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Teaching Assistant Handbook

Five Reasons Why We Should Prepare Graduate Students to Teach

(adapted, with permission, from "A Dozen Reasons Why We Should Prepare Graduate Students to Teach," by Marilla Svinicki, The University of Texas at Austin.)

1. ***Building self-confidence.*** Many graduate students are assigned as teaching assistants as a way of financing their graduate studies. They are placed in the difficult position of having to guide the learning of individuals or groups of undergraduates through content that they have often not completely mastered themselves. They approach this responsibility with a great deal of trepidation about their abilities. With some support and training, we can increase the probability that the teaching experience will be a good one, one from which they will learn a great deal and which will actually boost their self-confidence instead of destroying it.
2. ***Improving efficiency.*** Teaching can be a very time-consuming activity when a person is new to the task. The second most common fear of graduate teaching assistants is whether they will be able to balance the demands of their teaching responsibilities with the demands of their own work as students. A little time spent in learning the basics of teaching and how to manage it can make them much more efficient at the task, thus leaving them more time to work on their research.
3. ***Teaching as a set of transferable skills.*** The skills which graduate students learn as teaching assistants or in an organized program on teaching will stand them in good stead regardless of their future careers. This is obvious in the case of those students who wish to enter the academic world as faculty, but there is as much if not more instruction occurring in business and industry as there is in education. Professionals who have had teaching experience will be able to translate the skills they learned as teachers into the skills of professional presentations, management, evaluation of employees, organizing and supervising work and many other areas. Their training in teaching can even translate directly into the kind of training and development which is becoming such a large part of the private sector.
4. ***Gaining the edge in the job search.*** Students who are able to show that they have had some training in teaching during their graduate years will be more competitive in the job searches. All job candidates will have been trained in the discipline, so our graduates will have to demonstrate additional skills to give them the edge over graduates from other comparable programs. Training in

the skills of teaching could be just the edge they need.

5. ***Commitment to teach excellence.*** The university is committed to excellence in teaching wherever and whenever teaching occurs. It is only right, therefore, that students should be offered the opportunity to begin to learn the skills of teaching or enhance those skills they already possess.

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The Teaching Assistantship: A Preparation for Multiple Roles

Marilla Svinicki
University of Texas at Austin

A part of graduate training of an ever-increasing number of students is the teaching assistantship. For some it is viewed as simply a way to get financial support; for others it is just a job, one which takes them away from their "real" studies; for others it is the first try at what might be their future careers. Whatever your personal feelings at this time, let me try to convince you that this is an opportunity to learn some really important lessons, no matter what your ultimate professional goals may be. The skills involved in teaching are generalizable to just about every other position of responsibility to which you might aspire.

Teaching requires that you be able to communicate technical material to specialists and non-specialists alike in both oral and written form, an important component of both business and research. Teaching requires that you be able to guide the learning of others and to establish and maintain good interpersonal relationships with those "below" and "above" you in the hierarchy, which is essentially what management positions require. Teaching requires you to evaluate the performance of others, one of the most critical and difficult skills for anyone in a management position. Teaching requires you to be able to listen to someone else struggling with a problem and help them solve it, the basis of consultation in most fields.

Of course, what you learn as a TA will be directly relevant to any academic position you assume. Not only will you learn about teaching, but teaching is one of the best ways to learn what you know and don't know about the content. There is no better review for comprehensive exams than serving as a teaching assistant in lower division courses. Being a TA also gives you a glimpse of things from the other side of the desk. Up until now you saw only the end result of the planning and problems that are an integral part of teaching. As the TA you'll see all the other aspects of running a course that students are never allowed to know. It is hoped that it will give you a better appreciation for your own classes. One thing is guaranteed: You'll never look at your own classes the same way again.

So instead of looking at the teaching assistantship as just a job or something that takes you away from your real vocation, you'll get a lot more out of the time you spend if you approach the opportunity in the same spirit of learning you approach your own courses. What follows later in this section are some suggestions for ways to learn as much as you can from the experience.

Different Responsibilities and Skills Needed of TAs

Just what do TAs do? There is no one answer to that question. The range of activities that are possible is enormous. Here are some examples.

Graders

Some TAs are only given the task of grading papers, homework, exams and such. This is not as easy a task as it might appear. Graders need a good grasp of the content, not in just a general sense but in the way the content is presented and analyzed in the course for which they are grading. They need to be able to follow a

student's thinking in order to interpret answers that might not be complete. They need to be able to set and maintain consistent standards as laid out by the instructor so that grading will be fair and reliable. In some cases they need to be able to communicate with students about the grading procedures, answering questions and even tutoring those whose performance is not up to par.

Laboratory Assistants

In science classes the TAs serve as laboratory assistants, something that on the surface might seem fairly straightforward but on closer inspection requires quite a bit of teaching. Most laboratory assistants have to be familiar with the equipment so they can set up demonstrations and student stations. But beyond that they also usually need to be able to fix things on the spur of the moment when a student complains about malfunctioning equipment. They often have to demonstrate the lab procedures clearly enough so the students will be able to repeat what they have observed; this requires great skill at explaining and breaking down procedures into simple enough steps to be understood by a novice. Lab assistants have to circulate and provide assistance to students as they work on their tasks. This requires sensitivity about when and how to help and when to let the student work it out alone. Some lab assistants also grade lab performance and lab reports, a task requiring good observation and evaluation skills.

Tutors

Occasionally TAs are assigned primarily as tutors or helpers for individual student problems. Their primary responsibility is to hold office hours for students who need help. This is an especially challenging assignment because you are working with one student on his or her most pressing need. The difficulty is that you are working with students who are having problems understanding, and the TA must be able to listen carefully to what is troubling the student and then help the student find the way out of his or her difficulty. It is very tempting in this situation to solve the problem yourself and send them on their merry way, possibly more confused and frustrated than before. The good tutor doesn't answer the question directly, but rather helps the student find the answer. That way the student will know where or how to look the next time a similar problem arises.

Discussion or Review Section Leaders

Another group of TAs is responsible for heading up class sessions to allow the students to discuss what they have heard in lecture or read in the text or tried on the homework. In my opinion this is one of the most demanding tasks in teaching, far more difficult than giving a lecture. In a lecture the instructor has planned out what is going to be said when and how with very little fear of interruption or deviation from the script. In the discussion or review section the whole idea is to allow the students to participate; there is no way to predict where that participation will lead or what form it will take. The section leader has to be ready for anything. In addition to that you are usually working mostly on those things that the students didn't understand in the first place, and now you are trying to explain the most difficult concepts to them. So the TAs who serve as discussion or review section leaders have a particularly difficult assignment

What Are TAs Most Worried About?

Being a TA is not always an easy assignment You're halfway between being a student and a teacher yourself and halfway between the students and the teacher of your course. It's normal to feel a bit confused and apprehensive, so here are some of the common concerns that TAs voice.

Do I Know Enough?

First, you know a lot more than most of the students in your class so you've got a good head start on them. Second, you're not expected to know everything all the time. It's perfectly acceptable to say, "I don't know,"

as long as you try to figure it out or find the answer eventually. Third, you can go a long way toward avoiding problems in this area by being well prepared for class. Know the assignment, the equipment, what was said in lectures, how the grading was done, whatever you will be expected to respond to in class. It just doesn't pay to try to slide by.

Will They Respect Me and Accept My Authority?

A lot of this will depend on how you view yourself. The students will see you as part of the teaching staff, and that alone will give you authority. But it's how you use that authority that is important. The best way to handle problems is to avoid them in the first place by being very clear about your expectations. The next component to authority is to think of yourself as responsible for the class not in a dictatorial way but in a senior scholar way. You're there as a coach to help them. If you expect them to listen to you, they will, without having to be very forceful about it.

Will I Be Able to Balance My Teaching Responsibilities with My Own Work?

This is a key worry, and one you should be attentive to. It will be important early on in the semester to establish your time ground rules, both with the students and with the supervising professor. Be sure to have a conference with your supervisor about what is expected of you and what support you can expect. A little prevention can go a long way. Later, if you see yourself starting to get into trouble, talk to your supervisor before it gets too bad. Maybe there's a way of working things out or shifting them around. Just don't suffer in silence.

How to Get the Most Out of Being a TA

Think About How Your TA Assignment Is Related to Your Future Work

Earlier in this chapter I described how the tasks which are associated with teaching correlates in other professional activities. The examples given at that point were just a hint of the possibilities. Some careful thinking about what is involved in the future you see for yourself and the responsibilities of your TA assignment could result in a whole array of similar tasks. When you identify these similarities, concentrate a little more closely on what you are doing and how you are doing it. Adopt the view that your teaching assistantship is more than just a job; it is a chance to practice some of those future responsibilities in a fairly non-threatening environment.

Be Observant About the Practices of Those for Whom You Work

Another way to benefit from the time you spend as a TA is to become an observer of those who are already teaching, both good and bad models. Think of this as an apprenticeship, an opportunity to watch someone else engage in the tasks of teaching and to learn from them. Take an active interest in the how and why of the teaching that is occurring. Ask friendly questions. Why was this particular teaching method chosen? What is the thinking behind the objectives of this course? How does the instructor deal with the various in-class situations that could be a problem, such as student questions, challenges to authority, or lack of understanding? If you have the chance to assist more than one instructor in your tenure as a TA, you have an even better array of examples from which to learn. Make comparisons between the various instructors as they handle similar situations. Ask questions about their choices and practices. How do they prepare for class? What do they look for in a student's work? Most instructors will welcome the opportunity to talk about their classes, provided the questions are offered in the spirit of learning rather than as a challenge.

Take Advantage of Opportunities for Increasing Responsibilities

Related to the advice above is the idea that you should welcome the opportunity to take part in as many

aspects of the course for which you are the TA as possible. Not only is this a good way to be sure that you know all you need to know to fulfill your responsibilities to that particular course, but it gives you a chance to observe firsthand much of the day to day decision-making and fine-tuning that is involved in teaching. For example, offer to assist the Instructor in gathering information for lectures or in preparing exams. You'll probably already be involved in the grading of exams, but it is a good experience to see how the exam was developed from the beginning. Why were certain concepts included and others excluded? How are questions generated and revised? How is the grading scheme developed? If you are given the opportunity to occasionally lead the class or give a short lecture, take it, especially if the Instructor will be present. The feedback you can get from this experience will help you build your confidence and skills as a presenter. It may seem like extra work or a frightening situation, but the learning that can result is worth the extra discomfort.

Be Reflective About Your Practice

One of the current movements in professional development these days is the concept of the reflective practitioner. It means that a professional's actions and decisions are not made at random, but reflect an underlying set of theories and assumptions. To improve, the professional constantly reflects on those theories and assumptions and how they relate to behavior. Therefore, to be professional as a teacher means getting in the habit of examining what you do and why you do it. One useful aid in this is keeping a journal on your teaching experiences. When things go well, note what was good about it. When things go wrong, try to think about what happened and why. Just the act of noting the successes and problems will increase your awareness of what it is that guides you as a teacher and that awareness will serve as the first step toward improvement.

Learn from Reading as Well as Practice

I know that it feels like there is already too much work to do in graduate school without adding more, but getting in the habit of reading about all aspects of your profession is a good tradition to develop early on. The fact that you are reading this book is a good start. There are many books on teaching by philosophers and practitioners alike. In addition, most disciplines have journals that are devoted to the teaching of the discipline. Alternatively, there may be special issues of the disciplinary research journals that once a year focus on teaching. There are other more general periodicals that discuss teaching in general or issues in higher education. These would be of special interest to those planning a career in teaching.

If you don't have time for that kind of reading, you might try a different tack. Read your regular reading from a different perspective; look at your own textbooks and reading assignments from the perspective of a teacher. If you were the instructor of the class using this material, what would you do to make the material comprehensible to students? How do the different textbooks you encounter handle that task? What is the difference between reading textbooks and primary sources? And what is the significance of that difference for teaching? By developing a "second eye" when reading the printed matter of your discipline you can accomplish two tasks at once: You can digest the content of the reading and you think about ways to teach using that particular type of material.

Documentation of Activities with the Teaching Portfolio

Another way to learn and profit from being a teaching assistant is to be on the lookout for things that will make you more marketable when you enter the job market. If you can document these activities to show potential employers the degree of sophistication about teaching (or even other activities) you have developed during your graduate years, you could make yourself stand out among a large field of candidates, all of whom have very similar credentials. The name given this documentation is the "teaching portfolio."

What might you include in such a portfolio? As you work with various typical undergraduate courses,

particularly those that are taught in nearly every institution, create sample course descriptions for the courses as you might teach them under various conditions. What textbooks or types of textbooks would you use? What objectives and activities would you include? Have you had experience with those activities? What is your analysis of their effectiveness? Can you give examples of the work of students with whom you have worked and how you evaluated their efforts?

As you begin to develop a philosophy of teaching and learning, creating a series of descriptions of that philosophy and what has shaped it could tell potential employers whether or not you would fit with their departments. Just as employing departments will expect you to have a coherent research program focusing on a few relevant themes or contributions, you can provide them with a similar coherent description of the contributions you would make to their educational mission as well.

Create descriptions of the different types of activities you were required to perform in your various TA positions. Not every TA position has the same responsibilities or means the same thing to every person. You need to illustrate what you have learned and what your strengths are. Just as you strive to document your research experiences through papers and presentations, you should document your teaching experience.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

J. D. Nyquist, R. D. Abbott, D. H. Wulff, and L Sprague (eds.), Preparing the Professoriate of Tomorrow to Teach (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1991).

J. D. Nyquist, R. D. Abbott, and D. H. Wuiff(eds.), Teaching Assistant Training in the 1990s, New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 39 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989).

J. Janes and D. Hauer, Now what? Readings on surviving (and even enjoying) your first experience at college teaching, 2nd ed. (Acton, MA: Copley, 1988).

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One-to-One Teaching

by
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By "one-to-one teaching" we mean the instruction that takes place between one teacher and one student. Sometimes it happens in the context of an independent study or tutorial; more often it happens during office hours in those short intervals when the teacher tries to clarify a confusing concept, offers advice, or just listens. Listed below are some suggestions for maximizing the potential of this situation when certain student responses jeopardize its outcome.

The student just doesn't get it.

- Back off - talk about something else for a couple of minutes. It's possible to overexplain an idea or process.
- Think of an example or ask the student for one to see if the concept is understood.
- Direct the student to a written description or solution.
- Involve someone else (maybe another student) who may be able to connect with the student more effectively than you
- Don't give up or attribute blame.

The student arrives unprepared.

- Be certain the student has explicit instructions on what to prepare. e.g. reading, answers to study questions, preliminary problems to solve.
- Be honest and open in your assessment of the situation if it occurs.
- Don't chew out the student and then proceed to provide all the answers.
- If the situation repeats itself terminate the session and have the student reschedule after the necessary preparation.

The student has complaints within your jurisdiction.

- Listen carefully.
- Avoid defensive responses.
- If you don't plan to change whatever the student finds objectionable, calmly explain why you've chosen a particular policy or practice and why you intend to continue using it.

The student has complaints not within your jurisdiction.

- Offer suggestions of a person or place more appropriate for the complaint.
- Help put the complaint in perspective: "Is the fact that this course meets at 8 am. the only reason you're failing?"

The student wishes to discuss a personal or emotional problem.

- Make sure the student understands your qualifications: you're not a professional counselor.
- Know what psychological resources and services are available at your institution.
- If you decide to let the student proceed, curtail the conversation if the problem is beyond your experience. Don't give advice you're not qualified to offer.
- Remember: You're the student's teacher first, friend or counselor after that.

The student finds the one-to-one contact with you intimidating.

- Be friendly, smile.
- Meet with the student around a table or in some neutral location, rather than across your desk.
- Talk less and listen more.
- Ask questions, wait for answers, and respond when they're given. Offer criticism gently, especially in the beginning.

The student arrives late or not at all.

- Be sure you're present and on time at all scheduled meetings.
- End the meeting at the scheduled time: don't go overtime to compensate for a late arrival. If you need more time, schedule an additional meeting.
- Talk about why arriving late is troublesome.
- Reschedule missed meetings at your convenience.

The student won 't leave.

- End the meeting in an obvious manner: "We've covered all the topics I wanted to discuss."
- Set up meetings for a prescribed amount of time: "We'll meet once a week for an hour" - and stick to these times.
- Interrupt: "Sorry. I can give you five more minutes and then I've got to prepare for my next class."

The student doesn 't seem to be gaining new insights, but just keeps repeating the old ones.

- Give material that presents alternative insights and seek student response to it.
- Pose hypothetical counterpoint: "I had a student once who believed... What would you say to that?"
- Occasionally invite others to join your discussions with the student.

Meeting with students one-to-one can be very effective and rewarding - or frustrating and unproductive. Policies, preparation, and a positive attitude can make a big difference.

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One-to-One Teaching

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To put the emphasis on thinking into practice in a classroom, teachers must present subject matter from sources in addition to the text they must develop a sensitivity to ideas that are useful in instruction and evaluation. Pertinent ideas take such forms as these:

1. A contradiction to information offered in the text
2. A different interpretation or evaluation than offered in the text
3. Additional evidence to support a point made in the text
4. A different line of reasoning to arrive at a conclusion made in the text
5. A new example of the use of a generalization, value, definition, or skill developed in the text
6. More recent or accurate information on a topic presented in the text

Some thoughts from Sanders:

"The textbook is weak in that it offers little opportunity for any mental activity except remembering."

"A reasonable rule of thumb for an academic course is that a minimum of one-third of the time allotted to questioning in both instruction and evaluation should be devoted to levels above memory."

"While studying a topic in preparation for instruction, the teacher should be on the lookout for the big working ideas the generalizations, values, definitions, and skills that are important enough to deserve emphasis. These are the ideas that best lead to higher level questions."

"…more knowledge a teacher has, the better chance he/she has to fashion learning on all levels appropriate for his/her students."

"Another advantage of scholarship is that it gives a teacher more confidence in subjective evaluation. The teacher who avoids the synthesis and evaluation categories is often the one who has not had enough experience in his/her subject field to be able to give a convincing judgment of the quality of a student's work."

"An important rule in framing questions is that questions designed for grading should reflect the same kind of thinking used in instruction. It is wrong to ask a variety of levels of questions in instruction but revert to the memory category in evaluation. It is equally wrong to conduct instruction on the memory level in order to save higher-level questions for an examination. The best way to avoid these errors is to compose examination questions and instructional questions at the same time and make a determined effort to keep them parallel."

Mistakes to Avoid

As with any idea in education, a special concern for questions poses certain dangers. Teachers who strive for higher level questions may lose interest in the bread-and-butter memory quest on. They become so intrigued with sending students through intellectual labyrinths that they neglect fundamental knowledge. They may tend to cater to the capacities of superior students. Simple questions designed for slow learners are just as necessary as complex ones in all categories. Subjective questions are important and have a challenge of their own, but should be mixed with a liberal number of objective ones. There is satisfaction in giving the one right answer to an objective question and being told the response is correct.

adapted from: Sanders, N.M. (1966). *Classroom questions: What kinds?* New York Harper and Row.

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How can I improve discussion?

When you are asking students questions:

1. Start asking questions early in the course.
2. Wait for the answer.
3. Ask only one question at a time.
4. Avoid answering your own questions.
5. Be aware of nonverbal communication.

When you are dealing with their answers to your questions:

1. Practice the art of listening.
2. Praise right answers.
3. Be careful responding to wrong answers.
4. Encourage more than one answer if possible.
5. Encourage various students to participate.

When you are answering their questions:

1. Ask students to repeat questions that you do not understand.
2. Do not get sidetracked by answering irrelevant questions immediately.
3. Don't pretend to answer a question you don't know the answer to.
4. Be careful about responding to questions already answered but being asked by someone who hasn't been paying affention or who has been skipping class.
5. Be careful with questions that challenge your authority.

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Laboratory TA Assignments

What is the purpose of labs?

- EXPERIENCE
  - First and maybe only time to use equipment
  - Helps student make connection between theory and practice

- APPRECIATION
  - Allows students to appreciate the subtleties of experimental work; firsthand view of all previous classes in practice

What is your role as a TA?

- GUIDANCE
  - Encourage students to think
  - Answer procedural question, guide conceptual questions
  - Make lab challenging without causing frustration
  - Ensure all students take an active role
- SAFETY
  - Make students aware of potentially dangerous situations
  - Make sure necessary protection is provided
  - Know location of emergency equipment
- GRADING
  - Clearly state the ground rules
  - Be consistent within your lab section and with other TA's
  - When assigning final grade, reward improvement
- HOW AND WHY YOU SHOULD PREPARE
  - Be able to explain why the lab is being done
  - Encourage students to question the procedure
  - Know exactly how everything works, and how to fix things
  - Perform the lab completely before your teach it
  - Know students' names
  - Be certain of all bookkeeping concerns

Difficulties You Will Encounter

- GRADING
  - Do not jeopardize the grading criteria
  - Be firm with due dates
  - Do not be afraid to fail students
- OOPS!
  - If you make a mistake, admit it, correct it, learn from it and move on
  - Do not be afraid to say "I don't know"
  - If something breaks, do not assign blame

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Efficiency in Grading

by
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Grading papers is one of the tasks that most instructors really dread, and yet it's one of the most important vehicles for communicating with students. Each instructor must find ways in which he or she can be most efficient in grading; we might characterize efficiency as providing the most useful information with the shortest amount of grading time. This handout provides some suggestions for ways to speed up the grading task.

Make the assignment clear

A great deal of grading time would be saved if the students followed the assignment instructions closely. Students are willing to do this provided it is clear what the instructions are, so you can save yourself some headaches later by spending some time up front making the assignment requirements clear. Keep the following things in mind:

- *Put the assignment in writing.* Not only will this force you to be clearer about what you want from the assignment, but it serves as a constant reminder to the students about what is expected. When the requirements are in writing, you are on firm ground in refusing to accept an assignment which doesn't conform to the instructions. You'll also save time spent in answering questions from students who weren't in class or didn't get all of the assignment down when you gave it out orally.
- *Give the students an idea about the reason for the assignment, and how it fits into the "big picture" of the class.* Understanding an assignment's context often helps students follow it more closely.
- *Provide a list of the criteria for evaluation.* This can serve as a self-checklist for the students to use prior to submitting the assignment, and it will help them ensure that all the parts are there and in the correct format and order.

Choose a level of feedback appropriate to the task

The amount of feedback on a graded paper should match purpose and timing of the assignment. Don't spend time dividing detailed information that won't be used. Keep the following in mind:

- There are different levels of "completeness" which can be used in marking papers. You can make general comments only; you can make specific comments about the assignment as a whole; you can highlight good and bad examples of work, you can mark all errors or you can correct all errors. Each successive level of marking requires more time and effort. Be sure to pick the level that will be the most helpful for the students. For example, correcting all the errors is not helpful because students need to learn to correct their own errors. Correcting one and then marking the others on a short assignment is sufficient. On long assignments, highlighting some good and bad examples of work might be more efficient. If necessary, you can select one page of a paper and mark all the errors on it to show the student the types of errors he or she is making, but marking all pages is not efficient.
- Other factors to consider in choosing the level at which to mark:
    - What are the priorities of the class and the purposes of this assignment? If this is a thought paper, not intended to teach writing, then general comments directed at the thinking are in order. If this is a paper for learning to write, then more detailed feedback on writing is important.
    - What is the level of the students at this point? Are they just learning procedures to follow? If so, pointing out the most problematic errors rather than all the errors is more logical since they won't be able to process every mark you make.
    - Where in the course does this assignment fall? If it is a homework assignment, then detailed marking will be most helpful for students when they go to prepare for an exam. If it's the exam, detailed marking will not be as useful.

Give yourself sufficient time to grade

Grading takes time and attention and can't be done on the fly. Plan your schedule to have sufficient time for major grading tasks you know you'll have to complete.

Limit distractions and have everything you need to grade

Gather up the assignment sheet, the text, notes, lab manuals or anything else you may need to refer to and hie thee to a quiet and distraction-free zone, just as you would if you were preparing to study yourself.

Set a reasonable limit on grading time for each paper

Too often we get wrapped up in grading the initial papers in a stack so that we run out of time. To avoid this, divide the time you have available by the number of papers you have to grade and set a timer to let you know when you've spent the allocated time on a single paper. You'll probably have to make some adjustments at the beginning and revise your estimated grading time, but this will make it possible to give each paper equal attention if necessary.

Use timesaving devices

There are several ways of making the actual grading easier.

- Some instructors use a tape recorder while they are reading a student's paper and record their comments rather than writing them out on the paper. The student is then given the tape and the paper with guide marks to indicate what comments belong where. It's a lot faster to dictate than to write and the students get a more personal feeling from the tape.
- Other instructors have a computer database of comments they typically make on papers. As they read a student's paper, they note which comments would be appropriate. When they've finished, they create a new document by cutting and pasting the appropriate comments together and print out a sheet for return to the students. This also allows the instructor to provide longer comments than if they were written out.
- A version of the previous example is a numbered-comment sheet containing the types of comments the instructor usually makes about good and poor work. On the student's paper the instructor indicates the number of the comment that applies at each point. The student receives the comment sheet plus the marked paper and can refer to the comment sheet for ideas about how to improve or what he or she did correctly.
- If you are actually going to mark on the papers, a felt tip pen is less fatiguing than a ballpoint or pencil.

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Checklist of Instructional Duties for Teaching Assistants

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Listed below are some duties that TAs normally perform. Please indicate which of these duties your TA will be expected to perform and how ofien he or she is expected to do them. For infrequent duties (such as computing final grades), indicate expected dates.

Duty - How often? or time frame?

- [ ] attend classes _____
- [ ] read textbook/assignments _____
- [ ] take attendance _____
- [ ] maintain seating chart _____
- [ ] take class notes _____
- [ ] maintain office hours _____

- [ ] conduct review sessions _____
- [ ] conduct lab sessions _____
- [ ] grade homework _____
- [ ] grade essays & papers _____
- [ ] show films/videotapes _____
- [ ] conduct field trips _____
- [ ] prepare transparencies _____
- [ ] write exam questions _____
- [ ] proctor exams _____
- [ ] grade exams _____
- [ ] arrange for machine-grading of exams_____
- [ ] maintain class records/grades _____
- [ ] prepare mid-semester reports _____
- [ ] help in computing final grades _____
- [ ] Other: please specify _____

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Checklist of Instructional Duties for Teaching Assistants

Imagine you're teaching a course at the introductory level, one that is required of all students who want to proceed on to major in your department. And let's suppose that you are approached by a student after the first exam, someone whose performance was much below standard. And that person offers you a considerable sum of money if you'll change a grade on the exam so the student can pass. What is the ethical thing to do in this situation?

Now suppose that it's the same situation, but instead of offering you money, the student pleads for an opportunity to retake the exam because of extenuating circumstances during the first test administration. Now what is the ethical choice?

Now it's the same situation, but this time you are the one who notices that a student who's been working hard in your class and whom you expected to do very well has instead failed the exam miserably. How does this situation compare with those above from an ethical standpoint?

The first of these scenarios seems fairly straightforward, a definite violation of ethics if you were to accept the money to change the grade. The second example is not as straightforward; to what extent should the student be allowed an opportunity that is not available to all the other students? Does providing that opportunity constitute unethical behavior? Or is it just unfair? Or is there a difference? And in the third instance, to what extent should your assessment of a student's abilities counter actual performance? Where do you draw the line in helping students? The most difficult questions that teachers face often have nothing to do with the content of a course or the way it is presented. They focus instead on the ethical issues of teaching, how we relate to our students, our institution, our discipline, and society at large. What are our responsibilities to each constituency and what do we do when they conflict? Unfortunately there are no easy answers to these questions. I raise them here as food for thought because you will face them sometime in your teaching career.

What Does It Mean?

This chapter addresses the issue of ethics in teaching. It is something that is seldom overtly taught, even in matters of scholarship. It is either assumed that "everyone knows what that means" or it is learned in the process of apprenticeship to a more advanced scholar as in the research laboratory or research assistantship.

As evidenced by some recent scandals in the conduct of research, it is not always learned very well. It is even more likely that the ethical decisions in teaching are difficult to learn because they are not generally in the public view. The students in an individual's class are usually not aware of the ethical standards that shape an instructor's course policies and teaching practices; they see only the outcomes of those standards. Teaching assistants frequently have to face questions of conflict with students or questions of an ethical nature. Just as frequently they do so with very little guidance.

What is an ethical question in teaching? There are many interpretations of that issue, but in general, ethical standards are intended to guide us in carrying out the responsibilities we have to the different groups with whom we interact. Ethics violations can occur when we are tempted to act contrary to those standards. Ethical dilemmas occur when multiple responsibilities conflict. It is often surprising to consider all the different things that can cause ethical problems for instructors. They range from the obvious bribe attempt described above, to failure to present all legitimate sides of an issue adequately, to accepting remuneration for extra tutoring for a class with which one is connected.

In a 1991 research study of psychologists teaching at academic institutions, Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel, and Pope reported reactions to various ethical questions involved in teaching at the college level. Respondents were asked to report if and how frequently they engaged in a wide range of various activities and rate the extent to which they felt those activities were ethical or unethical. The activities included things as drastic as sexual harassment to more mundane activities such as teaching material that the instructor had not yet fully mastered. The authors then assessed which items most respondents reported engaging in at some time, which were the most controversial in terms of ethical judgments, and which were extremely rare.

The behavior most often engaged in was teaching when not adequately prepared, although it was not a consistent pattern for most people. The authors attribute this more to busy workloads and rapid advances in the field than to the shirking of responsibilities. Respondents also reported that they tried to teach ethics or values, a practice that could be seen as either positive or negative depending on precisely what is being taught and how.

The rarest behaviors were those related to sexual harassment. Whether this is an accurate reflection of behavior or a reluctance to report such behavior is impossible to tell. Also rare were actual sexual encounters with students. Less drastic but still questionable practices that rarely occur were such things as conflicts of interest with book publishers.

Perhaps the most interesting sources of ethical conflicts for this group were a result of the conflicting roles of mentor/sponsor and evaluator. The respondents had great difficulties in sorting out their loyalties. For example, over two-thirds believed allowing a student's likeability to influence a grade was unethical, but over two-thirds reported doing it at some point anyway. The same sort of dilemma is seen when instructors interact socially with students. On the one hand, the interaction with faculty is reported as vital to student growth by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), while on the other it raises the possibility of conflict.

How can an instructor decide what is best? The American Association for University Professors has provided a statement of professional ethics dealing with the responsibilities of faculty members that highlights what they consider to be the special responsibilities of one in an academic position (AAUP, 1987). Perhaps using these standards as a guide can help highlight what a faculty member should consider in making personal choices.

Responsibilities to the Students

To Encourage the Free Pursuit of Learning, to Demonstrate Respect for Students, and to Respect Confidentiality

The primary purpose of teaching is to encourage learning; therefore the first ethical responsibility an instructor has is to that goal. What do we do to meet that responsibility? All that we do to prepare and conduct well-designed instruction is part of that effort. The ethical instructor knows the content to be learned, the students who will do the learning, and the methods that could be used to foster that learning. A second part is to protect and encourage the autonomy of our students so that eventually the students no longer need our constant guidance. Ethical instructors also respect the "otherness of students" (Churchill, 1982); that is, the individual and independent nature of the students and the fact that students are at different stages of their lives than are the instructors. That respect implies that the students have a right to privacy in their dealings with us.

There are many ways an instructor might violate these standards. Here are some examples:

- The most obvious is to fail in our duties in class preparation. One can't always be in top form, but just as we expect students to come to class prepared, we must make the same effort.
- Another violation would be an insistence that students adopt the same values and philosophies that we hold in areas where there is room for disagreement. We have a responsibility to help students learn how to evaluate a position, but to force a position on them is indoctrination, not instruction.
- A violation of omission rather than commission would be to allow the students to become too dependent on us as instructors. We have a responsibility to help them grow into independent learners.
- When we ridicule a student's ideas or dismiss their questions as trivial, we violate the principle of respect. Any good teacher knows that a question asked by one student probably echoes the questions of at least a dozen others. Failure to respond to genuine attempts at understanding discourages learning.
- Discussion of a student's problems with anyone who does not have a genuine part in that student's education is another violation. Just as there is a confidential relationship between doctor and patient, lawyer and client, there is one between teacher and student. It must be based on trust and that trust should not be taken lightly.

To Model the Best Scholarly and Ethical Standards

A teacher, whether by accident or design is more to students than a content expert. The teacher is a model of all that it means to be a scholar. The teacher is also a model of what it means to be a thinking person. We teach not only what we know but what we are. Part of the ethics of teaching is to realize this responsibility and to become the best models we can be, which requires some serious self-reflection on our personal standards of scholarship and living. For example, the way in which you discuss points of view that differ from your own speaks volumes to the students about reasoned discourse. This does not imply that you must always take a dispassionate stance; but even, or perhaps especially, when one feels strongly about an issue, it is necessary to demonstrate by your actions that intelligent people can disagree and still remain rational.

To Foster Honest Academic Conduct and to Ensure Fair Evaluation

Perhaps the most obvious ethical problems arise in the area of evaluation of student learning. Instructors are the arbiters of entrance into the profession and are therefore responsible for seeing to it that standards are upheld. However, we are also responsible for guaranteeing that all are given a fair chance at demonstrating their abilities. When we allow academic dishonesty to go unheeded, we violate the rights of all the other students who are abiding by the rules. If we fail to establish an evaluation system that accurately assesses the students' progress, we are abdicating our responsibilities to both the students and the profession.

The conflicts most often occur when this standard is pitted against the first one, that of respecting the individual and fostering independence. The examples that opened this chapter speak to this issue. How important is it that all students be evaluated in the same way? Are we being fairer if we maintain standards and vary conditions of evaluation or if we use individual standards according the special situation of each

student? Which factors are legitimate considerations? There is no agreement on these issues. The best we can do is to continue to discuss and deliberate, alone and in groups, because the conditions under which we operate today will not be the same as those in the future. The decisions we make today might be made obsolete by changing circumstances, as has happened in the past.

To Avoid Exploitation, Harassment, or Discrimination

One of the guidelines that should be at the forefront of our thinking about the ethics of teaching is the fact that there is a great power discrepancy between the teacher and the students. Whether we like it or not, whether we seek it or not, by virtue of our position alone, we are invested with a great deal of power over the lives of our students. To make matters worse, many students invest us with even more power than we are entitled to.

It is the abuse of this power imbalance that is at the base of many of the ethical traps that lie strewn across our paths as teachers. The most blatant examples of unethical behavior, those most frequently mentioned in written codes of ethics, deal with the abuse of power, especially in the form of exploitation or harassment of various types: sexual, racial, religious, even intellectual. For example, requiring students to engage in class activities that are unrelated to the educational purposes of the course but that serve our personal ends is an abuse of power. Making derogatory comments about population subgroups is an obvious example of harassment A less obvious example is ignoring the special needs of a subgroup completely, either consciously or unconsciously. An even less obvious example is engaging in intellectual snobbery by setting course standards at levels far beyond the capabilities of the students in the class ("No one earns an A in my class!"). Perhaps the best way to avoid violations of this standard is to keep the first standard in mind: Respect the students as individuals and keep the purpose of learning primary in all course-related decisions.

Another area of ethical problems involves receiving special considerations or benefits as a result of being in a position of authority, especially when those considerations come from those over whom you exercise that authority. For example, many instructors receive complimentary copies of textbooks in hopes that those books will be adopted for a course. Is it a violation of ethics to adopt a less-than-adequate book simply because of incentive made available by the publisher or to turn around and sell those copies to someone else? Is it a violation to even accept them in the first place? How legitimate is it to accept an invitation to a party or other event as the guest of a student in your class? Does it matter if that student is no longer in your class? Does it matter if the event is somehow connected with the student's academic program, for example, a dinner honoring that student's work? What constitutes "a bribe"? Or "special consideration"? I don't know the answers to these questions, but we must be aware that by our position alone we will sometimes be put in a compromised situation in all innocence on our part or the student's part.

Responsibilities to Colleagues, the Institution, and the Discipline

The AAUP guidelines go beyond those just focused on our role as teacher; they deal with all aspects of faculty life, including relations with colleagues, responsibilities to the institution for which we work and to the discipline we represent. Taken as a whole, however, the same ideas apply. The standards cluster around the issues of promoting and defending free and honest inquiry, showing respect for others, meeting institutional and professional responsibilities, and continuing to grow as scholars throughout professional life.

Ethical failures in this area include examples such as falsification of research results, failure to give due credit to the work of colleagues or students, unwillingness to participate in institutional governance, and unfair or unfounded evaluation of colleagues. More difficult choices might be things like continuing to teach in a situation that does not meet the needs of the students, such as overcrowded or understaffed classes, ignoring the inadequate teaching of colleagues, taking on so much outside work that work with the students suffers, or refusing to teach a sufficient number of service courses to help students graduate in a

timely manner.

Making Ethical Choices

The array of possibilities for problems seems endless. How then can we avoid stumbling somewhere along the line? While there are no easy answers, there may be some ways of thinking about our actions as professionals that will maximize the possibility of acting ethically. I draw the following principles for evaluating one's actions from two sources, the first five from Brown and Krager (1985) and the last from Schon (1983).

1. Autonomy - Am I acting in ways that respect freedom and treat others as autonomous?
2. Non-maleficence - Am I causing harm through either commission or omission?
3. Beneficence - Benefit the other person rather than myself?
4. Justice - Do I treat those for whom I am responsible equitably?
5. Fidelity - Do I uphold my part of any relationship?
6. Act consciously - What are the assumptions on which I base my actions and are they valid?

It is a great privilege to be a teacher, but all great privileges carry great responsibilities as well. Many of those responsibilities are subtle, thrust on us by the expectations of others rather than sought by us. Keeping these six principles in mind won't solve all the ethical dilemmas you face as a teacher, but they might give you a way to reflect on them alone and with other teachers. That reflection should never stop, because conscious reflection on values is perhaps the cornerstone of the ethics of teaching.

Supplementary Reading

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S. M. Cahn, Saints and Scamps: Ethics in Academia (Totowa, NJ: Rownian & Littlefield, 1982). L R. Churchill, The teaching of ethics and moral values in teaching, Journal of Higher Education, 1982,53(3), 296-306.

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B. Tabachnick, P. Keith-Spiegel, and K Pope, Ethics of teaching: Beliefs and behaviors of psychologists as educators, American Psychologist, 1991,46(5), 506-515.

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Words and Phrases that Offend Students

This site is currently under construction. The information previously posted on this page can be found in:

Jackson, George. *Helpful Hints for Advising and Counseling Minority Students: In Predominantly White Colleges and Universities.* Ames, Iowa: The Black Cultural Center, 1984.

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"Don't Get to Know Them Biblically..."

Sexual harassment is a serious problem in universities, and it is receiving increased attention. One recent survey indicated that "one in six female graduate students in psychology had sexual contact with a professor while working on a graduate degree." Sexual harassment is not, however limited to male professors harassing female graduate students; TAs of both sexes may harass or be harassed by undergraduate students and professors of the opposite or the same sex.

Various definitions of sexual harassment have been offered, including "unwanted sexual comments, unwanted sexual overtones, often offensive sexual materials, unwelcome fondling, and sexual assault." Another definition is that sexual harassment is promotion of stereotypes, unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, leering and/or ogling, sexual demands accompanied by implied or overt threats."

Obviously, TAs should be very circumspect in their dealings with students. Charges of sexual harassment may be taken to court; even if not proven, an accusation would be very damaging to a TA. Many universities sponsor workshops for instructors on avoiding actions that may be interpreted as sexual harassment.

In addition to avoiding such actions, TAs must also be very careful when dealing with students who are attracted to them. Although most universities do not have a formal rule prohibiting TAs from dating students, such behavior is clearly not a good idea. Students are often young and impressionable and can be hurt by an aborted romance with a TA. Also, TAs who date students will find themselves facing a conflict of interest when assigning grades. MIT's response to TAs who wonder if they should ask students "out for coffee or dinner and a show" and "see where it leads" is official and brief, "**Don't.**"

UTD's Policy on Sexual Harassment

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What is a Teaching Portfolio?

A teaching portfolio is a factual description of a professor's teaching accomplishments supposed by relevant data and analyzed by the professor to show the thinking process behind the artifacts. Most portfolios are NOT collections of everything that the professor has done in the way of teaching over his or her entire career. Rather they are selected samples that illustrate how that individual's teaching is carried out in the various venues in which teaching occurs. Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991) describe portfolios as follows:

- Portfolios provide documented evidence of teaching that is connected to the specifics and contexts of what is being taught.
- They go beyond exclusive reliance on student ratings because they include a range of evidence from a variety of sources such as syllabi, samples of student work, self-reflections, reports on classroom research, and faculty development efforts.
- In the process of selecting and organizing their portfolio material, faculty think hard about their teaching, a practice which is likely to lead to improvement in practice.
- In deciding what should go into a portfolio and how it should be evaluated, institutions necessarily must address the question of what is effective teaching and what standards should drive campus teaching practice.
- Portfolios are a step toward a more public, professional view of teaching. They reflect teaching as a scholarly activity.

Steps for Compiling a Teaching Portfolio

Seldin (1993) suggests following the seven steps below when creating a portfolio:

1. **Clarify teaching responsibilities**. Start with an understanding of the role the professor is expected to play in the department with regard to its various functions. This will help the professor determine what kinds of specifics need to be documented.
2. **Select items for the Portfolio.** Based on the teaching responsibilites in step 1., the professor would select information relevant to those responsibilities rather than gathering ever piece of data that can be found.
3. **Prepare statements on each item**. The professor prepares statements on each item that show their relation ot the overall responsibilities and how they reflect on his or her status as a teacher.
4. **Arrange the items in order**. The order might be in terms of importance to that professor's responsibilities. It might be chronological to show growth over time. It might be catagories of types of teaching responsibilities to show breadth. The order should reflect the purpose of the evaluation. Check with your deparment for specific guidelines.
5. **Compile the supporting data**. Evidence relating to the statements on each item should be gathered to support conclusions drawn. This evidence is best placed in an appendix.
6. **Incorporate the Portfolio into the curriculum vitae**. Since the portfolio is about only one aspect of the professor's teaching responsibilities, it needs to be viewed in the total context for the most accurate interpretation.
7. **Physical presentation considerations**. The primary consideration for presenting your portfolio is that the materials should bge conveniently arranged for review by others. One possibility is a tabbed notebook. Another is arranging and indexing all of your materials on a floppy disk. In performance and visual arts, you may need to provide audio and/or video tapes to highlight some activities.

What Kinds of Material can be put into a Portfolio?

Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991) drew from a study at Stanford to identify four domains a portfolio might adress. They are:

- *Course Planning and Preparation*, represented by syllabi, handouts, lecture notes, problem sets, specialized software you've developed, etc.
- *Actual teaching presentation*, represented by comments from others, written comments from student evaluations, or tapes of actual class sessions.
- *Evaluating students and giving feedback*, represented by evaluation assignments and students' graded work along with a brief discussion by the instruction about how feedback was given.
- *Currency in the field*, represented by changes in the courses as new developments in the field arise, currency of reading materials assigned or drawn on for course presentations, attendance at professional conferences that resulted in changes in content or methods of teaching.

The lists below are from Seldin (1993) and by no means intended to be exhaustive of the possibilities. Note that Seldin indicates that there should be multiple sources of information on the same observation, known as triangulation of data. By providing several perspectives on the same event or course, the professor is able to give a clearer picture of the teaching than could be achieved with one source only. What is show below is not intended to be a checklist of everything that should be included in a portfolio; the list is merely suggestive of what might be included.

Material from Oneself

- A statement of teaching philosophy reflecting the individual's view of the teacher's role and how the individual's activities fit with that philosophy.
- Statement of teachign responsibilities including course titles, numbers, enrollments and demographics, a brief description of the way each course was taught and how the courses fit into the

overall mission of the department.
- Representative course syllabi detailing course content and assignments, teaching methods, readings, homework assignments and evaluation activities, possibly highlighting how courses have changed over the years in response to student feedback or instructor growth.
- Description of steps taken to improve teaching, either through the improvent of individual courses or in general through activities to enhance teaching skills or background knowledge.
- Descriptions of instructional innovations attempted and evaluations of their effectiveness.
- Descriptions of non-traditional teaching settings, such as work with laboratory assistants, special help sessions, work with students during office hours, out of classroom contact with all kinds of students.
- Descriptions of activities involving the supervision of graduate students and undergraduate honors thesis students, including names and completion dates, titles of theses or dissertations, works in progress, and an indication of your general approach to such supervision.
- A personal statement describing teaching goals for the next five years.

Material from Others

- Student course evaluation data, including present and former students, majors and nonmajors, graduates and undergraduates, assistants and mentorees, whatever groups constitute the individual's typical constituencies.
- Statements from colleagues who have observed the individual in the classroom or who have taught students in subsequent courses. If such data are not available, there may be alternative sources of similar information. For example, if the individual has been a guest lecturer in another instructor's course, that could be a source of an evaluation. Of if the individual has presented workshops for colleagues either locally or elsewhere, participants could be asked to evaluate the presenter.
- Evaluations from other faculty in team taught courses
- Statements form TAs you have supervised who have taught labs or discussion sections in your courses, etc.
- Documentation of teaching development activities, such as attendance at conferences or workshops on teaching either locally or at professional conferences.
- Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the professor's teaching materials, such as course syllabi, assignments, testing and grading practices. Data can be solicited from outside reviewers on these documents by inviting review from others teaching similar material at similar institutions.
- Honors or other recognition such as a distinguished teaching award or nomination for such an award.

Products of Teaching

- Samples of work along with the professor's feedback to show the range of student performance and how the instructor has dealt with it.
- Student journals compiled during the semester and reflecting student growth in a wide range of areas.
- A record of students who succede in advanced study in the field or who become majors in the field and reflect back on the instructor's influence.
- Testimonials from the employers of former students.
- Student scores on class examinations, departmental exams, national certification exams.

Some Items that Occasionally Appear

- Descriptions of curricular revisions, including new course projects, materials, and class assignments.
- Self-evaluation of teaching-related activities.
- Contributions to, or editing of a professional journal on teaching in the discipline.
- Service on professional society committees or University committees dealing with curriculum or teaching issues.
- A statement by the department chair assessing the professor's teaching contributions to the

department.
- Invitations to present at national conferences on the individual's teaching.
- A videotape of a typical class session.
- Participation in off-campus activities related to teaching in the discipline, such as working with local community groups in educational campaigns.
- Evidence of help given to colleagues leading to improvement of their teaching.
- Descriptions of how non-traditional materials are used in teaching.
- Statements from alumni.

As noted earlier, not all these items would be appropriate for every portfolio. These lists are provided merely as stimulation for the professor's own thinking.

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Responsibilities of U. T. Dallas Graduate Student Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Research Assistants

SCHOOL_____

PROGRAM_____

In appointing you a T.A/R.A. (Graduate Student Teaching Assistant or Graduate Student Research Assistant) position at The University of Texas at Dallas, the School and Program are affirming your potential as an apprentice teacher/researcher and your status as a valued member of the U.T. Dallas community. To assure your understanding of the responsibilities regarding general university policies which your appointment entails, the School and Program request that you read the following statements and, by your signature below, indicate that you accept these responsibilities. Please return this form to the office of the Dean of your School.

As a T.A./R.A. in the_____Program in the School of _____I understand that:

1. As a U.T. Dallas employee, I will comply with the U.T. System Regents Rules and U.T. Dallas' rules, policies, and procedures, including, but not limited to, those concerning sexual harassment, safety, student privacy, the rights of persons with disabilities, drugs and alcohol in the workplace, research integrity, intellectual property, animal care and use, human subjects in research, and biosafety.
2. I will follow safe laboratory practices as demonstrated in program-specific safety training sessions and in The University of Texas at Dallas Safety Program manual, and will report all accidents immediately.
3. I understand that all rules, policies, and procedures referred to in this document are available for my review in the offices of the Dean of Graduate Studies, my School and my Program, and that I take full responsibility for making myself knowledgeable about the content of the rules, policies, and procedures and for complying with their content.
4. I understand that my attendance is mandatory at University, School, Program and Office of Sponsored Projects training sessions offered to T.A/R.A.'s throughout the year.
5. I will comply with the policies of my supervisor(s) and the University with respect to the conduct of classes, laboratories, problem sessions and tutorials, or I will seek revision or clarification of policies by conferring with the Program Head or Dean.
6. In coordination with the Office of the Graduate Dean, I will have my teaching videotaped at least once in the course of this appointment.
7. I will conduct my teaching and/or research practices honestly and with a sense of responsibility to my

colleagues and the subject matter. I understand that grading materials, student submissions, data, laboratory notebooks, computer programs, sample collections, research products, and technical information, in any form, are the property of the University and must be returned to the Principal Investigator/Project Director, Program Head or Dean immediately upon request or upon the termination of my appointment.

8. I understand that my T.A/R.A. appointment, combined with my course load, constitutes full-time employment, and I will accept no outside employment unless it is approved by my Program Head and Dean.

Print Name_____

Signature_____ Date_____

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Time Scheduling

by
Learning Skills Center
The University of Texas at Austin

Learning to schedule your time is a critical component of becoming a successful student. Managing all of the responsibilities that accompany your college experience can seem overwhelming. For example:

There are 168 hours in a week, and if you must spend

- 56 hours a week of sleep (8 hours are usually adequate; do you get enough sleep?), and
- 21 hours eating (time to eat, and relax, and socialize), and
- 20 hours attending class and labs, then
- 10 of every 24 hours are hours in which you'll have to make DECISIONS about what you do.

This leaves you with 71 hours/week or 10 hours/day for study, recreation, and everything else. In other words, this is not an easy lifestyle.

- Consider making a schedule. It can work like a charm in cutting down on tensions, worries, and daydreams. Far from making a robot of you, a time schedule frees you from making top-level decisions constantly, thus allowing you to make the best use of your time.
- Start by making a record of your fixed activities such as classes, meals, meetings, etc. Each week add information revolving around class assignments; note due dates and estimate study time required.
- Remember these *Principles of Time Use* when deciding how to spend your time. Many effective schedulers habitually plan their day 5-10 minutes in the morning or before going to bed.

- Allow larger blocks of time for learning new material, grasping concepts, drafting a theme, etc. Divide these larger blocks of time into definite subparts the length of your concentration span (20 minutes? 30? 10?)
- As you begin work on each subpart, jot down the time you expect to finish. When you're through, reward yourself with a brief break: move around, talk to a friend, drink water, eat a snack.. whatever is good for you.
- Use short periods of time (15 – 45 minutes) to review. It's especially wise to spend a few minutes reviewing immediately before a class involving discussion or recitation. Immediately after a lecture class spend a few minutes reviewing your notes.
- Schedule harder study tasks when you are most alert and can concentrate best.

- Do something daily - don't let it all pile up!
- Plan to really learn the first time; the rest of your study time should be spent reviewing through recitation, discussion, making up and answering possible test questions, etc.
- Don't try to allocate all your time; know what needs to be done and how long it will take you. It's how you use your time that counts.

-from Learning Skills Center. (date unknown). Time Scheduling, unpublished handout.
The University of Texas at Austin. Used with permission

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Time Management

James W. Knight
Professor, Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences

Some Thoughts About Time:

- Time is what keeps everything from happening all at once
- Time flies when you don't know what you are doing
- Everything takes longer than it takes
- Time Management = The art of chasing your tail after you've already bitten off more than you can chew

The Complex and Multifaceted Demands on TA's and the Necessity of Time Management

So much to do, so little time...

The primary roles of TA's:	A student (advanced learner) teacher (facilitator of learning)
The inherent irony:	you occupy the role of teacher because you have been a successful student
A suggestion:	draw upon your experiences as a student to be a successful teacher and vice versa.
The transitional nature of being a GTA:	internship? merely financial support?
The socialization of GTA's:	*Socialization, the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes the interests, skill, and knowledge - in short the culture - current in groups to which they are, or seek to become a member.* (Merton, Reader, and Kendall, The Student Physician, 1957, p.287.)
Role socialization:	student (variety of new learning activities) teacher
Cultural socialization:	know the "workplace" and its "product" know the curriculum understand professional expectations
Personal socialization:	develop a support system

The inevitable conflict:	personal and professional goals personal and professional life
The bottom line:	we cannot do everything and cannot have it all
The only solution:	choices

An ancient Chinese proverb:

"Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in eliminating the nonessentials."

Suggestions for Increasing Effeciency of Overall Time Management

- Identify "not to do's" (nonessentials) as well as "to do's" (essentials)
- Learn to distinguish between Important and Urgent (generally inversely related)
- Remember "Pareto's Principle" (the 80-20 Rule) and consider its implications
- Work in blocks of time and vary activities

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