 1,000 ads for faculty jobs:
- 585 include the words "teaching philosophy,"
- 27 include the words "teaching statement," and
- 28 include the words "teaching portfolio."

When you apply for a job or come up for tenure, you will be asked to submit a teaching statement. Of course in some instances, a teaching statement is not a serious factor in the hiring or the tenure process. An institution requires a statement simply to send the message that it regards teaching as important.

A poor teaching statement can hurt more than a strong statement can help. A bad statement clearly identifies a grad student who is disdainful of students and who dislikes teaching. But in other cases, especially at liberal arts colleges, a memorable, skillfully written teaching statement helps to set you apart from other candidates. It can demonstrate that you have reflected seriously about your learning objectives, methods, and the relationship between your research and your teaching.

An effective teaching statement addresses the following questions.

1. What drives you to teach anthropology or biology or sociology or…?

There are many reasons why we might want to teach history. Many of the reasons are clichés: To learn the lessons of the past. To place contemporary controversies in historical perspective. To cultivate cultural literacy. I am driven by certain questions, some big (e.g. how people as intelligent and moral as us could commit horrendous acts of evil; why empires rise and fall; why revolutions occur), and some smaller. And therefore I build my classes around key questions and controversies.

2. What are your goals as a teacher?

Mine are three fold: 1) To instill an ability to think historically (that is, to appreciate the importance of change over time, contingency, and the importance of context); 2) to give students the opportunity to do history (conduct research, weigh evidence, work with primary sources); and 3) to encourage them to tell history (in essays and even in "mini-movies.").

3. How do you engage students?

First of all, I build my classes around provocative questions and inquiry and investigation. I don't want students simply to study history, but to do history. Secondly, I want students to work with primary sources--the living voices of the past—including letters and diaries. Third, I use unconventional evidence--advertisements, art works, fashion, film clips, music, photographs—to bring the past to life by communicating the look and feel of earlier time periods. Fourth, I try to convey to students our need to create a new history for a new century, a history that speaks to the issues of our time. History is not simply politics and diplomacy and war--though they remain central to any understanding of the past--but other issues that engage us. I seek to show that everything has a history: childhood, families, holidays, manners, sports, and on and on.

4. What innovative pedagogical techniques do you use?

To ignite student interest and to promote engagement, I use a variety of pedagogical techniques. One approach involves discussion triggers: An image or an audio clip or a brief text to ignite discussion. Another involves online resources-- discussion boards that break down classroom walls. New technologies--for example, iMovie or PhotoStory, which allow students to create audio-visual presentations. Then there are other techniques that I have found effective: role playing, small group activities, collaborative projects, and problem based learning.

5. How do you make discussions substantive and truly interactive?

To insure that discussions take place at a high level, I lay out (or have the students help lay out) opposing positions that reflect recent scholarship--and then have students represent various points of view. Thus, I don't simply have students debate whether slavery was the major cause of the Civil War, but various ways that slavery might have been the cause: the moral issue of slavery, the economics of slavery, slavery expansion, or fear of a Slave Power.

6. What challenges have you faced in the classroom?

I've faced many challenges in the classroom. The biggest: Too many students come to history classes convinced that the subject matter is boring and irrelevant. I seek to refute that. Also, many students from underrepresented groups feel that history isn't their story. They can't see themselves or their ancestors represented in the curriculum. I want to create an inclusive history. Pre-class preparation is another challenge. I require students to reflect on the reading (in writing) before class. Then there is yet another problem: Students who dominate discussion while others are withdrawn. I use a variety of techniques to make sure that all students are involved (including small group activities).

7. What relevant experience do you have?

Are you ready to "hit the ground running"? Have you directed student research? Have you lectured? Have you designed a course?

Other Steps You Can Take

1. Highlight your teaching experience—informal as well as formal.

You probably have more teaching experience than you think you have. In addition to serving as a teaching fellow, you may have lectured or directed undergraduate research projects or evaluated and commented upon writing. Even at Columbia, you have worked with highly diverse students. You have taught majors and non-majors, freshman and more advanced students.

As a teaching fellow, you've done many of the things that many institutions are looking for: You've led discussions, devised and graded a variety of writing assignments, organized small-group work, facilitated student presentations, and provided feedback to students.

2. Don't hesitate to mention the innovative pedagogical techniques you have used.

How have you used CourseWorks or Internet resources? Have you used audio-visual resources?

3. Request a classroom observation.

In addition to receiving practical advice about how to make your classes more stimulating, you will also have someone who can write firsthand about your teaching, including your pedagogical approach, your teaching strategies, and your rapport with students.

Sample Teaching Statements:

Biology:

I believe as a biologist and a teacher it is my responsibility to challenge and support my students, in pursuit of three
learning goals: (1) confront misconceptions about crucial biological ideas; (2) learn basic biological concepts; (3) cultivate an interest in science and an understanding of how we do science. For the majority of my non-science major students, the semester spent in my classroom will be their first and last experience doing science. Yet, these students will have to make decisions about biological issues. I want my students to leave my classroom with basic biological skills that enable them to engage these ideas, making well-considered choices. How do I do this? I start with a complex, yet relevant, idea such as whether forests could be used as carbon sinks to counter global climate change. I gather students' initial ideas about why plants need carbon and where they acquire that carbon. I then challenge them to discuss the questions in pairs and explain their answers to one another. A second poll of answers demonstrates how students' ideas have changed, and allows me to correct misconceptions and assess their understanding of basic biological concepts. The crucial final stage in this discussion is that of developing experiments to test their ideas. This is the crux of how science is done. Traditionally, there has been a major discrepancy between how we do

science and how we teach science. In most biology lab classes, students carry out lab activities by following step by step directions printed in the lab manual.

Students do not experience the joy of discovery since every step of the experiment, including expected results, is explicitly stated, requiring little creative thought. In my lab classroom, we use an inquiry-based lab curriculum, centering on the principle that students should actually do science themselves. Doing science entails defining a biological problem or question, addressing the problem through experimentation, and interpreting the findings. An inquiry-based curriculum offers many opportunities for active learning, creating an atmosphere in which students must take responsibility for their learning. During one three-week-long segment, my students test the effectiveness of frequently prescribed antibiotics and to tackle the issue of evolution of bacterial resistance to antibiotics. Students are immediately immersed in all aspects of science; working in small groups, through intensive discussion, they collaboratively design and conduct experiments, deciding which antibiotics to test and how to best determine whether an antibiotic is effective. After carrying out their experiments, students write articles in the style of popular magazines in which they interpret their experimental results and translate these ideas into everyday language. As a result of conducting these experiments, students rethink the common misconception that it is not necessary to complete a course of prescribed antibiotics.

I have two benchmarks for determining that my objectives for students learning are met: that students are able to convey biological concepts in everyday language; and that students are able to use basic knowledge and skills as building blocks to tackle more complex problems. Often this requires that I use more unusual means of evaluation to determine whether these learning objectives are met. For example, after a series of labs in which students use molecular biology techniques to investigate genetic diseases, students use role play, pretending to be genetic counselors. My students leave the lab classroom with the ability to discuss and develop ideas to address problems in collaboration with their peers, which is the underlying structure of the process of scientific inquiry. More importantly, though this may be the final biology course which my students experience, developing the ability to collaborate and persevering to see projects to completion are skills which are transferable to many aspects of my students' lives.

Foreign Languages:

There are a wide variety of approaches to foreign language instruction. These include the Total Physical Response method in which students engage in activities that include singing and acting in plays as they learn Spanish language skills; the Communicative Approach stressing communicative competence; the Grammar-Translation Method, which emphasizes translation of passages and memorization of grammatical rules; and the Audio-Lingual Method emphasizing repetition. My teaching draws up a variety of approaches….

History:

As a teacher of history, I have three major learning goals: To instill the ability to think historically - to appreciate the importance of change over time, contingency, and the importance of context; to give students opportunities to do history - to undertake research, weigh evidence, and interpret primary sources; and to provide students with chances to tell history - to write research papers and make classroom presentations that address important historical questions, advance a clear argument, speak to alternate viewpoints, and present compelling conclusions.

The majority of my students enter my classes knowing little about my subject. For many of these students, mine is the only course in history that they will take. Therefore, I feel a special responsibility for ensuring that the students not only emerge from my classes with a command of historical content, but with an understanding of the way that historians approach and address fundamental problems.

My teaching philosophy can be summed up in terms of four basic commitments. I believe students learn history best when they:

- Work with primary sources, the extent traces of the past.
- Discover that history is not simply a litany of names and dates but of questions and problems.
- Write frequently and learn how to communicate ideas and arguments clearly and convincingly.

• Have an instructor who is passionate and knowledgeable about history and who can illustrate abstract themes with stories and anecdotes that bring history to life.

Among the challenges that I have faced as an instructor, several stand out: engaging non-majors who are taking history because it is required; challenging students who have a deep background in a topic while not neglecting those students who are novices; and persuading students who are reticent or disengaged to actively participate in discussions. There is nothing quite as unsettling as a prolonged silence during a discussion or witnessing a vapid expression on a student's face. My answer to these challenges has involved active inquiry, problem solving, and small group activities.

To teach the importance of perspective, I juxtapose conflicting accounts of landmark events. Through close examination of these texts, my students come to understand how different backgrounds and agendas generate contrasting viewpoints.

I make frequent use of maps in my classes. Maps not only help students understand geography but allow them to see that maps are not necessary the objective depictions of reality that students sometimes mistakenly assume, and can serve ideological and political purposes.

My research informs my teaching and my teaching has helped enlighten my research. My research which cuts across the boundaries separating cultural, diplomatic, political, and social history, addresses issues that I have discovered are deeply meaningful to diverse students: migration, borders, collective identities, nationalism, imperialism, and colonial resistance - subjects that I address in my classes.

Psychology:

As an instructor of an introductory psychology course, the majority of my students are non-psychology major freshmen. Furthermore, for most of these students, this may be their first and perhaps the only psychology course they will take in college. With that in mind, I have three main objectives for their learning experiences: 1) to facilitate the appreciation for the science of psychology, 2) to provide fundamental knowledge and tools applicable to students' pedagogical career, and 3) to enhance self-awareness and understanding of the world around them and the people in it.…

I believe that students do not come to class as blank slates and often bring with them preconceived notions about the field of psychology. These preconceived notions may consist of false assumptions, generalizations, and ideologies that manifest into a lack of appreciation and understanding for the science of psychology. As a teacher, a psychologist in training, and a researcher, it is important for me to acknowledge that but to also provide students with a well-informed view of psychology. However, before I can challenge them to think differently, I must first help my students see the relevance of psychological concepts in their lives. I bring psychology to life by providing examples students can grasp based on what they know of the world. I take big theories down to possible answers to every-day life questions (i.e., why have you chosen the friends you have? why do we conform to societal norms?) to make the connection between the textbook and real life issues. Demonstrations and activities are used to help students "see, feel, and touch" what psychology is all about.

Because they are not blank slates, I invite students to utilize their life experiences when learning the course material. I involve students in activities, ask for examples from their lives, and allow time for reflection and reactions to the material. For example, to illustrate concepts of gender differences, gender roles, and societal influences, I engage my students in the "Are men really from Mars and women from Venus?" dialogue…. I bring in knowledge from research to contextualize the discussion and demonstrate how psychologists scientifically explore answers to such questions....

Political Science:

Example 1: Laura M. Luehrmann , Political Science, The Ohio State University

I am a firm believer in active learning, and I try to maintain a very lively and interactive classroom. To me, teaching is not about lecturing to students; it is about presenting theories, concepts, and empirical material to students in a way that they can integrate this information into their own life experience. I try to accomplish this not only in my presentations and lectures, but in the questions that structure classroom

discussion and, particularly, in writing assignments. For example, the culmination of my Political Ideologies class is a paper in which each student must sketch his or her own political ideology, as well as how this approach compares to two major contemporary ideologies of our world. I have similar writing assignments in my other courses as well.

In each of my classes, I emphasize critical thinking and real-world applications of the concepts and issues we study. I try to engage students who sometimes fail to see the humanity of political and social situations in other countries, or, more commonly, who overlook the interconnectedness of world events with our life in the United States. For example, to teach about rural politics in China, I have constructed a role-play exercise in which the students assume the identity of rural agricultural workers, peasant entrepreneurs, and party cadres, in an attempt to portray the competing priorities and challenges of implementing policies in rapidly changing circumstances. I also begin each one of my classes with a discussion of current events which are related to our subject matter. I have found this exercise most useful in the Political Ideologies classes, when students sometimes view political "theory" as completely divorced from contemporary political "reality".

Finally, I do not see a rigid dividing line between research and teaching. Good teachers need to be at the cutting edge of recent scholarship, in order to help students see the dynamism of our work. Social science is not a collection of facts, but rather, an area of research that is still alive with puzzles, contradictions, and new areas of inquiry. I try to "demystify" research for students, by encouraging them to discover the excitement that can be found in researching the political world. I welcome the opportunity to supervise independent projects, and I have encouraged students in my own classes to submit their writing to appropriate journals for review.

Example 2: Monica Schneider, University of Minnesota

A liberal arts education should produce students who are strong critical thinkers and capable problem-solvers. Students should graduate with the skills necessary to be productive and engaged citizens. I plan to use faculty roles of teaching, research, and service to support student attainment of these goals.

In every course that I teach, each class reading, assignment, and lecture facilitates students' achievement of both broad and specific demonstrable critical thinking goals. My first goal is for students to become engaged and critical citizens. Through the use of historical and factual knowledge of American politics, participants in my class will critically evaluate the politics of today. My second goal is for students to compare and contrast different theories to explain political and social behavior. My third goal is to have students ask interesting and important theoretical questions and consider the normative implications of those questions. In addition, I want students to have the experience of using a variety of different methods to improve their capability of answering their own valid social science questions.

I have already developed and used assignments to achieve these goals. In particular, in my course Quantitative
Analysis, each student asked an interesting social scientific question of importance to that student. One of my students, "Mark," was interested in prejudice against specific minority groups and ultimately how prejudice might affect support for policies such as the "Marriage Amendment." Mark hypothesized that Minnesotans, particularly males, would be more prejudiced against male cross-dressers compared to gay or straight men. Armed with information from my lectures and assigned readings, Mark compared and contrasted various methods to test his hypotheses. Mark designed an experiment and subsequently selected and defended the sampling design and measurements for the independent and dependent variables. Thus, by doing their own research with my guidance, Mark and the students in the course had the experience of creating their own theories, testing them through the use of quantitative methods, and developing their own conclusions about the validity of these theories.

I evaluated my students' success as budding social scientists using short written assignments, a research paper, in-class group and individual activities, presentations, and a short examination. Using my feedback on their work, students were able to improve their thinking and final project. In the assessment of this assignment, conducted by gathering student comments and feedback in a survey format, I conclude that

students felt more confident in their abilities as social scientists, critical thinkers, and users of quantitative techniques as one way to answer social science questions.

A second sample activity is one I plan on using in an interdisciplinary psychology and political science course on social and political identity. Students will compare and contrast individual- and societal-level explanations and solutions for prejudice and racism. For example, psychologists (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, and Esses) posit a "contact hypothesis" as a way to overcome racism while political science work (e.g., Oliver) examines a similar hypothesis on a macro-level. Students will extend their understanding of these theories by applying them to experiences in their own lives or to current societal examples as well as by analyzing films such as Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing.

Students will sharpen their theoretical skills by considering both psychological and political explanations for particular behaviors and behavioral outcomes. The ability to think beyond one discipline is consistent with the broad goals of a liberal arts education and will prepare students for Capstone Projects or Senior Theses.

A final sample course component that would achieve my teaching goals would be to have students evaluate the relevant theory explaining participation in a democracy. Students will write an opinion piece defending their views on mandatory voter laws, comparing the U.S. to other countries. Next, assigned readings will posit theories of the causes of individual variation in participation and my lectures will clarify important concepts in these readings, particularly how scholars define participation, theorize on the causes of participation, and test their theories.

To engage actively in political science theory and practice, students in my course will design, implement, and justify their own plans for increasing voter turnout. Through practical implementation, students will deepen their understanding of the theory. Students will be assessed on their ability to evaluate critically democratic theory and political science research. As an active scholar who is involved in many different projects, I seek to engage students as assistants in my own research. As an undergraduate, I learned about social science by helping a psychology professor with her research. By assisting her with theory development, literature reviews, experimental design, and analysis, I became a better researcher. As I pursue my research agenda addressing representation with solid theory and methods, I plan to invite undergraduates to participate in all aspects of the research process – from conception to completion - including asking sound questions grounded in theory and extant literature, research methods and design, analysis, and writing.

Over the course of my graduate career, I have actively sought to broaden my repertoire of teaching techniques. I have given numerous guest lectures relating my research to undergraduate students. I have also attended and organized a number of political science-specific teaching seminars on using elections and technology in the classroom, teaching with writing, discussion, film, service learning, and commenting on student writing. Most importantly, I have completed an elective two semester sequence entitled Preparing Future Faculty. In these courses, I evaluated a variety of different teaching techniques and wrote an interdisciplinary syllabus. I lectured for an introductory American Politics course under the supervision of Joseph Peschek, a senior faculty member at Hamline University, an undergraduate-focused institution located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Example 3: Christopher N. Lawrence, Tulane University

My Approach to Teaching: My primary objective as teacher of political science is to enable my students to think logically and clearly about political questions. In many ways, this objective overlaps with one of the key questions embodied in my research program—the question of whether, and to what extent, the public is equipped to comprehend and apply new political information in their decision-making processes. I think it is more important for students to emerge from an introductory course with a clear understanding of how politics works than a battery of factual knowledge, much of which may not be applicable when they encounter future political science courses or are called on to think about political questions later in life. That is not to say that factual knowledge is unimportant; some degree of information is needed for any political reasoning. However, knowledge is easier to acquire when it is needed than the ability to make reasoned judgments.

Coupled with this objective, particularly in more advanced courses, is my interest in encouraging students to better understand the study of politics can be approached using scientific processes. Students are often under the impression that "science" is something that one can only do with a Bunsen burner and a lab coat, but scientific approaches can also lead to worthwhile knowledge in social inquiry. Whether students are applying quantitative or qualitative methods, the scientific method—developing a strong theory, testable hypotheses, and an appropriate research and case-selection strategy—should be applied rigorously. While not all political questions lend themselves to scientific inquiry, when students are called on to do research on empirical questions they should be equipped to apply the appropriate research method for their question with rigor. This approach is at the core of my teaching of political science research methods for undergraduates.

The key approach I use in my teaching to accomplish these objectives is to engage students in them. One way I find to be effective is to sell the material with an enthusiastic approach. The courses I have taught in the past have generally been required courses, not electives, which often leads students to be less excited about the material than they might otherwise be; this attitude is particularly common among students in the research methods course.

Engaging students with real-world examples, an abundance of enthusiasm, and a healthy dose of humor seems to help most students over their initial lack of interest in the material. Particularly in the methods course, I've found that the use of texts that cover the material in an accessible way is effective at disarming students.

I also have carried forward my experience at Millsaps College, a small liberal arts institution focused on undergraduate teaching, to my subsequent positions at large research universities. I firmly believe in an "open door" policy, whereby students are free to drop in regardless of whether or not they arrive during posted office hours, and in being accessible to students in and outside the classroom. From this experience I have also decided that it is important to me to teach in a context where colleagues and the administration also place a high value on faculty teaching meaningful, rigorous courses, even if this leaves less time for faculty to conduct research.

Perhaps most important, though, in the methods course is ensuring that students recognize the connection between the statistical methods I am teaching and the substantive problems they are trying to understand through their own research and readings in other courses. Students who may be initially reluctant to "do math" often find it much more rewarding when they come to understand that it allows them to analyze the real world in a more rigorous fashion. In upper division courses, I tend to emphasize the continued development of critical thinking and writing skills. In all of my upper-division courses, the bulk of student assessment is based on out-of-class essay assignments (research papers of varying lengths and take-home essay exams), coupled with assigned readings from textbooks, scholarly books, and research articles that cover the major themes of the course in significant depth. I mostly devote class time to occasional lectures on the more difficult concepts raised in the readings, with the bulk of time spent on seminar discussion of the broader conclusions of the readings and connections between the theoretical and practical realms of politics.

I have also begun to integrate instructional technology in my courses. At Duke and SLU, I made use of university computer labs to include hands-on data analysis instruction and exercises in my methods course. I also had students in my American Political System course at Duke produce on-line state politics journals, which have the dual purpose of keeping students engaged in real world events beyond the classroom and an exercise in improving their writing and critical thinking skills. In my American Government courses at SLU, I used the university's WebCT system to administer online quizzes on the readings that students are expected to complete prior to coming to class, which has helped encourage students to read the course materials. Generally, students have been receptive to these approaches, and I hope to make further use of them in the future.

Overall, I find teaching political science to be a very rewarding experience; I often learn things from my students that enhance my understanding of politics or the world at large that I might not otherwise

encounter. The central reward of teaching to me, however, is that it is an opportunity for me to both honor and pass forward to others the contributions that a large number of teachers and professors have made, and continue to make, to my life. My hope is that I can make similar contributions to my students' lives and thus encourage them in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

Finally, I should mention that I am open to a variety of approaches and perspectives when teaching courses, despite my orientation towards quantitative approaches in my research. While some of the upper division courses I teach do require students to apply quantitative methods—for example, it would be difficult to understand or conduct meaningful research into public opinion or voting behavior without the use of statistical methods—many of them do not. In particular, the course in Southern politics I developed at Duke and am currently teaching at Tulane, based on a directed study course I taught at Millsaps, relies heavily on qualitative research and historical narrative.

I strongly support the notion that, while quantitative methods have an important place in the study of politics, there are other, equally-valid approaches that may be more appropriate for certain problems or may be able to explore questions that quantitative methods are unable to answer. Perhaps equally importantly, I enjoy teaching a wide variety of courses within the fields of American political institutions and political behavior and look forward to developing and teaching new courses in the future.

Strengths and Weaknesses in the Classroom and Among Colleagues: The most basic challenge I face as a classroom teacher is that I am by nature a very shy person—the experience of lecturing in front of a group of people, or even interacting with individuals that I don't know very well, is quite uncomfortable for me. While I have worked very hard to overcome this anxiety, I have occasionally been told by observers who are unfamiliar with my teaching that my shyness and related mannerisms sometimes leave an initial impression of disinterest or aloofness. I think that my classroom evaluations show that over the course of a given semester students warm up to me, and my former chairs would say that I was a good colleague in their department.

In general, my evaluations as an instructor have been positive, particularly in the methods course. Students have uniformly noted my enthusiasm for and command of the material. However, in lecture courses I have occasionally received criticism for sometimes being difficult to hear or understand, and in the first semester I taught (Fall 2000) some students believed I rushed through the material. I have worked diligently to address these deficiencies, and both my student evaluations and informal feedback from students and fellow faculty have improved markedly as a result.

Example 4: Kessel, Alisa, Wake Forest University

I maintain a strong commitment to teaching, in part because I love to teach and in part because I believe that political science education can help students grow into informed and active citizens. I employ a democratic pedagogy that aims to prepare citizens for an active democratic life and to educate them about the most important issues of our time. As a professor of political theory, my goal is to allow both contemporary and ancient texts of political theory to speak to political problems in the world today. This is as important to me in the courses I teach as it is in my scholarly work. And just as my scholarship focuses on agency and membership in democratic polities, so my instructional work aims to nurture students' own senses of political agency. As a professor of political science, I have two overarching goals.

First, I aim to complicate, rather than simplify, political discourses. In an environment of political pundits—from "the right" and "the left"—who want to demonize, insult, or otherwise discredit the arguments of the "other side," I think it is especially important to challenge this kind of political discourse by offering arguments from all perspectives that are thoughtful and generous to other citizens.

Perhaps as an inevitable result of the two-party system in the U.S, students here are often inclined to view only two sides to any political question. This over-simplification distorts the difficult choices implicit in democratic political action. My goal in constructing a syllabus, giving a lecture, or facilitating a discussion, is to expand students' understanding of an issue and the myriad interests, ideas, and insights that underlie it. My second goal is to nurture students' critical abilities to evaluate source material. Given the movement of

increased “democratization” of information on the Internet (about which I am be deeply ambivalent), this goal is deeply intertwined with the first goal.

I have come to realize that students have a wealth of information at their fingertips, but many of them do not yet have the capacity to evaluate what they find. I am currently re-fashioning of my courses so that I can devote significant time and energy to teaching my students how to identify reliable sources, assess author qualifications, and undertake well-rounded research on a topic.

Teaching and learning: Socrates showed us that teaching is sometimes provocation. When students are bored, tired, or otherwise uninterested, it is up to the teacher to stoke the fire. Teaching is its most difficult under these circumstances, when the teacher must animate an uninspired class. But many times, students provoke and interest one another; in those instances, the teacher is well-served to sit back and let students teach one another. Although it is not the task of the instructor to entertain, sometimes being entertaining is the best way to challenge, inform, and facilitate. And while I believe that students ought to feel a sense of responsibility for their own learning, I also know that my enthusiasm can fuel theirs. Moreover, because the classroom is an ever-changing space with new students, topics, and challenges, a good teacher must be flexible. I strive to be responsive to the changing classroom dynamic and to students’ particular learning needs. I know that I will never teach the same class twice, and I will always expect that what works for me one semester may not work the next. This dynamism is at once exciting and intimidating.

“Learning” is often measured by the amount of information a student has absorbed. I think this is an easy but uninspired vision of learning. Learning, in an exciting sense, really happens when factual knowledge is accompanied by the ability to apply knowledge, to synthesize, to make predictions and judgments, and ultimately, to make defensible normative claims. To do this, I may occasionally and intentionally create a learning environment that is uncomfortable for students because it is so unfamiliar to them. I think that students often learn best and most in moments when they are pushed to think beyond what they know (or think they know). This is especially true when learning about politics, in which the goal is to allow students to develop principled stands of their own. I also believe that in teaching, as in life, one cannot afford to fear failure. Instead, I strive to remain open to learning from my successes and failures in the classroom and to learning something important about myself, about politics, or about the world every time I step into a classroom.

Beyond the development of political positions, students can also practice democratic skills so that they can learn to take responsibility for decisions they make and for decisions made on their behalf. In my mind, political science education is not simply education about politics, but education to do politics. Students must learn, for example, to take the political positions of others (whether those “others” are ancient philosophers or college sophomores) seriously. I try to lead discussions so that students can experience what it means to respect and be respected in lively political deliberation. I hold myself accountable to these same standards of respectfulness in the classroom. Respecting the opinions of my students, and often critically challenging them, is an important way to help them nurture a sense of their own power and importance.

Courses: In undergraduate education, I enjoy developing courses that are thematic. For example, my course called “Multiculturalism and Political Theory” explored a broad range of perspectives on the challenge of multiculturalism to a political community. I also tend to be interested in topics relating to marginalized voices (because of racial or ethnic identity, cultural or religious commitments, class, or gender). In particular, I am prepared to teach undergraduate courses on democratic political theory, multiculturalism and race, the ancient Greeks, and American political thought. I will develop and teach the introductory political theory course at Wake Forest in the spring. I would also enjoy teaching a course about theories of citizenship and the challenges of migration or courses on essentially contested concepts in political theory (such as liberty or authority).

In graduate education, I adopt a different approach. My goal, in this instance, is to provide future scholars with a solid and nuanced understanding of the core issues that motivate various strands of political theory. I could ably teach democratic political theory, liberal political theory, or a seminar on early modern and modern political theory.

In conclusion, learning and teaching are essential and invigorating aspects of my intellectual life. The college atmosphere allows me to continue to grow, personally and intellectually, because I am challenged by colleagues, students, and other members of the community who present and defend their ideas in the college setting. This vitality—a deliberative and provocative vitality—is what drew me to a career as a professor, and it is what will continue to challenge me, both as an instructor and a scholar, in the future.

Statistics:

Statistics, as a discipline, is concerned with transforming "data" into "information." Thus, a statistical education that explains both how to learn from data and how to make inferences from data has an important place in a well-rounded education. My objectives as a statistics educator are: (1) to teach students about statistical tools and how to use them correctly, (2) to expose students to the complete cycle of statistical analysis, and (3) to teach students how to communicate statistical results and ideas clearly to a variety of audiences. These objectives apply to all the courses I teach, with varying degrees of emphasis depending on the level of the course.

My teaching philosophy can be summarized by the following beliefs:

▪ Students learn statistical theory best when they see how this material can be applied in real life situations.

▪ Students must be able to see past the computational drudgery to the underlying principles. Both oral and written skills in presenting results are important.

▪ Students need to see instructors who are passionate about their field.

▪ Instructors improve their teaching from regular feedback from the students and other instructors. Experimentation and Quality Improvement should be a regular tool of an instructors life. These beliefs have several implications for the way in which I teach courses and interact with students:

▪ Real Life Examples: Many of the assignments in my courses involve an actual experiment or are related to current events. For example, when anecdotal complaints were raised about the prices of textbooks at the SFU Bookstore, I encourage students in a course to do an actual investigation. This subsequently lead to a publication of their experiences.

▪ Using computer packages: Students in introductory or service courses in statistics should use a computer package (e.g. JMP) to analyze realistic problems. This frees the students from worrying about the computational drudgery often associated with Statistics and allows them to concentrate on the concepts.

▪ Oral and written skills: My assignments always include written questions where students must explain their results. Upper level students must complete term papers - unusual in the mathematical sciences as much of the material in these programs is extremely technical. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to make oral presentations about their work.

3 Talking About Teaching in Your Job Interview

Talking about Teaching in Your Job Interview

At a job interview, you will be expected to demonstrate your enthusiasm for, commitment to, and knowledge of teaching. You need to show their passion for teaching. You also need to explain why teaching is important, not just interesting. And remember: teaching is not just performance but design.

1. Demonstrate that you will be an inspiring and compelling teacher.

Make it clear that you are passionate about teaching and that teaching stimulates some of your best thinking.

2. Be prepared to explain why teaching matters.

Effective teaching requires an openness, a vulnerability, and a love of sharing that research does not.

3. Note that teaching is more than knowledge transmission—it is transformative.

By helping your students develop their intellects, you are helping them change their outlook and approach to life.

4. Don't be afraid to reflect on the values behind your teaching

You may want them to know the values of collaborative collegiality, openness to criticism, curiosity, and playfulness; the ability to criticize without being mean-spirited; the strength of character to live cheerfully with the possibility that the views you hate the most could be the ones that in the end are proved right; and the humility to say what you don't know as well as the self-assurance to assert what you do know.

5. Remember, teaching is more than performance.

While a riveting performance can cover up a multitude of design flaws, a conscientious teacher know that an effective course must have clear and compelling structure, content, and goals.

Search committee want you to explain what you think your course would achieve for students, how you would justify it to a university committee on instruction, how you would structure it, what would be in it, and how you would teach it.

6. Be prepared to talk about the way teaching makes a real contribution—in fact, an irreplaceable contribution—to your own ongoing education.

Teaching is not just imparting or even sharing information and knowledge; teaching is also learning. What will you learn when you teach is not limited to learning to how to teach. Teaching is also learning about what is taught. When you can find language to make complicated ideas accessible to students, you will not only have taught, you will have learned.

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