

Editors'Notes

In 1992, the Office of Instructional Development and Technology (OIDT) took the initiative to establish the President's Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards in order to recognize, on an annual basis, the outstanding achievements of three Teaching Assistants. Selection Committee members have been favourably impressed by the very high calibre of the dossiers filed on behalf of the nominees; a large number of undergraduate students and faculty have written strong letters praising the teaching accomplishments and dedication of some of Dalhousie's finest Teaching Assistants.

University Teaching and Learning: *An Instructional Resource Guide for Teaching Assistants at Dalhousie University* was first published in 1992 and represents another element of the University's overall effort to address the professional development needs of Teaching Assistants. The OIDT takes particular pride in the fact 20 Dalhousie faculty and staff contributed to this Third Edition of the *Resource Guide*. This collective project demonstrates the growing involvement of members of the academic community in instructional development strategies on campus and beyond.

Moreover, the previous editions of this *Resource Guide* have been purchased by 46 institutions in Canada, 51 in the United States, and 35 in other countries. In addition, 26 universities around the world have purchased the diskette version of this *Resource Guide* in order to adapt it to their own institutional setting and print copies for distribution across their campuses. (See Appendix 1.)

The 1994-95 academic year marks the continuation of many events tailored to the needs and interests of TAs: an Orientation session and lunch-hour workshops. Although the OIDT contributes in various ways in preparing TAs to assume their pedagogical role, it is primarily at the level of the academic department that TAs will receive daily guidance in fulfilling their growing professional responsibilities. Conscious of the essential part the individual academic unit plays in the development of TAs, we include a Checklist for Departments on page 3. Where does *your* department stand?

The OIDT staff and the *Resource Guide* contributors are confident that you will find this Third Edition useful. In any case, we welcome your comments and suggestions for a Fourth Edition, which will be prepared for publication in August, 1995.

The Editors would like to make special mention of the contributions of Lynn Jackson, former graduate student in the School of Education, and Janice MacInnis, Administrative Secretary in the Office of Instructional Development and Technology, to the creation of this Guide.

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✓ TA Preparation: A Checklist for Departments

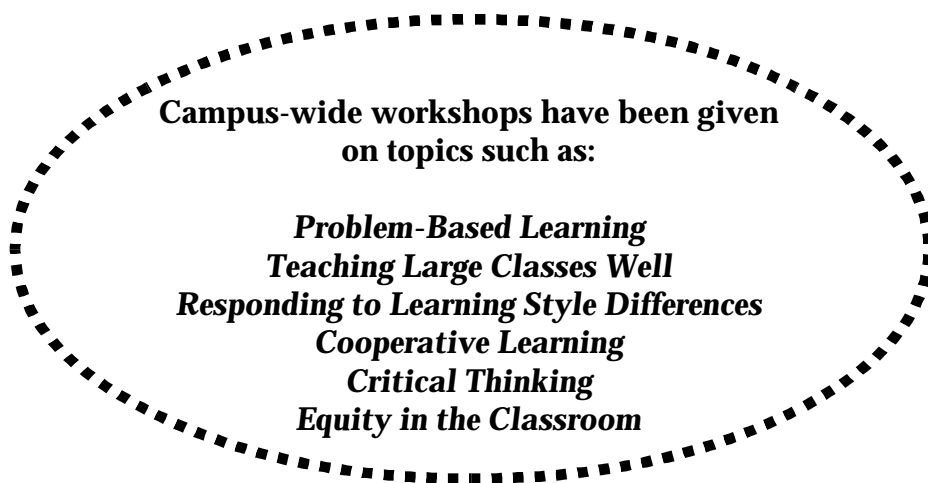
- ___ 1. What provisions are made for coordination between the faculty member and Teaching Assistants who run tutorial groups and labs?
- ___ A. Regular meetings
 - ___ B. TAs attend the lectures
 - ___ C. Lecture, tutorial, and lab notes are shared
 - ___ D. Material to appear on tests is discussed
 - ___ E. Other
- ___ 2. What basic or routine information is systematically provided to Teaching Assistants?
- ___ A. Resources: office space, secretarial support
 - ___ B. Instructional materials
 - ___ C. Department policies on grading, plagiarism, etc.
 - ___ D. University policies that directly affect instruction
 - ___ E. Other
- ___ 3. Is provision made for dialogue concerning the professional development of TAs?
- ___ A. Time set aside for this purpose
 - ___ B. Regular discussion at departmental meetings
 - ___ C. List of mentors, faculty, other TAs available for consultation.
 - ___ D. Other
- ___ 4. Does your department have a training program for TAs? Does it include these topics?
- ___ A. Preparation of lectures and presentations
 - ___ B. Encouraging student participation
 - ___ C. Motivating undergraduate students
 - ___ D. Classroom management
 - ___ E. Establishing rapport
 - ___ F. Tutoring methods
 - ___ G. Effective communication
 - ___ H. Stress management
 - ___ I. Evaluation and grading
 - ___ J. Practice teaching and feedback sessions with other TAs
 - ___ K. Lab procedures, techniques, safety
 - ___ L. Other

Adapted from: Teaching and Learning Center. (1992). Teaching at UNL. 13(5). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Office of Instructional Development and Technology

Since 1989, the Office of Instructional Development and Technology (OIDT) has provided professors with the opportunity to increase their knowledge of effective approaches to teaching, to become familiar with Dalhousie resources which support teaching and learning, and to develop teaching techniques.

The OIDT's programmes and services were initially directed to new and experienced teachers. Subsequently, professional development activities have also been organized for Teaching Assistants because of their important role in undergraduate education. The goal of all these programmes is to improve teaching and, ultimately, to enhance student learning.



In addition, the OIDT responds to the needs of individual departments by conducting workshops upon request.

The OIDT has a resource centre of books and articles on university teaching and learning. An extensive (38-page) bibliography is available for consultation, and a sample of titles is listed below.

Anderson, James. (1991). "Instructional Variety and Student Diversity: Producing Success in the Classroom." Preparing the Professoriate of Tomorrow to Teach. Jody Nyquist et al., Editors. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

"Assessing Students' Learning." (1988). No. 34 in New Directions for Teaching and Learning. James H. McMillan, Editor. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Bateman, Walter. (1990). Open to Question: The Art of Teaching and Learning by Inquiry. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Brookfield, Stephen D. (1990). The Skillful Teacher. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Cano, Jamie et al. (1991). "TA Teaching of an Increasingly Diverse Undergraduate Population." Preparing the Professoriate of Tomorrow to Teach. Jody Nyquist et al., Editors. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Classroom Communications: Collected Readings for Effective Discussion and Questioning. (1989). Rose Ann Neff and Maryellen Weimer, Editors. Madison, WI: Magna Publications.

Gibbs, Graham, et al. (1988). 53 Interesting Things to Do in Your Lectures. Avon, UK: Technical and Educational Services.

Teaching College: Collected Readings for the New Instructor. (1990). Rose Anne Neff and Maryellen Weimer, Editors. Madison, WI: Magna Publications.

Unger-Gallagher, Victoria J. (1991). "The Role of the TA in the Interactive Classroom." Preparing the Professoriate of Tomorrow to Teach. Jody Nyquist et al., Editors. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

OIDT publications:

Recording Teaching Accomplishment:
A Dalhousie Guide to the Teaching Dossier

University Teaching and Learning:
An Instructional Resource Guide for Teaching Assistants at Dalhousie University

Learning Through Writing:
A Compendium of Assignment and Techniques

Each publication is available from the OIDT, located in the Killam Library, for \$5.00 on campus or \$6.00 through external mail. Copies of each publication are on reserve in the OIDT Resource Centre and may be borrowed for reference purposes.

Focus on University Teaching and Learning, a bulletin on instructional development issues, is published 5 times a year and distributed across campus free of charge. Off-campus subscriptions are available at a cost of \$10.00 per year.

A Summary of Programs and Services for Teaching Assistants

Academic year 1993-94 witnessed the debut of a series of programmes, services, and workshops expressly for graduate teaching assistants. The year began with the first annual university-wide Orientation Session for new teaching assistants held in September. This Orientation Session involved presentations from the Dean of Graduate Studies, the President of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students, and the Director of the Office of Instructional Development & Technology. A comprehensive orientation package was also given out and included *University Teaching and Learning: An Instructional Resource Guide for Teaching Assistants at Dalhousie University* and information regarding international students, students with disabilities, Audio-Visual Services, and Library Services. The highlight of the session was a presentation by four TAs who had recently won the President's Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. These award-winning TAs reflected upon their initial experiences as teaching assistants as well as on their approaches and attitudes towards teaching. (See next section, "Tips from the Trenches.")

Throughout the year, six TA workshops were offered, directed at improving their teaching effectiveness:

- * **Interacting with Students**, Tom McRae, Department of Biology.
- * **Dealing Appropriately with Critical Incidents**, Eileen Herteis, OI DT and Farhad Dastur, Department of Psychology.
- * **The Art of Lecturing and Questioning**, Farhad Dastur, Department of Psychology.
- * **Laboratory Demonstrations**, Karen Thompson & Sharon Sawler, Department of Chemistry.
- * **The Teaching Dossier**, Carol O'Neil, OI DT.
- * **Equitable and Effective Grading**, Joe Murphy, School of Education.

Similar workshop series for TAs will be presented each year with a session every month. We hope TAs will benefit from and respond to these sessions, as well as suggest topics of interest to them. We also plan to provide a letter of attendance for TAs who wish to document their commitment to teaching in their Teaching Dossiers.

GTA Electronic Bulletin Board

A novel service offered to all graduate students at Dalhousie University is GS-NOTICE, an e-mail bulletin board which came on-line in April, 1994. The purpose of GS-NOTICE is to provide a medium for the rapid and direct dissemination of information relevant to graduate students. Such information might include changes in Faculty of Graduate Studies policies, and information about scholarships and research funds. The Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students will also be providing information about their activities and meetings. And finally, the OI DT will be advertising up-coming workshops, seminars, and services of interest to graduate students. For more information about GS-NOTICE, contact Farhad Dastur at SYNAPSE@AC.DAL.CA or at 492-8675.

The President's Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards

Dalhousie University recognizes and applauds the important contributions of Graduate Teaching Assistants to the educational mission of the University. The work of TAs, both in the classrooms or laboratories and behind the scenes, provides crucial support for faculty members and greatly enhances the learning process for undergraduate students. Each year, the President's Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards are presented to those TAs who have achieved outstanding success in the area of undergraduate instruction.

1993-94 Award Winners

Spencer Greenwood is working towards his Ph.D. in Biochemistry. Faculty and students alike commend him for his "exemplary" work as a teacher in laboratories. In fact, his teaching skills have so impressed the professors in his department that one wrote that Spencer "is unquestionably the best teacher at the graduate level that we have seen in the department."

His students appreciate Spencer's approachability and skill in promoting discussion, explaining procedures, and ensuring understanding. Spencer says that, while he is always prepared, he is never afraid to admit to his students that he doesn't know something and will have to discover the answer. He is also delighted if the students find the answer themselves and tell him:

"I think that being honest with my answers has shown me that my students are much less afraid to ask questions the next time. Therefore, I have potentially achieved two important goals: (1) earned their respect for being honest and (2) broken down a communication barrier that often exists between the 'teacher' and the 'student'; instead, you are both learning from the experience."

Carol King is an M.A. student in the Department of Classics, who works as a teaching assistant in Classical Mythology. Her supervisor calls it a difficult class to teach because the students come from very diverse backgrounds; some find the wealth of material discouraging. Carol has excelled at her task.

Faculty speak of her "enthusiastic and inspiring" work with students. They comment, too, on her "energy" and "initiative" in conducting tutorials for students which "enrich" their understanding of classical mythology, literature, and history. Students call Carol an "approachable," "knowledgeable," and "well organized" teaching assistant "who has incorporated many new ideas (i.e. PBS videos, plays, epics) into her teaching. These all help [us] to understand the subject better."

Carol says, "I . . . believe that the educational system should teach young people, beyond knowledge, how to discover themselves, their talents, and even sometimes their limitations. A variety of approaches must be used to achieve this — one method alone cannot work for every situation and for every student — and a teacher must listen to the needs of students. Students must be comfortable with the learning process and should be challenged for real growth to take place."

Paula Wedge is a Ph. D. candidate in Chemistry who works as a teaching assistant in the second- and third-year organic chemistry laboratories. Faculty are impressed by Paula's "enthusiasm" and "excellent leadership qualities." As evidence of their confidence in her, when an extra lab section opened, Paula was the unanimous choice of professors to supervise it - usually only lecturers or professors would have such responsibility. In this challenging position, Paula "enthusiastically fulfilled the department's expectations."

Paula has received outstanding teaching evaluations from her students. They speak of "her talent for explaining concepts simply and clearly," "her enthusiastic attitude," and her "commitment." Others value the encouragement she gives them to work independently in the lab, "while at the same time providing guidance and experience."

Paula takes her love for her subject into the elementary schools in the district, doing some "magic tricks" as part of the *Scientists in the Schools* volunteer program. Paula says that two things are essential for effective teaching: capturing the attention of the students and keeping it:

"We have had speakers [in a Chemistry seminar series] whose work was very interesting, but poorly presented. The speakers lacked enthusiasm, and I found myself not paying attention. On the other hand, we have had speakers whose work I was not interested in, but their talks were so well presented and dynamic that I found myself listening to every word. . . . I want to show my enthusiasm for the subject and keep my students interested. . . ."

Teaching is "an intriguing paradox, for the sincere teacher must both *profess* to know, and simultaneously *confess* not to know. . . . Thus, teacher becomes student again, and stands before the class as a brilliant example of what it means to be a curious explorer in the largely uncharted world of ideas." Farhad Dastur

These examples of outstanding TAs (who are but a few of the hundreds on campus) are well-deserving of recognition. If they choose careers as university teachers, they have already compiled an impressive list of accomplishments for their c.v.'s. Because of growing concern for the quality of university teaching and learning, all TAs would be well advised to keep a record of their teaching activities in order to demonstrate their ability to fulfill this part of a faculty member's duties. Information on the Teaching Dossier is readily available in the library or through the Office of Instructional Development and Technology. An outline of the essential components of the Teaching Dossier is contained in the next section.

We invite you to participate in the nomination process for this year's President's Graduate Teaching Assistants Awards. Watch for the Call for Nominations or telephone the OIAT at 494-1622 for further information.

***"Being a GTA is a lot like being an apprentice
trapeze artist who still gets to work with a net."
Patricia Cole***

**Previous Winners of the
President's Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards**

1991-1992

Mark Bruhn (English)
Natalie Cann (Chemistry)
Patricia Cole (Psychology)

1992-1993

Jane Brooks (Microbiology & Immunology)
Farhad Dastur (Psychology)
Stephen Vanslyke (Chemistry)

Tips from the Trenches

At the first annual Orientation session for Graduate Teaching Assistants at Dalhousie University, a panel of award-winning GTAs shared their experience with new teaching assistants. Here are some of their thoughts.

On teaching . . .

After overcoming beet red fears, I became intoxicated by teaching – and it was addictive!

I've been asked, "Are you old enough to be teaching us?"

I crave teaching. I'm addicted.

If you say, "I have the best course to teach and the best group of students," it betrays an attitude. Students will remember your attitude.

On students . . .

Things that seem "common sense" to you because you have been doing them for 8 years will not be common sense for the students. Use examples that make sense to them - move from the concrete to the abstract.

Look at the faces of your students. Know them.

There's a wide range of attitudes among students ; some don't always see the application of my subject to their field, They want just enough information to pass the exam — I used to get cheesed off at those people!

Students are not vessels to be filled.

On rapport and communication . . .

Making yourself clear is important. A journal of literary criticism is sometimes impossible to understand because of the specialized language used. Reach beyond specialists. . . . try to speak clearly to students.

Become partners in learning. Get to know one another. It changes the feeling. Ask questions about expectations; it sets the tone and attitude.

When you ask a question and they're slow to respond, wait them out. My supervisor told me that the average wait time is only 1.9 seconds. Patience works.

Teaching is listening.

Q. 'How do you carve out your own niche? What do you have to leave to your supervisor?'

A. 'I'm assertive –I do as much as I want until someone says 'no.' It depends on your personality.'

Q. “How do you mark with a fresh perspective when it’s a danger to know your students?”
A. “Have a scheme for marking: mark question one—all of them; then go on to question two and mark all of them.”

On creating a learning environment . . .

Have the right attitude – leave everything else behind when you walk into the lab or classroom.

It’s a challenge to get them interested in a lab till 5:30 p.m. on Friday. You have to try to get to them, to hook them, make them interested in the field.

Create an atmosphere that’s fun. Be open to a diversity of opinions.

You have to make the subject come alive. Get the students to feel comfortable.

Put on a show, show them you love the subject and love to teach. Be an entertainer.

Create excitement: “Wow! A white blood cell!”

Be secure in your knowledge and preparation and aware of your limitations.

Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know.”

Thanks to panelists Jane Brooks, Mark Bruhn, Farhad Dastur, Stephen Vanslyke, and the participants at the first Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation held on September 30th, 1993.

A Message from the Former President of DAGS

I feel quite strongly that the set of challenges faced by our generation of academics is unique, at least in terms of this century. It would be easy at times to perceive the academic environment as spiralling in on itself, financially, morally, spiritually, leaving one to wonder about prospects for the university of the 21st century.

For our generation of educators—for we are now educators—the challenges are quite different as well. We are going through times when an overriding message is what we cannot do, what we cannot study, what we cannot think. These messages get twisted and contorted, and the cost in human inspiration is immeasurable.

The challenge of our generation of educators and academics then becomes one of discovering—and re-discovering—the human side of higher education, saying out loud what we CAN study, what we CAN think, and what we CAN do. This is a message of importance that we can take into our classes: that our students are allowed and indeed encouraged

simply to think. My view tells me that our century has devoted a great deal of time and energy to taking things apart; we can now learn—and then teach—how to put things together.

The importance of these messages is a sign of the importance of our work, and as part-time instructors, we can keep foremost in our minds the importance of the service we render to the university, and the importance of the service we give to our students, to the INDIVIDUAL students in our classes. It's amazing to think that if we tell a young woman that her ideas are valid, that her contributions are valuable, that we may be the first one ever to say it in so many words. If we encourage a young man to bring his individual perspective to bear on a problem, we may be the first person to tell him that there is no point in blending into a faceless crowd, that innovative thought is needed. Given the close contact we have, we can be the person who discerns a learning difficulty and who helps a student learn strategies to get around it. We can be the person who makes a foreign student feel welcome at Dalhousie. We can be the person who makes every Canadian student feel welcome at Dalhousie.

A university remains a place where individuality and diversity of thought should be promoted. Don't ever let anyone undersell the importance of what you do. The atmosphere of this university is not yet ideal, and your work may not always be given full credit. Don't ever believe someone who treats your work as unimportant: the impact of it is far-reaching, and is essential to the overall well-being of our world.

I encourage you to believe, then, in the importance of what you do. If you have ideas on how things can be done better—'when' you have ideas—get involved, and make sure your input is heard. I encourage you to bring a positive influence to your department, to your students and to your school. Get involved in the associations and bodies which are here to serve you. Make sure they serve you (DSU - \$121; DAGS - \$24; SUNS & CFS; Senate, Board of Governors, your own department and its committees; the Faculty of Graduate Studies). Graduates are here for a purpose. I know I'm here for a reason. For many reasons. Graduate TAs do valuable work, are an essential part of a healthy academic atmosphere. I encourage you to believe in this, and to profit from your experience, today, and each day you spend here at Dalhousie, our university.

Peter Edwards, President 1993-94
Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students

Responsibilities and Expectations

Role of the TA

The job of a Teaching Assistant is both demanding and rewarding. The TA can expect to be a real asset to a department and to benefit greatly from the teaching experience. The TA is up-to-date and knowledgeable in his or her discipline, and is often the right age to be an effective role model for undergraduate students. Teaching Assistants are asked to do a variety of jobs, depending on the department, but in each of these they will perform a number of functions.

❶ **Instructor:** You will be teaching undergraduate students in classrooms or marking student work. Although you are knowledgeable in your field, some aspects of the subject will be new and you will be expected to prepare carefully for each session. Don't underestimate the amount of work it takes to be well prepared. Allow yourself time to plan carefully; pay close attention to detail and check everything before you begin. The best teachers are usually the ones who make the greatest effort. However, no teacher is perfect or knows everything, so don't be afraid of being wrong sometimes and admitting it to students.

❷ **Representative from your Department:** Each discipline has its own methods and standards. Chemistry, for example, operates on different kinds of premises than does Philosophy. You are responsible, with the professor, for establishing reasonable standards for the students, and for helping them meet these standards. This is a difficult job at the beginning as you try to understand what you can reasonably expect of others.

❸ **Teacher:** Whether you instruct in labs or tutorials or mark essays, you are a teacher and must help the students learn. This involves much more than knowledge in your specific discipline. Teaching can be an exciting and interesting process, and there are many ways of doing it effectively. Try out new ideas, watch the results, discuss them with your colleagues, and make further changes to accommodate what you have learned.

One of the most important (and underrated) things teachers do is provide feedback. When students reach university, they should be taking control of their own learning but they can do this effectively only if they have good feedback: *“Learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process. When he (sic) chooses his own direction, helps to discover his own learning resources, formulates his own problems, decides his own course of action, and lives with the consequences of each of these choices”* (Gibbs, 1981).

If you see your job as helping students develop their ability to learn, you will give them a different kind and quality of feedback than if you think you are just presenting a subject or determining a mark.

❹ **Role Model:** Graduate and senior undergraduate students can be excellent role models for undergraduates: they are often just a little older, they have clearly been successful at

university, and they show the undergraduate students what they can aim for. TAs should take their positions as role models seriously. The most important assets of graduate students are their idealism, enthusiasm, and high standards. TAs will be ideal role models if they display these traits in their teaching.

⑤ **Friend:** All teachers must show respect for and interest in their students as well as enthusiasm for their subject. TAs are still aware of what it is like to be a student; they appreciate the frustration involved in having to live by the rules of others, in being forced to meet deadlines even when they seem arbitrary or unrealistic, and in being judged by others when they are not in a position to criticize in return. Therefore, TAs are in an ideal position to treat each student as a unique and worthwhile individual. Both in the classroom and while marking assignments, you will be creating the learning atmosphere for students. If you are enthusiastic, helpful, knowledgeable, and fair, you will be serving your students well.

⑥ **Intermediary:** Teaching Assistants are perfect intermediaries between faculty and students because they understand, ideally speaking, both sides. You can explain the rationale of the faculty member to the students, but you can also provide an early warning system when things are not going well by telling faculty members what the students dislike.

Role of the TA	
✓ Instructor	✓ Representative
✓ Teacher	✓ Role Model
✓ Friend	✓ Intermediary

The TA and the Department

The TA works as a member of a department and a faculty at Dalhousie and is obliged to follow the policies and regulations within the department and meet its standards and expectations. Make sure you understand these departmental requirements.

The TA and the Professor

Generally, you will be working under the direction of a professor in your department who will determine the content and methods used for your teaching assignments: make sure you understand the faculty member's expectations. Once you accept your teaching assignment, you share responsibility for this class.

The TA and the Students

Although you are hired by the University, you are ultimately responsible to the students. You must do your best for them, and accept responsibility for your own success - or failure.

Professional Ethics

As a representative of the University, you are expected to maintain the standards of the University. This includes following all guidelines and rules established by the University. If you disagree with the policies of the University or the professor you assist, you are obliged to discuss these privately with the professor or an appropriate University administrator rather than doing so in front of students or simply refusing to follow the University guidelines.

You also have responsibilities as a teacher to help students learn your discipline and improve their ability to learn. You must be fair and honest and do nothing to exploit your position of power over the students. All students must be treated with equal respect. Private bias and disparaging remarks should never be tolerated within the classroom (see section on Human Rights).

Source: Gibbs, G. (1981). Teaching Students to Learn. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.



HumanRights

Nova Scotia Human Rights Act

The text of the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act* (“Act”) was amended in 1991 to provide for greater protection of the rights of all individuals in the province, and to provide them with greater security from persecution. The *Act* now lists fifteen prohibited grounds of discrimination: race, religion, creed, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, aboriginal origin, family status, source of income, and political belief, affiliation, or activity. Sections of the *Act* covering age, sex, and physical disability were broadened.

Dalhousie University, as an agent of the Government of Nova Scotia (the University receives programme funding from the Province), is bound by the *Human Rights Act*, and therefore must conform to the stated laws of the Province under the *Act*.

For further information, you may contact the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission at (902) 424-4111.

Affirmative Action in Education

Dalhousie University has declared itself to be an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Educational Institution with respect to academic policies and practices, and within this general commitment has adopted the following guiding principles:

- a) accountability to document efforts and outcomes;
- b) respect for diversity as a positive value to be developed through academic programmes, policies, and structures; and
- c) assertive institutional policies to address systemic deficiencies and to encourage access, support, and opportunity.

Employment Equity

The University is committed to employment equity through affirmative action and will institute active measures to eradicate discrimination, both personal and systemic. Dalhousie’s approved Employment Equity Policy commits the University to a programme intended to improve the representation of designated groups in all areas of the University workforce. The designated groups are women, aboriginals (especially Micmacs), visible minorities (especially indigenous black Nova Scotians), and persons with disabilities.

For details on the Employment Equity Policy you may contact the Employment Equity Office in the Arts & Administration Building, Room 205, or call 494-6672.

Discriminatory Harassment

The University policy statement on discriminatory harassment, is defined to include:

- 1) intimidation, whether physical or psychological;
- 2) personal vilification on the basis of sex, race, colour, age, disability, class or socio-economic condition, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin; and/or
- 3) speech or other expression (including written, symbolic, or pictorial) which might reasonably be interpreted as denigrating an individual or group of individuals on the basis of sex, race, colour, age, handicap, class or socio-economic condition, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin, and which does not have a *bona fide* educational or artistic function.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

In framing its policy on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Dalhousie University wished to adhere to its long-standing tradition of promoting and preserving individual rights. The University also acted out of a regard for public health. The University seeks to educate the community about the realities of AIDS while preserving the rights of those who may suffer from the disease. Faculty, staff, or students known to be HIV-positive will not be restricted in their employment or attendance at the University. There will be no barriers to study, teaching, research, and other work opportunities, or to the use of recreation, sporting, residential, or other communal facilities and services subject to the following considerations. With regard to safety, first-aid, and emergency practices and to the care of patients with infectious diseases, the University endeavours to conform to national standards for health safety as established by the federal government.

For information on the AIDS Policy you may contact the Employment Equity Office at 494-6672.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined, in Dalhousie's policy on sexual harassment, as sexually-oriented behaviour of a deliberate or negligent nature which adversely affects the working or learning environment. It includes, but is not limited to:

1. sexual solicitation or advance of a repeated, persistent, or abusive nature made by a person who knows that such solicitation or advance is unwanted;
2. implied or expressed promise of reward for complying with a sexually-oriented request;
3. reprisal in the form of either actual reprisal, or of the denial of opportunity for refusal to comply with a sexually-oriented request;
4. sexually-oriented remarks or behaviour on the part of a person who knows or ought to know that such remarks or behaviour may create a negative psychological or emotional environment for work or study.

Sexual harassment can be verbal (suggestive comments; insults or jokes about a person's gender, appearance, or sexual orientation; sexual propositions or invitations; threats; or persistent questions of a personal nature), gesticulative (suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, or obscene gestures), visual (offending pictures, literature, or graffiti), or physical (touching, pinching, brushing the body, coerced sexual intercourse, or assault).

Dalhousie University is committed to maintaining a working and learning environment which is free from sexual harassment. Contact the Sexual Harassment Advisor at 494-1137 for confidential advice, information, and support. All enquiries are confidential.

On the Frontlines: Strategies for TAs

Can you see the silence?

North American studies have repeatedly shown that women and individuals belonging to minority groups speak, on average, 30% or less of the time in classroom and lab situations, even when they make up 50% or more of the groups concerned. Studies also show that both female and male instructors call on female students less frequently and are less inclined to make eye contact with them, or to engage in dialogue with them, or to acknowledge the significance of their contributions.

TAs are well positioned to play a very positive role in counteracting these insidious forms of silencing. You can use various means of encouraging the academic expression and contribution of students affected by systemic discrimination without obviously singling out such individuals.

For instance, in labs, the TA can take steps to implement an equal gender division of the technical or manual parts of the lab procedure. In seminar and group discussion contexts, the TA may try going around the table calling on all students to express their views on a particular topic or question; or, in cases where students are organized into small groups, the TA can ensure that the role of group leader rotates regularly. A TA can also sometimes help to draw the attention of a faculty member to the unintentional forms of silencing and devaluation that make it more difficult for women and/or members of minority groups to contribute in academic contexts.

Why do words matter?

TAs can act as important role models for students in using language that respects and includes individuals of different genders, races, cultures, physical capacities, and sexual orientations. Using such language is not a matter of "political correctness"; it is a matter of justice and fairness. Studies in a range of fields (linguistics, law, sociology, and psychology, among others) have incontrovertibly shown, for example, that terms like "man" and the masculine pronoun "he" are not interpreted as including women, even when that may be the speaker's intent. Likewise, terms such as "lame" (as in "that's a lame theory") may perpetuate prejudices and cause offence where it might have been avoided.

In some cases, TAs themselves may belong to cultural minorities, and may experience difficulties intensified by linguistic differences (See Teaching Tips for International TAs). In such cases, active dialogue between the TA and the students concerned may bring benefits to both parties, if there is respect on both sides for cultural differences. If a TA is subjected to continual harassment from a student or group of students, the TA may want to consult the Discriminatory Harassment Committee.

Is it normal to feel so uncomfortable?

Often individuals suffer from subtle forms of discriminatory harassment without recognizing that a particular annoying or uncomfortable experience is indeed a result of harassment. A TA may be in an excellent position to recognize that a student is suffering from a type of harassment, whether it be sexual harassment, or some other type of harassment based on race, cultural difference, difference in sexual orientation, etc. In some cases, of course, the TA herself or himself may be the victim of such harassment. Please read carefully the definitions of harassment included in this Resource Guide, and contact the officials or committees concerned if you have any questions.

The Teaching Environment

Building a successful teaching environment depends on both the teacher and the student; however, the initial responsibility for achieving this state falls on the teacher — the individual perceived by the student as the expert, the figure of authority, or the leader within the relationship. The leadership position must be exploited, not abused, such that a mutual respect builds between teacher and student. This relationship cannot be established instantly or with ease but requires hard work, a genuine interest in teaching, and a concern for others.

There are some general suggestions worthy of consideration as one engages in the teaching enterprise.

The first step is to forget that you are a student — you are now the teacher; but do not forget what it is like to be a student. Remembering the first time you entered a laboratory or stood in front of a tutorial group will help you appreciate students' problems. This advice is probably useful for all teachers.

The second suggestion is to have realistic expectations of students. Most students are ambitious: they want to succeed, and they will respond to the challenges you present. Those students who truly don't care, and there are always some, can only be encouraged to the extent they allow. If they are not in the class or laboratory, you cannot help; but when an opportunity occurs, you should encourage them.

The final general comment is to remember your favourite teachers and what you liked about them; then try to behave in the same manner. You may be surprised by how good it feels to have a positive impact on your students.

Achieving Student Involvement: Attendance, Attention, and Articulation

The essential element of a healthy teaching environment is active student involvement. The first step in achieving involvement is to have students attend teaching sessions. You must then maintain their attention, the second level of involvement, from which they will articulate or express ideas to you and their peers. That is, they will be actively involved in the learning process that you, as teacher, are directing. Since the various levels of student involvement are achieved sequentially and depend on attendance, it is important to know why students come to teaching sessions. Quite simply, it is to obtain information, used here in the broadest context of the word. The teacher's main responsibility is to communicate information to students. If you communicate poorly, students will not attend your sessions, and from this it follows that they neither pay attention nor articulate their thoughts.

Clearly, a successful teaching environment realized through student involvement is readily attainable. A teacher must work hard in order to become familiar with the class material and to organize it into a comprehensive package. Tolerance and respect for others are a part of normal behaviour and should not be discarded when you pass through the classroom door. Emphasizing the positive and maintaining a sense of humour provide the glue which holds the enterprise together. As you get better at it, you will enjoy teaching more, and the opportunity to interact with students will be a source of much satisfaction.

Characteristics of an Effective Instructor

What is an effective instructor? What skills and characteristics does he or she have? What is effective teaching, for that matter?

There is no universally accepted definition of *effective teaching*; however, any acceptable definition would have to take into consideration both what the teacher does and student learning. Here is one definition: “*Effective teaching produces beneficial and purposeful student learning through the use of appropriate procedures*” (Diamond; 1987).

There are, however, certain characteristics and skills which effective teachers demonstrate (Wotruba and Wright; 1975). These qualities are all considered in various sections of this resource book.

Characteristics of an Effective Instructor

- ✓ Knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject matter and teaching
- ✓ Good organization of subject matter and course
- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Positive attitudes toward students
- ✓ Fairness in evaluation and grading
- ✓ Flexibility in approaches to teaching

Although knowledge of your discipline is a given, you are not expected to be omniscient. As you will read in the sections dealing with communication and questions and answers, students find the “all-knowing instructor” very threatening. Admit it when you don’t know something, and be willing to learn. As Joseph Joubert said in *Pensées*, “*To teach is to learn twice.*”

Other than knowledge of the subject matter, organization is the single most important element in communicating with a group. If your teaching sessions are well organized, students attend because they know information will be presented in a logical, straight-forward manner. This

provides an introduction which allows them to understand the material when they study on their own time. Effective organization means students pay attention, or at least increases this possibility. If they listen, students will begin to articulate their ideas to you and to their peers. Another benefit of organization is that it allows the teacher to know where s/he stands within a session, thus providing peace of mind.

Remember that your colleagues are excellent resources; talk to them. Find out what other Teaching Assistants are doing in their classes. If you come across a technique that you think will work in your class, try it. An effective instructor is always ready to borrow, adapt, or steal good teaching ideas from someone else!

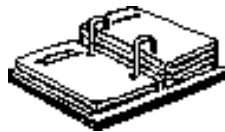
Surviving the First Day of Class

It is more than a cliché that first impressions are lasting ones. The first day of class is very important, so don't assume that a quick read-through of the course outline and early dismissal are enough.

It's perfectly natural to be a little nervous before your first class. However, don't let the desire to "get it over with" cause you to short-change your students. Concentrate on making a good impression, showing the students that you are approachable and knowledgeable, and most of all that this is an important class with interesting material. Most important tip? Don't talk too fast!

Here are a few more tips:

Before the first day:



- Make sure you know where the classroom is, visit it, and accustom yourself to its dimensions. For example, write something on the board, then go to the back of the class and see if you can read your writing.
- Familiarize yourself with the course outline and be prepared to explain rather than simply present the objectives to your students.

On the first day:

- On the board, write the course name, number, section, and your own name, office hours, and phone number.
- Tell your students something about yourself and make eye contact with them; if you are nervous, admit it - many of them will be nervous, too.
- If the class is small enough, have the students introduce themselves aloud. If the class is too big for that, ask them to introduce themselves to a neighbour. Some instructors also have their students provide information about themselves on a 3" x 5" card.

- Talk about the text, the edition they will need (Is a second hand copy of last year's text outdated?), additional readings and where to find them.
- Be explicit about your expectations of the students. Explain clearly the preparations required for class, describe assignments, quizzes, tests, and outline the learning objectives for the course and how they will be evaluated.
- Discuss policies regarding attendance, participation, and meeting deadlines.
- Describe penalties for late submission of work, plagiarism, or missing assignments. If you are willing to make exceptions, specify the circumstances and criteria.



Other ideas to get you through the first day:

- ☆ Find out what the class already knows about the subject by giving a short - perhaps light-hearted - "quiz."
- ☆ Show the students in a non-threatening way the kinds of problems they will be able to solve at the end of the course.
- ☆ Discuss some of the current issues in the field.
- ☆ Show how the course can help students answer questions in other disciplines.
- ☆ Try an "ice-breaking" exercise (like Interests, Concerns, and Free Associations below).

Interests, Concerns, and Free Associations

Your students read the course outline, then introduce themselves to a colleague, stating their major field of study and their interests in and concerns about the course. Then they present their partner's responses to the class. As the information is presented, note it in columns on the board labeled "Interests" and "Concerns," and respond.

Already you have created interaction among students, and between students and yourself. You have discovered your students' reasons for taking the class and made it easier for them to remember the goals and objectives of the class because they've been actively engaged in discussing them.

The second part of the process involves students in free-associating with a key word in the title of the course. Ask students to call out their associations, and then write them on the board without comment. Once the board is filled, work with the students to evaluate these words into positive, negative, or content-oriented categories. Then discuss them.

Remember, the first class meeting sets the tone for the semester, so show enthusiasm, **Interests**, major field of study and their interests in and concerns about the course. Then they present their partner's responses to the class. As the information is presented, note it in columns on the board labeled "Interests" and "Concerns," and respond.

Source: Brodeur, Donald "Interests, Concerns, and Free Associations," a session presented at the 11th Annual Conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Halifax, NS. June, 1991.

Encouraging Student Input

Getting students to express their ideas depends on the teacher's perceived attitude or disposition. There is nothing wrong with "being popular" if your reputation has been earned by treating others with fairness and respect and not by awarding everyone in the class a high mark. The students must like you, or at least not hate you, for it goes without saying that we prefer to talk to a person we like rather than someone we dislike! Students appreciate teachers who have a sense of humour, who are approachable and enthusiastic, and who show an interest in them. In short, students are no different from everyone else — they enjoy being treated with respect. This is the Golden Rule for establishing a productive relationship with students and should not be broken. Just as organizational skills can be developed, one can cultivate the appropriate attitude towards teaching, thus enhancing the experience for the student as well as the teacher.

Student involvement in learning, the culmination of organization and fostering the appropriate attitude, entails direct interaction between teacher and student, although student-student exchanges can be equally stimulating. Once students believe you are reasonable, they will talk to you. This can mean that the same students speak out, but the entire class will benefit. Students will visit you before presentations, and more will come after if you are approachable.

Achieving positive interaction with students takes a relatively small amount of effort once organization and attitude are in place. It is productive to arrive at the teaching session early and to mix with people in different areas of the room. Students with problems seek you out if you are present before class, saving a trip to your office and interruption of other work.

Letting students know you are interested in their ideas by providing time for comments and questions is important and can be accomplished in many ways. Stop the relentless flow of information and seek questions. Wait at least 15 seconds for a response and find something good to say about the comment as this reassures the student. Ask questions which can be

partially answered from information just presented. Praise the answer if it is deserving, emphasize the positive in a poor response, and make the student feel good about contributing. Also try posing questions for which you supply the answer almost immediately. In this case, the students have the satisfaction of answering to themselves, or at least of not responding incorrectly in front of the class. Another technique is to ask questions and present what seems like a logical answer but which is wrong. Reason your way to the correct solution out loud with the students. The students then feel as if they are helping you arrive at the final answer even if no member of the class speaks (See Question and Answer Techniques). Finally, be available immediately after class and, of course, have time away from formal meetings when students are welcome to visit.

Effective Communication

How often have you heard the following? “Professor Wye sure knows a lot about his subject; I wish he could communicate it better.”

Communication is inseparable from many of the recognized qualities of a good teacher. It has an impact on the way you present your material, create rapport with the students, and establish your credibility in and control of the class. And remember, communication involves receiving as well as sending - in other words, a good communicator is also a good listener.

Once you are comfortable with your knowledge of the material you are about to teach, here are some skills to help you communicate it effectively:

1. Know your students. If you know your audience, the whole communications process will be much easier.
2. Don't be afraid of silence - take a moment to think before you talk.
3. Use clear and precise terms.
4. Avoid using jargon; if you must, give a definition to ensure everyone understands.
5. Listen carefully to student responses.
6. Be sensitive to student behaviour and non-verbal communication in the class. A lot of chattering or restless shuffling could indicate that the class does not understand something. Stop and ask for an explanation.
7. Create a gender-sensitive classroom environment. Use language which is inclusive and examples which are appropriate and comfortable for everyone in the class (See section on Human Rights).
8. Use humour, by all means, but make sure it is neither tasteless nor malicious.

Classroom Communication Checklist

Know your students
Don't let silence unnerve you
Be clear
Avoid jargon
Listen carefully
Be sensitive to student behaviour
Create equity in your classroom or laboratory
Use humour appropriately



Question and Answer Techniques

Questions and answers are essential components of teaching and learning. You will ask questions of your students and answer questions from them.

Asking a good question will help you motivate students' curiosity about the topic, and it will help you assess how well they understand the material.

There are two kinds of questions: **closed** and **open**. A closed question (sometimes called a "lower order" question) is usually used to check student comprehension. It requires a factual answer and allows little opportunity for dissent; e.g., "What does 'x' equal in this equation?"; "Which of Henry VIII's wives survived him?" The answer will be either correct or incorrect.

An open or "higher order" question offers the students much more opportunity to speculate, draw inferences, extrapolate from data, or contribute their own opinions; e.g., "What do you think would happen if we reduced the temperature by 25 degrees?"; "Which of the two short stories provides the best description of adolescence?"

Open questions are frequently the springboards for lively class discussion. You might want to think of some possible answers to an open question before you ask it in class.

Answering student questions can be unnerving at first. If you do not know the answer, say so. It is better to be honest than to give an inaccurate answer which will have to be retracted later. Tell the students you will find out for them by next class; better still, invite the questioner to find the answer and report it at the next class.

Further guidelines for answering student questions include:



1. Take a moment to think carefully before you respond to student questions.
2. Listen to the question carefully. It may indicate that the student is having difficulty with the material. You may wish to answer with another question until you discover where the student's misunderstanding begins.
3. If the question requires a very lengthy response or demonstrates that the questioner has missed some classes, you may wish to ask the student to stay behind after class or come to see you at another time to get the answer.

Remember these points concerning questions addressed to the class:



1. Ask only one question at a time.
2. Wait at least 15 seconds for a response.
3. If there is no answer, rephrase the question and ask it again. Asking a different question will confuse the students.

Classroom and Laboratory Safety

Rapport in the Classroom: Responses and Respect

Students are often very hesitant to speak out in class. Questions go unasked and unanswered, students remain silent because they are afraid to lose their self-esteem by being put down in front of their classmates.

Here are some hints for creating a more open, rewarding, and responsive classroom environment.

1. Listen to what students say without comment. Use eye contact, non-verbal cues such as a nod, and facial expression to indicate that you're interested.
2. Don't dismiss student comments with a vague phrase such as "uh-huh," or "okay."
3. Don't interrupt student comments or responses.
4. Try to incorporate student comments and responses into your material.
5. Encourage students to respond to each other by inviting them to comment on a remark a classmate has made.
6. Write good responses or comments on the board to emphasize the value of student contributions to your class.
7. If you are not sure what a student is asking, ask some questions which will help you clarify. Don't say, "I don't understand what you mean."
8. If you cannot answer a question, be frank with the class. Ask for help; maybe one of the students can give an example to help you out.
9. Repeat and paraphrase student answers. This shows that you were listening, helps you check that you understood what the student meant, and ensures that everyone in class hears what was said.
10. Never try to capitalize on students' confusion by ridiculing or joking about incorrect responses. "Humour" of that kind is bound to backfire and create the very kind of inhospitable climate that you are trying to avoid.
11. Never deter questions by saying, "Well that was really straightforward. I don't suppose there are any questions, are there?" You can bet there won't be.

Using Audiovisuals to Enhance Instruction



A good aid is like a window, it should not call attention to itself, it should just let in the light.

Why use Audiovisuals? Communicating to facilitate learning is a challenging process requiring creative efforts to overcome a variety of problems and help achieve the instructional sub-objectives of:

- attracting attention
- developing interest
- adjusting the learning climate
- increasing understanding
- promoting acceptance (of an idea)
- introducing hands-on activity

Common Audiovisuals Some of the more common audio-visual aids are:

- films and videotapes
- overhead projectors
- 35 mm slides
- chalkboards or flipcharts
- audio-cassettes
- computers (eg. for overhead projection)

A teacher must determine which media, in what form, and at what time, will most effectively provide the most relevant experiences for learners.

Take care Audio-visual aids require:

- care in selecting or preparing
- planning and skill in use

For further information regarding the use of audiovisuals see Appendices, “Sample Procedure for Lesson Design (emphasis on AV selection),” “Matching Media to the Presentation Parameters,” and “An Audio-Visual Checklist.”



Classroom and Laboratory Safety

As the TA present in a classroom or laboratory, it is your responsibility to be aware of all safety rules and regulations. This is true even if you are not the formal authority (i.e. Instructor or Professor) normally present; make sure you can handle an emergency in the absence of the faculty member. The most effective way of ensuring you can handle a potential emergency satisfactorily is to be prepared.

The following tips will help you ensure classroom and laboratory safety:

1. Know where the nearest telephone is and, in an emergency, whom to contact. Dalhousie University has a 24-hour emergency number (3344); Dalhousie Security's phone number is 6400.
2. Know the locations of fire/emergency exits, fire alarms, and the best evacuation routes.
3. Know the location of the first-aid box and be prepared with simple first-aid procedures.
4. Know the location of fire extinguishers (CO₂ and H₂O), chemical spill kits, emergency showers, and eye washes and how to use them.
5. In the event of fire, call 3344 to report the details and pull the fire alarm. If the fire is small, fight it with the appropriate fire extinguisher. Your first responsibility is to ensure the safety of students and other occupants of the building. Only after ensuring the safety of these people should you attempt to fight a fire. Leave the area if you cannot control the fire with one fire extinguisher.
6. In the event of fire alarm, direct your students to evacuate the building by the fire exit or shortest safe route. Do not use elevators. Give assistance to handicapped persons and close the door after everyone has left but do not lock it. Do not return to the building until authorized.
7. In the event of serious injury or illness, do not move the injured person unless it is a life-threatening situation. If possible, do not leave an injured person unattended. Call 3344 and give as much information as you can. Officers will arrange for medical help and an ambulance, if required. Return and remain with the injured person, obtaining local medical assistance if available.
8. In the event of hazardous chemical spill or hazardous gas leak, if you can safely do so, try to confine the leak or spill by shutting off the source of gas, closing the door, etc. If serious, pull the fire alarm so that evacuation of the building can begin. Call 3344 and give as much information as you can. Contain and neutralize chemical spills with the chemical spill kit, and report gas leaks or suspicious odours to the Security Department (6400).

9. In the laboratory, be sure you and the students: a) refrain from smoking, eating, or drinking; b) wear appropriate footwear (open toed shoes, sandals, bare or stockinged feet present an accident risk); c) when required, wear appropriate protective equipment such as safety glasses and lab coats; d) do not engage in horseplay and pranks: they are potentially dangerous; e) confine clothing and long hair when working with chemicals and lab equipment; f) develop a healthy respect for chemicals, know safety procedures (e.g use of fumehood, gloves, eye protection and how chemicals should be stored), and be alert for unsafe practices and techniques; g) put all broken glass, used cover slips, or other sharp material in a specially marked puncture-proof container for disposal: do not put sharp material in regular garbage containers or sinks; h) do not discard chemicals, radioactive materials, or animal tissues along with regular garbage.

For additional information on safety procedures, or instruction on use of fire extinguishers, first-aid, and treatment of chemical spills, contact the Environmental Health and Safety Office, Room 7, Arts and Administration Building, phone 494-2495.

Laboratory Safety

- ☞ Where is the nearest telephone?
- ☞ Where are the fire/emergency exits and fire alarms, and what is the best evacuation route?
- ☞ Where is the first-aid box?
- ☞ Where are the fire extinguisher, chemical spill kit and emergency shower?
- ☞ In case of **fire**, call 3344 and pull the fire alarm.
- ☞ In case of **fire alarm**, direct students to evacuate the building.
- ☞ In case of **serious injury** or **illness**, call 3344 for assistance.
- ☞ In case of **chemical spill** or **gas leak**, call 3344, contain spill/leak or pull fire alarm.
- ☞ **Students must not** smoke, eat, drink, engage in inappropriate behaviour, or wear inappropriate clothing in the laboratory.

LearningStyles

What is “Learning Style”?

Many university teachers do not realize that students vary dramatically in the way they process and understand information. These differences in learning, called “*learning styles*,” refer to students’ preferences for some kinds of learning activities over others. It is important to stress that we are discussing *how* students learn, and not *what* they learn.

Researchers have examined various types of learning styles and these can be organized into the following categories:

Personality - basic characteristics or predispositions, e.g., extrovert/introvert

Information Processing - how students tend to interact and behave in the classroom, e.g., concrete experience/abstract conceptualizing.

Instructional Preference - which teaching methods are preferred by students, e.g., lecture/small group discussion.

Why is learning style important?

Information about students’ learning style is important to both the teacher and the student for the following reasons:

- Low satisfaction or poor performance in a course or particular activity may be misinterpreted as lack of knowledge or ability, when it is actually difficulty with a particular style of learning.
- Teachers with an understanding of their students' learning styles are better able to adapt their teaching methods appropriately. (See chapter on “Instructional Strategies” in this resource guide.)
- Teachers who introduce a variety of appropriate teaching methods into their classes are more likely to motivate and engage students into learning.
- Students who learn about their own style become better learners, they achieve higher grades and have more positive attitudes about their studies, greater self-confidence, and more skill in applying their knowledge in courses.
- Information about learning styles can help teachers become more sensitive to the differences which students bring to the classroom.
- Information about learning styles can serve as a guide to the design of learning experiences that either match, or mismatch, students’ style, depending on whether the teacher’s purpose is efficiency of students’ learning or developing skills with a style of learning in which the student is weak.
- Information about learning styles can assist in working with poorly prepared or new university students, as the highest drop-out rates occur with those groups.

How can teachers use information about learning style?

Some experts propose that teachers should accommodate learning style differences; others, while not totally absolving teachers of this obligation, shift the primary responsibility to students themselves. Any approach to the accommodation of learning styles should recognize the constraints inherent in teaching at the university level, e.g., large classes, limited contact with students. The most realistic approach should respect the following principles:

1. Students should be empowered through the development of awareness of their own learning styles.
2. Teachers should vary their teaching methods and assignments so that no learning styles are totally disadvantaged across a whole course.

One particularly helpful approach to learning styles is Kolb's "*experiential learning model*." This is described nicely by Anderson & Adams (1992).^{*} This model describes four dimensions in a learning cycle which include a learner's immersion in a *concrete experience*, followed by *observations and reflections*, followed by logically shaped or inductive formation of *abstract concepts and generalizations*, and finally, the empirical testing of the *implications of concepts in new situations*. This, in turn, gives rise to new experiences which starts the learning cycle again at a greater level of complexity.

Table I below lists teaching activities that support different aspects of this learning cycle. Any of these can be further adapted for individual or group, competitive or collaborative, in-class or out-of-class activities.

<u>Concrete Experience</u>	<u>Reflective Observation</u>	<u>Abstract Conceptualization</u>	<u>Active Experimentation</u>
readings	logs	lecture	projects
examples	journals	papers	fieldwork
fieldwork	discussion	projects	homework
laboratories	brainstorming	analogies	laboratory
problem sets	thought questions	model building	case study
trigger films	rhetorical questions		simulations
observations			
simulations/games			
text reading			

Tips for Teaching Assistants

1. **Develop an awareness** of the types of teaching activities or assignments that favor a particular type of learning style. (See table provided in this chapter for examples.)
2. **Vary your teaching activities** and assignments so that certain learning styles are not constantly disadvantaged. (See the chapter on Instructional Strategies in this resource guide.)
3. **Allow students to choose**, if possible, how they demonstrate competence in some assignments, e.g., paper or project, individual or team work.
4. **Provide appropriate support** when you know that an activity or assignment requires behaviours to which one style is unaccustomed. Techniques for doing this could include additional tutorials, group assignments, availability during office hours and peer support.
5. **Determine your students' learning styles** as much as possible. In other words, try to understand not only *what* your students know or don't know, but also *how* they came to know it. Techniques for doing this could include observation, discussion, or asking students to write a mini-paper on "*How I learn best*" or "*My most rewarding learning experience.*" Questions also are available to assess various dimensions of learning styles.
6. **Conduct your own classroom-based "action research"** on the relationship between learning styles and student satisfaction/performance. OI DT staff can assist you in designing and conducting these types of studies.

* Anderson, J.A., & Adams, M. (1992). "Acknowledge the Learning Styles of Diverse Student Populations: Implications for Instructional Design." In L.L.B. Chism, Teaching for Diversity. New Directions in Teaching and Learning. no. 42, San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Instructional Strategies

Teaching Styles

There are many teaching styles. Which one you use will depend upon the size of your class, the content you are teaching, and the learning objectives for the students.

It is important that you feel comfortable when you are teaching – so don't try to adopt a style that makes you feel otherwise. On the other hand, by introducing a variety of appropriate teaching styles into your classes, you will be more likely to engage students and address their different learning styles. Each style contains a different amount of student participation and active involvement; every style requires the same two essential things from the instructor – preparation and enthusiasm.

I. Lectures

Lecturing is the most frequently used teaching technique. Over the years it has developed a bit of a bad reputation because it encourages students to be passive learners who neither contribute to the class through discussion nor engage in critical thinking or problem solving. Many teachers and scholars would disagree with that criticism of the lecture; they argue that if it is used when it is appropriate, the lecture is a very effective technique.

When is it appropriate to lecture?

- ✓ When you want to impart some information or give instructions or details which the students could not find elsewhere.
- ✓ When you want to present and organize the material in a certain way or for a specific purpose.
- ✓ When student involvement in the class is not necessary to achieve learning objectives.

Lecturing Guidelines

When you have decided that lecturing *is* the appropriate technique, here are some guidelines to ensure that you use it successfully:

1. **Plan the lecture** in advance.
2. **Establish objectives** for the class and ensure that your lecture meets them. Present the objectives to your students at the beginning of the lecture.
3. **Organize the material** appropriately so that your students can understand it clearly. Chronological order may be the best way, but consider alternative approaches: Comparison and Contrast; Cause and Effect; Inductive; Deductive.
4. **Make eye contact** with your students; move around if you can; use gestures. Don't just stand there reading notes!
5. **Make sure** that everyone can hear and understand your lecture:
 - Use vocabulary which all the students will understand.
 - Define complex terms.
 - Avoid jargon.
 - Don't talk too fast.
 - Write difficult words or concepts on the board.
 - Use overhead transparencies to outline and clarify your lecture.
6. **Enliven your lecture** with concrete examples, personal anecdotes, or references to today's news.
7. **Capture interest** at the beginning of the lecture with a question, a powerful or popular quotation, or a dramatic or startling statistic.
8. **Build suspense** into your presentation as a way to maintain class attention, within the context of information flow. If at all possible, save the main point until the evidence has accumulated, giving others an opportunity to deduce the conclusion before it is revealed.
9. **Vary teaching methods.** Don't lecture for the entire class time. Twenty or thirty minutes is the maximum attention span you can expect from your students.
 - Break at that point to pose a question to stimulate student interest.
 - Ask your students to turn to their neighbours and solve a problem.
 - Invite questions from the class.
 - Ask your students to write a one-minute paper on "The three advantages of . . ." or "The importance of . . ."
 - Invite the class to make up exam questions on the material you have just covered.
10. **Summarize the main points** at the end of every major section of your lecture.
11. **Summarize the entire lecture**, reinforce and repeat the points you want to emphasize.

Lectures: Some Do's and Don'ts

Make sure that everyone can hear and understand your lecture:

- ☛ Use vocabulary which all the students will understand.
- ☛ Define complex terms.
- ☛ Avoid jargon.
- ☛ Don't talk too fast.
- ☛ Write difficult words or concepts on the board.
- ☛ Use overhead transparencies to outline and clarify your lecture.

Don't lecture for the entire class time. Twenty or thirty minutes is the maximum attention span you can expect from your students.

- ☛ Break at that point to pose a question to stimulate student interest.
- ☛ Ask your students to turn to their neighbours and solve a problem.
- ☛ Invite questions from the class.
- ☛ Ask your students to write a one-minute paper on "The three advantages of . . ." or "The importance of . . ."
- ☛ Invite the class to make up exam questions on the material you have just covered.

Lessons learned from life upon the wicked stage that can be useful in teaching even if you're not quite ready for prime time

- ✓ Set the stage before you begin.
- ✓ Warm up physically and mentally before you enter the room.
- ✓ Make an energizing entrance and open with an engaging activity.
- ✓ Use simple, appropriate props.
- ✓ Move and position yourself to effect.
- ✓ Show emotion with your body, face, and eyes.
- ✓ Maintain eye contact with many students.
- ✓ Compose your presentation as a variety of short scenes.
- ✓ Script your class outline: right column for content and action, left column for materials, timing, and notes.
- ✓ Involve students in class activities.
- ✓ Use simple triggers to elicit response.
- ✓ Exit on your own terms with a stimulating closing scene.

Linc. Fisch

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II. Laboratories and Demonstrations



“ Being well prepared is the best insurance that your laboratory class will run smoothly.”

1. Preparing Yourself for Lab Sessions:

- a) Consult your supervising professor before your first laboratory about the nature of your teaching responsibilities including the details of marking assignments, and the class policy on cheating and plagiarism.
- b) Familiarize yourself with the Laboratory Timetable and be clear about the dates and times of your teaching responsibilities.
- c) Know the emergency and safety procedures. (See section on Classroom and Laboratory Safety.)
- d) Familiarize yourself with any safety protocols that might be given you, or posted in the laboratory, e.g. list of emergency phone numbers, location of safety equipment, and procedure for handling chemicals.
- e) Familiarize yourself with the laboratory rules. All labs have some “do’s and don’ts” such as where to return equipment, how to keep work areas clean, method of disposal of animal waste.
- f) Know where equipment and supplies are stored.
- g) Determine how your teaching performance is to be evaluated and what information you might need to keep for inclusion in your teaching dossier. (See section on the Teaching Dossier.)



2. Preparing Students for Lab Sessions:

- a) Familiarize your students with the Laboratory rules in a firm but friendly manner.
- b) Indicate the location of first-aid kits and safety equipment, such as emergency showers and eye washes.
- c) Explain to the students how their laboratory performance is to be marked and how the function of the laboratory ties in with other parts of the class.
- d) Explain what kind of preparation is expected of students prior to the lab, such as reading the lab manual.
- e) Indicate how attendance at labs will be handled and the policy for make-up labs, if any.
- f) Explain to students what kinds of reports, if any, are expected, including the format, marking scheme, due dates, and penalties for late reports.
- g) Explain to students the class policy on cheating and plagiarism as it relates to the preparation of laboratory reports. Where possible, collaboration with proper acknowledgement should be encouraged in the preparation of written reports but it is important that the problems associated with referencing and acknowledgement (such as Lab reports from previous years) be addressed. (See section on Conflicts and Resolutions.)

3. Planning Specific Labs:

- a) Know the objectives and purpose of the lab so that you are familiar with what students are supposed to learn.
- b) If you are not familiar with lab exercises or procedures, or it has been a long time since you last performed them, complete them so that you are familiar with problem areas.
- c) Complete data analyses and computations so you are able to check student answers.
- d) Decide on an appropriate introduction for the lab, including preparation of handouts, demonstrations, and background material.

4. Conducting Specific Labs:

- a) Get the lab started after a brief introduction covering the purpose of the lab together with the demonstration of procedures or equipment emphasizing any specific safety precautions. Resist the temptation to lecture or talk too long.
- b) If a lab requires a longer introduction, it might be more appropriate to work with students in small groups rather than address the whole class.
- c) Check with students to see how the lab is going. If results are not as expected, encourage students to speculate about reasons for the deviations.
- d) As students leave, make sure they have kept their workplace clean and have put equipment away properly.
- e) At the end of the lab do a routine check: turn off lights; lock equipment cabinets; check air, gas, and steam taps; and then lock up the laboratory.



5. Interaction with Students during Labs:

- a) Circulate among students during the laboratory so that you are able to answer questions or give assistance. Do not spend time chatting to other TAs or professors or spend too long assisting one student.
- b) If students look confused do not wait for them to ask questions. A simple “What stage are you at?” or “How is it going?” is a good way to check how they are doing as well as to give them an opportunity to ask questions. Do not intimidate students by asking too many questions or hovering over them.
- c) If you do not know, or are unsure of, the answer to a student’s question, say so and then try to find the answer by consulting a colleague or textbook. Never try to hide your ignorance by giving a confusing or muddled reply.
- d) Never give students the impression that you think they asked a stupid question. (See section on Question and Answer Techniques.)
- e) Show your students respect and cooperation. Being approachable is the best insurance that students will benefit from their interaction with you. (See section on The Teaching Environment)

III. Discussion Groups

We often use the word “discuss” in everyday language to mean “chat” or “talk about.” A successful classroom group discussion, however, is much more than a chat; it is both planned and focussed. The instructor should keep the discussion groups under control without obviously intruding into the proceedings.

The following general guidelines apply to every kind of discussion group:

1. Establish an objective for the discussion: to solve a problem, to offer alternatives, to set a policy. If you don't set goals, the session could quickly deteriorate.
2. Divide the class into groups of 3-6 students. Remember, the larger the group, the less chance for everyone to speak.
3. Try giving one student in each group the responsibility for timekeeping, recording, and reporting the outcome of the discussion to the rest of the class.
4. Ensure that all the students in each group have the opportunity to participate.
5. Don't allow a handful of students to dominate the discussion.
6. Walk around and listen in on the various groups; provide guidance, ensure their comments are relevant, but keep your participation to a minimum.

Types of group discussions

When you are planning your discussion and have decided what the objectives are, choose the type of discussion that best accomplishes your goals.

Brainstorming Session: This is an excellent way to generate discussion topics and encourage creative thinking. For example, have your students brainstorm on the advantages of Free Trade with Mexico. The quantity of ideas produced is, initially, more important than the quality. Once the groups have reported, work with the students to evaluate the responses; choose the best ones and develop your discussion from there.

Group Discussion: Each group discusses the same question or questions. When they report back to the class, note the differences and similarities in their answers. This format may develop into a debate.

Debate Discussion: This format is ideal for controversial issues where participants can take a 'pro' or 'con' stand. Ensure that the discussion remains objective and that each side is given equal time. A variation on this format which ensures more objectivity is to have participants argue against their personal stance; e.g., those who support the environmentalists argue on behalf of the Lumber Company.

“ . . . [A]n intellectual debate occurs when a thesis is pitted against an antithesis and understanding emerges from the search for synthesis” (Worrell, 1990).

Buzz Groups: Give each group a different question (or questions) to consider. Students should be encouraged to question other groups when they report back. This is a good way to show students that they can learn from each other.

IV. Other Instructional Strategies

Lectures, labs and demonstrations, and discussion groups are probably the three main instructional techniques.

Here are some things to try when you want yet a different approach - either for a short change of pace within a lecture or as an alternative for an entire class.

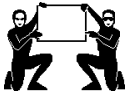


Pyramids. Students work alone, then in pairs, in fours, and in larger groups. The benefits of this method include encouraging interaction among students, especially students who are reluctant to speak out in class; the validation of students' ideas because they see that others in class have the same thoughts - although they may have reached them in different ways; the increased ability to manage difficult tasks. Each stage of the pyramid process should involve a slightly more complex task than its predecessor. This will ensure that students are building on the achievements of the previous stage (Northedge, 1975).



Drama. One way to emphasize the importance of crucial ideas is to dramatize them and so make them stand out from the rest of the material. Here are two ideas to get you started:

- ✦ In a poetry lecture on metre, an instructor beats a drum in rhythm with the metre of the poem.
- ✦ During a class on legal evidence, several people rush into the classroom, cause a disturbance, then leave. The students are surprised. However, when they are asked by their instructor to give evidence about the event which they have just witnessed, they realize that the teacher had planned the disturbance to illustrate the problems associated with obtaining evidence from witnesses (Gibbs et al, 1984).



Pairs Problem-Solving. The students work in pairs to solve a problem assigned to the class. One partner reads the problem and thinks aloud while the other listens – constantly checking for accuracy. The listener works alongside the problem-solver, understanding each step and asking for clarification where necessary. If the problem-solver makes a mistake, the listener points it out but does not correct it. The constant vocalization in this method is important because it shows students that there are many valid ways to reach the solution.



Ask students to submit questions. Ask your students to submit possible exam or essay questions, or request that they submit two or three questions about the course that they want you to answer in class. Either way you will get insight into what they are understanding from the class. If a number of students are asking questions about a particular point you thought you had covered well, maybe it's time for a review of that material. Respond to "typical" questions in class, perhaps writing them on the board and encouraging students to respond and so validating the importance of questions as a way to learn. One professor at the University of California at Irvine hands out 3 x 5 cards to his students and asks them to submit open-ended questions on the cards for credit. Because the cards are small, the questions are brief, and reading them takes very little time; however, the benefits are far-reaching. This technique encourages discussion, improves rapport, and shows students that it is perfectly acceptable to ask questions (Gallow, 1991).



Role Playing. This method is very useful when you want your students to gain greater insight into a person or situation. You do have to make sure that the "players" take their roles seriously and have defined the characteristics of their roles. The rest of the class, too, has to have clear responsibilities for observing and commenting upon the action.

Role playing can be used in classes to help clarify such things as patient-caregiver roles; social worker-client interaction. Or try assigning your students the roles of different atoms then instruct them to link their arms to construct a DNA molecule (Gibbs et al, 1984).



Assume a persona. Become a character in your own presentation. Assume the role of Dr. Freud for your class on the id; become a visitor from the planet "X" who wonders why the earth looks so different from space these days; don a sou'wester and be a fisherman at the turn of the century who explains why the fish stocks around the Maritimes will last forever. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

There are many more alternative strategies you can use in class. Visit the Office of Instructional Development and Technology to take a look at some of the resources we have available.

V. Cooperative Learning

Teachers use small groups frequently—to generate ideas for classroom discussion, for a change of pace from the lecture, or to encourage students to speak out in class. This occasional use of small groups, however, differs from cooperative learning in a number of significant ways. “

What is Cooperative Learning?

Cooperative learning is a strategy which involves students in established, sustained learning groups or teams. The group work is an integral part of, not an adjunct to, the achievement of the learning goals of the class. Cooperative learning fosters individual accountability in a context of group interdependence in which students discover information and teach that material to their group and, perhaps, to the class as a whole. The teacher’s role changes as Alison King (1993) says “from sage on the stage to guide on the side.” Although they learn in groups, the students are evaluated individually on the learning they have achieved.

Cooperative Learning is Structured and focused to make sure that learning is taking place. The teacher chooses the groups to reflect a diversity of viewpoints, abilities, gender, race, and other characteristics. The groups contain fewer than six students - most likely four. Four students can work in pairs (each student having 3 potential partners) or together. (Millis, 1993).

Cooperative Learning Creates a Classroom Community involving students in a kind of interdependence whereby all are working towards a common goal, often with group members responsible for different aspects of the content and teaching it to other members of the group. In other words, the group’s work is not complete until all its members have mastered the content.

Cooperative Learning is a Sustained Approach, lasting longer than a 15 - 20 minute small-group discussion. An entire course or module may be taught using the cooperative learning method. Because they are in the same group for a longer time, students experience greater continuity than in occasional small-group situations.

Cooperative Learning Requires and Enhances Students’ Communication Skills, with the success of the group depending upon the interaction of its members.. Before cooperative learning can begin, students will learn some of the skills required for successful group interaction:

- paraphrasing other’s words to ensure and verify comprehension;
- giving and receiving feedback;
- allowing everyone to contribute ideas; and
- refraining from taking over the group or allowing another to do so.

Cooperative Learning Balances Interdependence with Individual Accountability Instructions to the students are specific: each group and each student within that group has a task to perform. In other words, each student must demonstrate his or her mastery of the subject and receive an individual grade.

Cooperative Learning Responds to Classroom Diversity and has a positive impact on students whose voices may otherwise go unheard in the classroom. These students include women, minorities, and those who for other reasons may be shy to speak in front of the entire class. Those whose learning style preference is cooperative and collaborative rather than competitive are also served well by this classroom technique.

The following section describes three common cooperative learning structures.

Think-Pair-Share

Look at the next example in the book and think about the advantages and disadvantages of the solutions which Clarkson proposes. Think about their economic feasibility. Write down your ideas and then compare them with one of the other students in your usual group of four. Make sure you justify the reasons for your answers especially if there is any disagreement with your partner. Once you are satisfied that you understand your partner's choices,—you don't have to agree with them—I'll ask you to share your answers with the rest of the class so that we can come up with the main advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solutions.

Students may use Think - Pair - Share to reach a consensus; however, this versatile cooperative learning structure can be used in other ways:

- **pairs problem solving:** two students work together to solve a math problem, for example;
- **thinking aloud pairs problem solving:** a variation where one student in the pair listens to the other as s/he talks through the solution to the problem; and
- **peer teaching:** students teach each other the material.

Think- Pair - Square

Similar to the **Think- Pair- Share** structure, **Think- Pair - Square** asks students, once they have completed their assigned pair task, to join with another pair to compare their conclusions. The instructions to the newly formed “squares” may be to reach a consensus within their groups or to explain their conclusions to the other pair who has joined them.

Jigsaw

In groups of four, students are assigned a “chunk” of material or a multi-faceted problem. Each member of the group then selects or is assigned a particular aspect of the problem on which to focus.

Next, students move into expert groups, again four students, which consist of students who are responsible for mastering the same material. Students may be given the necessary material at this point or may have been responsible for learning it beforehand. In these expert groups, the students ensure that they all understand their portion of the material and also know how they will teach it to their original group of four.



Students then regroup into their original foursomes, and each student teaches his or her material to the others. Individual mastery of the entire topic can be evaluated through quizzes.

This technique mirrors clearly the characteristics of cooperative learning - structured groupings, clear purpose and instructions, the balance of group interdependence with individual responsibility, and the development of communication skills.

Adapted from Crowley, M. and Dunn, K (1993). **Cooperative Learning at Dalhousie**, Workshop Materials.

References

Crowley, Mary and Dunn, Ken (1993). **Cooperative Learning at Dalhousie**, a workshop presented at Dalhousie University.

King, Alison (1993), **From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side**, *College Teaching*, 41 (1).

Millis, Barbara (1993), **Cooperative Learning**, a workshop presented at Dalhousie University.

These and many other sources may be consulted at or borrowed from the Office of Instructional Development and Technology.

VI. Helping Students to Think

Many students are comfortable as passive, receptive learners. They want “just the facts,” and more precisely just *those* facts which they require to pass the exam. However, simply stuffing students’ heads with facts may not be the most efficient use of class time – students will likely forget many of the facts, and you won’t be able to cover *all* the information anyway. With this in mind, would it not be advisable to spend some class time encouraging your students to obtain and practise the thinking skills they need to uncover and discover the rest of the facts? In other words, part of your role as a Teaching Assistant is to help your students think for themselves.

Most disciplines have key concepts and ideas which are fundamental (McPeck, 1981); they are the basic foundations of the discipline, and the remaining knowledge and understanding derives from them. Students must learn these concepts. It is equally important, too, that your students learn more than that.

Students should learn how the fundamental concepts in your discipline were established. Show your students the process by which these key concepts were reached. What questions were asked? What research was done? Which hypotheses were discarded and why? Why were these concepts accepted and why are they so fundamental to the discipline?

Students should learn the types of thinking and enquiry which are valued in your discipline. Each discipline has its own types of valued thinking and enquiry; help your students learn these (McPeck, 1981). Students must learn not only *what* to think in Biology, Calculus, or History, but also *how to think* like a Biologist, Mathematician, or Historian so that they can continue to engage in the enquiry of the discipline and thus reach a greater understanding of the material.

Students should learn that obtaining a correct answer is not the only goal. Of course, answering a question correctly is very important, but students should learn how to transfer their understanding of a familiar problem, situation, or activity to a new one. In order to do this, students must be able to identify the process of reaching solutions in one instance, recognize the similarities between the familiar problem and the new one, and adapt the process to solving the new problem (Pestel, 1988).

The thinking skills which are prized in the disciplines are also valued in society in general: investigation, interpretation, evaluation, anticipation, extrapolation, problem solving, decision making, creative thinking. In your classes you should encourage your students to obtain and practise these skills.

Vary your teaching methods. The most practical way to foster thinking skills in your classes is to use a variety of teaching approaches to ensure that your students are more than passive, receptive learners, but instead are independent thinkers. Look at the section on Other Instructional Strategies in this Resource Guide and notice how classroom discussion, group work, and classroom debates will help foster independent thought.

Ask lots of open-ended questions. Open-ended, or higher order questions, cannot be answered with a simple yes, no, number, or date. They require a reasoned response. *When did Thomas More write his biography of Richard the Third?* is a closed question. *How reliable is More's biography of Richard?* is an open question. Questioning your students in this way will achieve two important goals. First, you will model the types of questions and the forms of enquiry which are important in your discipline. Second, you will encourage your students to engage in independent thinking and to "uncover" the process of that thought by justifying their own answers or evaluating the plausibility of others.

Ask your students to assess others' thinking. For example, alert students to the assumptions, both implicit and explicit, in their own and others' thinking and writing. Have them identify these assumptions. Or ask them to evaluate the reliability of a textbook, article, or other source by looking for possible biases in the work and considering, for example, how, where, when, and by whom the information was gathered. Show students the types of flawed reasoning which weaken arguments: inferences based on unsound, or inadequate, observation; the assumption that an event which precedes another is its cause; oversimplification of complex relationships.

Reward students' independent thought. If you want to impress upon students that independent thinking is important, then you must create a classroom environment where reasoned and informed disagreement with the instructor is encouraged and not penalized. Furthermore, look for, comment upon, and reward independent thought. Students will quickly see through a syllabus which extols thinking skills but rewards rote memorization.

Helping Students Think

Vary your teaching methods.

Ask lots of open-ended questions.

Ask your students to assess others' thinking.

Reward students' independent thought.

Learning Through Writing



Writing Workshop

The Writing Workshop, located on the third floor of the Killam Library (494-3379), is a Student Service unit. It is a resource centre offering group instruction and individualized tutorial service for Dalhousie students to instruct them in writing papers in meaningful, clear, concise, conventional prose.

Group Instruction: The instructor guides the students through the process of writing by suggesting strategies for generating ideas, recognizing and forming patterns of thought, composing and revising thought to create meaning – all within the contexts of specific areas of academic study. The instructor encourages students to focus on composing unified content, coherent organization, effective style, and correct, appropriate language and format.

Individual Tutorials: The tutor discusses with the student the development, organization, and expression of ideas for a particular paper. The main objective is to help students to recognize, understand, and conform to acceptable academic standards of language usage.

Besides being an ideal place to work at improving the quality of your written work, the Writing Workshop is, as Louise Young, Senior Instructor, puts it, “one of the most consciously unintimidating places on campus.” Students fearful about their ability to write clearly and persuasively can be sure that they will receive supportive guidance at the Writing Workshop.

Writing as a Tool for Learning

Connie Borders Strode, University of Arkansas

How can you help your students to improve their writing? Here are several ways to “set the scene” for writing in your classes.

- ✓ Specify your writing requirements in the course outline. Explain the benefits of the writing requirement in terms of increasing knowledge and facilitating learning.
- ✓ Reveal yourself as a writer to your students; let them read (and evaluate) something you’ve written. Tell them how long it took to write it.
- ✓ Write in front of your students to let them see the process in action.

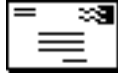
Source: Strode, Connie Borders. (1991). “Writing as a Tool for Learning,” Issues and Inquiry in College Learning and Teaching. 15(2), 46-59.

The Office of Instructional Development and Technology has published a compendium of writing assignments and techniques for teaching writing. ***Learning through Writing*** contains dozens of ideas that have worked in many disciplines. Here is an example from that publication.

Letter Assignments

Ken Dunn and Richard Nowakowski, Department of Mathematics, Statistics & Computing Science, Dalhousie University

Letter to a Sick Friend



We ask students to write a one- or two-page letter to a sick classmate explaining what s/he missed in class that day. This assignment gives students an opportunity to think about the topic discussed in the lecture and to see if they have really understood it.

Letter to a History Major



About half way through the first term, when students are well into Differential Calculus, we ask them to write to a friend who is a History major but is contemplating switching to Science. The students are asked to explain to their friend what Calculus is all about and why s/he should (or should not) consider studying it. While the usual weekly questions force students to become immersed in specific topics, this assignment allows them to stand back and look at the subject as a whole.

Learning Through Writing is available on campus from the OI DT for \$5.00 per copy (\$6.00 external mail), or copies are available on loan.

How can you provide your students with useful feedback about their writing?
The following guidelines should help you.

Responding to Student Writers – Some Guidelines

Barbara Walvoord, Writing Across the Curriculum Centre, University of Cincinnati

The basic relationship is not between the teacher and the errors in the paper, but between the teacher and the learner. The following guidelines will help teachers to respond to student writing appropriately, giving only the level of help which is needed.

A teacher's response should:

- ∕ Be clear to the student
- ∕ Be friendly in tone
- ∕ Be positive as well as negative
- ∕ Be respectful of the student's culture, dialect, ideas
- ∕ Help set priorities for the student
- ∕ Suggest specific actions. If you offer specific remedies, give more than one option to allow the writer maximum control.
- ∕ Be appropriate to the following:
 - Announced criteria
 - Announced audience and purpose
 - The stage of the writing process
 - The student's stage of development as a writer
 - The student's ability to use the advice.

Evaluation and Grading

Testing

Every effort must be made to prepare students for examinations. This process starts by informing students at the beginning of the class of the testing procedure, when tests will be given, and the criteria upon which they will be evaluated.

Ideally, tests are given:

1. To reveal to students their areas of strength.
2. To reveal to the instructor the students' progress.
3. To provide motivation for students.
4. To help instructors evaluate their teaching.
5. To provide a basis upon which grades are determined.
6. To evaluate students in terms of their professional and career goals.

Choosing a Testing Method

Test Type

Advantages

Disadvantages

Essay

- In-depth coverage of material
- Quick and simple to prepare
- Allow maximum utilization of student capabilities in responding
- Easily changed from class to class

- Restrictive in breadth of subject matter
- Time consuming for students
- Weigh specific part of course too heavily
- Burden of spelling, vocabulary, and grammar upon student
- Tendency to lean toward subjectivity in evaluation
- Difficult to grade

Choosing a Testing Method

<i>Test Type</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
Multiple Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cover a broad range of content in a short period of time - Measure ability to recognize responses rather than recall facts - More valid than true/false - Students can be tested for analysis and synthesis - Easy to grade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tendency to construct responses for knowledge only - Questions time consuming and difficult to develop - Provide opportunity for guessing - Rely primarily upon recall and memory
Recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple to grade and construct - Address numerous areas in a broad field of content - Require specific recall rather than a guess 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time consuming to students if they have a mental block - Subjectivity in grading similar responses - Nearly impossible to measure analysis and synthesis of material
True/False	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to ask large number of diverse questions - Stimulate students and give ability students a chance - Simple to develop - Valid if only two possible answers - Non-threatening and familiar to students - Easy to score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourages guessing - Difficult to construct brief, complete statements - Grading weight equal for minor as well as significant points - Not appropriate for elaboration and discussion - Test the lowest level of knowledge - Typically low in validity and reliability

Grading

Most TAs have some responsibility for grading student performance, assigning grades on quizzes, essays, mid-terms, lab reports, or final exams. It is important that each TA develop a sense of academic standards, explain them at the beginning of the course, and apply them consistently throughout the term. However, as TAs know from their experience as students, grading practices vary considerably from one instructor to the next. If in doubt, standards should be discussed with the course supervisor to determine appropriate guidelines.

Basic Rules:

- 1. Communicate criteria.** Advise students of the grading criteria at the first or second class session.
- 2. Include criteria other than test scores.** If it is important for students to communicate or express ideas, then class participation should be a part of the grading criteria. If a project or laboratory demonstration is part of the course, their values, as part of the grade for the course, should be made known.
- 3. Avoid irrelevant factors.** Including attendance and tardiness in the grading criteria may be unwise. Many experienced teachers feel that if students possess the knowledge and show they have reached the objectives of the course, they should be evaluated accordingly.
- 4. Weight grading criteria carefully.** Weight criteria according to their importance in fulfilling the objectives of the course.
- 5. Grade students on their own achievements, not those of other students.** Grading should be based upon criteria of the course and not upon other students' scores. Grading on a curve distributes all students on a curve, determining that a certain percentage of students will receive A's, B's, C's and so on. This system places students in competition with each other. Criterion-based grading evaluates each student independent of other students. So, if all students reach the objectives of the course, they all should receive passing grades.



Sample Evaluation Chart

<u>Grade Factors</u>	<u>Percent of Final Grade</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Points Received</u>
Tests	60	90	_____
Paper	20	30	_____
Project	10	15	_____
Class Participation	10	15	_____
Totals	100	150	_____

Adapted from:

Grieve, Donald. (1984). A Handbook for Adjunct/Part-Time Faculty and Teachers of Adults. Cleveland, OH: INFO-TEC.

Centre for the Support of Teaching. (1989). Teaching and Learning at York: A Guide for Teaching Assistants and Course Directors. Toronto, ON: York University.

Evaluating Your Teaching

Summative Evaluation

When you think of evaluation of teaching, you probably think of end-of-term or year-end questionnaires which are distributed to all the students in the class. You have likely completed a number of these for your own professors. The main purpose of such a *summative* rating of instruction is to provide information on your performance as a teacher. This type of evaluation is useful for both you and your supervisor to examine. It gives an overview of the students' impression of the entire course, their learning, and your teaching. The feedback you get from these questionnaires may help you prepare for the next class you teach. However, you do have to wait until the end of the course, and the questionnaires usually ask very general questions - in other words, they are not tailored to specific classes. What do you do if you want feedback on your teaching *now* so that you can continue to do what works and modify what doesn't?

Formative Evaluation

Mid-term *formative* evaluation is used for teaching improvement. It produces information which instructors can use for teaching improvement *during* a course. The instructor is in control of how and when the evaluation occurs, and the method of eliciting feedback can be crafted to match the needs of the course.

The methods of formative evaluation include:

- ∞ Information from Yourself: evaluating your own teaching to help you become aware of what is going on in class (this may include videotaping your class);
- ∞ Information from Students: distributing short questionnaires to your students two or three times during the course;
- ∞ Information from your Supervisor.

The benefits of formative evaluation are that you can modify your teaching *at once*, long before the end-of-year evaluation forms are completed by your students.

∞ Information from Yourself - evaluating your own teaching

How do you teach? How do you begin and end class? How do you emphasize main points? When do you change the volume or rate of your speech? How do you encourage participation?

Try to discover the answers to these important questions by keeping track of your teaching for a few days. This is the first step to self-awareness of your teaching (Weimer, Parrett, and Kerns, 1988).

One approach to reflection on your teaching (Shears, 1982) suggests that instructors complete a checklist to add a focus and a framework to their deliberations. This checklist can be completed after each class session.

Questions might include “How well did I . . . ?”

- capture students’ attention
- summarize the main points of the class
- keep the material relevant
- build up student confidence
- handle student questions and responses

Responses may be entered on a five-point scale from “very well” to “not applicable.”

You can build on this exercise by following it with student questionnaires or feedback from a colleague.

∞ Information from Students

As an instructor, you are constantly evaluating students and giving them feedback on their work. However, there is a real advantage to receiving regular feedback *from* your students about your teaching. One of the simplest ways to do this is, of course, is to have a Suggestion Box where students can drop their ideas. You can also collect valuable information from your students by compiling and distributing short forms of three to five questions which focus on aspects of your teaching you want to learn more about — perhaps issues you identified when you were trying to answer questions about your own teaching.

Patricia Cross and Thomas Angelo (1988) have developed a technique called the **Teacher-Designed Evaluation Mini-Form** which allows instructors to ask students focussed questions about the course at regular intervals.

- Compile three to five questions which relate to general instructional objectives or a specific issue.
- Develop an appropriate answer format: scale, multiple choice, or short fill-ins.
- Allow the students 10 - 15 minutes at the end of class to complete the questionnaire.
- Leave the room and ask a student or colleague to collect and deliver the completed forms to you.

Other Classroom Assessment Techniques

To further assess your impact on students' learning, try one of the following Classroom Assessment Techniques. They are quick and easy, and can give valuable information regarding what students are getting out of a class.

The One-Minute Paper

Please answer each question in 1 or 2 sentences:

1. What was the most useful/meaningful thing you learned during this session?
2. What question(s) remain uppermost in your mind as we end this session?

Source: K. Patricia Cross and Thomas A. Angelo. (1988). Classroom Assessment Techniques. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

The “Muddiest” Point

What was the “muddiest” point in this session? (In other words, what was least clear to you?)

Source: “The ‘Muddiest Point in the Lecture’ as a Feedback Device,” (1989). On Teaching and Learning: The Journal of the Harvard-Danforth Center, 3.

✍ Information from your Supervisor

You should attempt to obtain regular feedback from your supervisor on how you are teaching. You may also want to ask your supervisor to corroborate the evaluations by others — yourself, your students, or your colleagues — by observing your teaching or by discussing others' evaluations with you. Your supervisor is the best source of feedback concerning the course content.

Videotaping your class

You may also have your class videotaped and discover the answers to the question “How do I teach?” However, many teachers find this process extremely unnerving! If you have your class taped, make sure that you have a clear idea of the aspects of your teaching on which you wish to focus. Make a checklist similar to the one you would make if a colleague were observing your class. In fact, many instructors find it useful to invite a colleague to view the tape with them. Ask your colleague to follow your checklist and compare notes afterwards.

Remember that all the efforts you make to improve your teaching through seeking feedback are worthy of inclusion in your Teaching Dossier.

Peer Cooperation

Peer Cooperation for teaching improvement is a process whereby individuals seek to increase their teaching effectiveness through the support and advice of colleagues. While the enhancement of one's teaching is an on-going, essentially personal affair, there may be times when TAs feel that they need a fresh perspective on their teaching and that peer help and advice may assist them in their quest for ways to revitalize their teaching. The Office of Instructional Development and Technology has recently initiated a Peer Cooperation programme to assist in this structured reflection on university teaching in 1992. This group will be the nucleus of a much larger and more active Peer Cooperation program during the 1994-95 academic year.

The dozen faculty members of the Peer Cooperation group were all volunteers who sought to gain some experience with the peer cooperation process both by having their teaching observed and by being an observer of teaching. The Peer Cooperation process is undertaken on a voluntary basis by individuals and the academic administration is neither involved in the observation plan nor is it a party to the results.

The Typical Peer Cooperation Process

The person who is being observed should be as comfortable as possible, initiating the process and choosing the aspects of teaching to be observed. The process takes place around the middle of the term. This is the typical peer cooperation process:

☛ You and the observer, probably another TA, meet to discuss the aspects of your teaching that are to be observed. The observer need not be from the same faculty.

You may ask the observer to comment on items which are new additions to the class, things you are fairly confident about, or items about which you would like reassurance or suggestions. The checklist you are most likely to use is the "Made-to-Order Form for Instructional Observation (Peer Version)" (Weimer, Parrett & Kerns, 1988).

This form contains specific items for observation assembled under seven categories: Organization, Presentation, Rapport, Credibility and Control, Content, Interaction, and Active Learning.

☛ In choosing the items that you want your colleague to observe, remember to be realistic about the number, given the length of the class.

Explain to your colleague why you want these items observed, and what precisely you want to find out about them.

Sample List of Observation Items

In this example, the TA wants information from a colleague about four areas of teaching: organization, rapport, and active learning. The items under each heading represent teaching behaviours which demonstrate effectiveness in that area. The colleague will check off those things the TA does well.

The following list is based on an evaluation form devised by Weimer, Parrett, and Kerns (1988).

Organization

- clearly states the goals and objectives of the class period
- does not digress often from the main topic
- appears well prepared for class

Presentation

- responds to changes in student attentiveness
- communicates a sense of enthusiasm for the content
- selects teaching methods appropriate for the content

Rapport

- solicits student feedback
- requires student thought and participation
- listens carefully to student comments and questions

Active Learning

- clearly explains directions and procedures
- allows sufficient time for completion
- schedules time for discussion of results

☞ Once the items to be observed are agreed upon, you and the observer will generally next meet in class. You will introduce the observer, explain his or her presence, and then go on to teach the class as usual. During the class, your observer will rate your performance on these items on a scale:

needs improvement					does well

☞ After class the observer meets with a group of five or six randomly selected students to get their feedback on the course.

☞ The observer then writes a report and sends it to you. The report, of course, is confidential. It makes no mention of your name or the specific course observed.

The Teaching Dossier

The teaching dossier is a comprehensive record of teaching activities and accomplishments drawn up by the university teacher.

Now more than ever, institutions and individual faculty members are being asked to provide evidence of the quality of teaching and learning which occurs on campus. President Howard Clark, in an address to the Dalhousie community, stated that in future he "would be prepared to recommend promotion and/or tenure . . . for those cases in which there was clearly documented evidence of teaching ability." At Dalhousie University there is a growing interest in the teaching dossier as a method to record the contribution of faculty members to the enhancement of the pedagogical process through their teaching activities.

While you, as a graduate or senior undergraduate student, are just beginning your teaching, and your experiences in this area may be few, now is the time to begin recording your teaching accomplishments. Compiling a dossier may help you obtain a position in the future. Keeping documentation of outstanding work, letters of praise, and positive student evaluations of your teaching will help to build a comprehensive dossier, and perhaps give you some encouragement at times when it seems that teaching is not such a great way to make a living.

The Step-by-Step Creation of a Teaching Dossier

Though the compilation of documentation is an on-going activity, sooner or later you are faced with the preparation of an up-to-date dossier for presentation and review. This material, adapted from a Guide published by the Canadian Association of University Teachers,* simplifies the task by proposing a step-by-step approach to creating the teaching dossier.

Step 1. Clarify teaching responsibilities. There often exists an informal understanding concerning teaching responsibilities and criteria for judging teaching success. The first step in preparing the teaching dossier is to summarize these understandings in a short paragraph or two. Points covered might include specific duties, how students are to be evaluated, and the nature of progress expected by students. Where there is no informal understanding, the consequence can be arbitrary and shifting evaluation criteria; in such cases, you should include a brief statement of your own assumptions concerning responsibilities and obligations.

Step 2. Describe your approach to teaching. Keeping in mind the summary of teaching responsibilities outlined in Step 1, prepare a brief statement (1 - 2 pages) of your teaching goals and philosophy. This statement provides an explanatory framework for the information on your teaching accomplishments which follows. It gives you a chance to explain your approach to teaching and how this relates to your work with students.

Step 3. Select items for the teaching dossier. The list of possible items for a teaching dossier is examined. Paying particular attention to the statement in Step 1, the individual selects those items which are most applicable to his or her assigned teaching responsibilities. Item choice should also accommodate the individual's personal preferences and teaching style.

Step 4. Prepare statements on each item. Prepare a statement about activities, initiatives, and accomplishments in each area, referring to back-up documentation when appropriate.

Step 5. Order the items. The statements are arranged in the order which best fits their intended use. For example, if you are trying to demonstrate improvement in teaching, entries accenting improvements would be emphasized.

Step 6. Compile back-up evidence. You should keep copies of all printed items referred to in the dossier. These would include such things as examination papers, original replies to course evaluation questionnaires or official summaries of summative evaluations, letters from professors with whom you cooperate and students you teach, and samples of student work. These materials are not part of the dossier, but are back-up information in case original documentation is required.

Step 7. Incorporate dossier into curriculum vitae. Insert the completed dossier into the cv under the heading "Teaching" or "Instruction."

Step 8. Append exemplary materials. The Teaching Dossier may be accompanied by material which constitutes evidence supporting claims: an exemplary course outline, a reading list, an examination keyed to objectives, a numerical summary of student course evaluations or unsolicited letters of praise from students. This step is likely to be especially important when you are applying for a position.

Additional information on the teaching dossier and advice on how to compile one may be obtained from the Office of Instructional Development and Technology in the Killam Library, phone 494-1622. The OI DT has also produced **Recording Teaching Accomplishment: A Dalhousie Guide to the Teaching Dossier**, which provides helpful hints and examples of actual teaching dossiers compiled by full-time members of faculty. The *Guide* is available for purchase (\$5.00) or on loan.

* Shore, Bruce, Stephen Foster, Christopher Knapper, Gilles Nadeau, Neill Neill, Victor Sim, and with the help of faculty members of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Services, McGill University. (1986). The Teaching Dossier: A Guide to its Preparation and Use. Ottawa, ON: The Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Conflicts and Resolutions

It is almost inevitable that, from time to time, conflicts in the classroom will arise which require some response from you as a Teaching Assistant. Some of the potential sources of problems are outlined below, with suggestions for dealing with them. Beyond these particular cases, however, you should remember these general guidelines for handling difficult situations:

1. If possible, discuss the problem with your supervising professor, who not only bears ultimate responsibility for the class, but has more experience dealing with conflicts of this type.
2. Be sensitive to the different ways in which students are experiencing the class, and to how they are approaching activities and assignments. By “keeping your ear to the ground,” you can identify any potential difficulties and take steps to find early solutions.
3. Remember that teachers exercise considerable power over students; even casual comments that might be fine between friends can take on a threatening air when said by a teacher to a student.
4. Students should be treated at all times with respect, and with a recognition of their rights as mature, autonomous individuals.

Class Attendance

Students are given greater freedom at university and may initially need help making the adjustment. There is a direct correlation between attendance and grades, but students may not realize this. Three factors have the greatest impact on attendance:

Quality of classes. Classes that are well taught, and are clearly useful, are usually well attended.

Frequent feedback. This encourages students to attend and helps them improve their work. Young people don't have enough experience to predict the consequences of their actions. Many believe they can skip classes and still catch up later. You can encourage regular attendance by giving small assignments. These assignments, worth only a few marks each, will encourage students to attend classes and help them improve their work. They will also give early warning of problems.

Reduced anonymity. It is easy to skip classes at a large university like Dalhousie. If you make casual comments when a student has been absent, like, “Sorry you couldn't come last week.” or “Do you need help with the work you missed?” you reduce the student's sense of anonymity and increase her sense of responsibility. However, irritated or sarcastic comments will accomplish nothing.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating and plagiarism are important issues at the University and must be kept at a minimum. However, they are not easy to identify or deal with. Even when you are sure you have evidence of cheating, you may be wrong. Academic dishonesty has only occurred if there was an *intention* to be dishonest. What appears to be dishonesty may simply be caused by misunderstanding or inexperience. For example, it may appear that a first year student is guilty of plagiarism, when in fact, she is simply too inexperienced and inflexible with language, or she may not understand what plagiarism is and why it must be avoided. Similarly, it may seem that one student has copied the lab report of another student, when in fact, they simply worked together while writing the reports, learned from each other, and made no particular attempt to express the same idea in different words. We should deal with academic dishonesty as teachers, rather than as police. We can prevent cheating by improving our teaching methods rather than by becoming better police officers.

There are different kinds and levels of academic dishonesty. They can be categorized into roughly four groups:

1. Plagiarism - defined in the Dalhousie calendar as: “the presentation by an author of the work of another author, in such a way as to give one’s readers reason to think that the other author’s work is one’s own”;
2. Copying lab reports or essays written by other students;
3. Cheating on tests or exams; or
4. Submitting the same essay for a grade in two classes, without the expressed permission of both instructors.

1. Plagiarism. As teachers, our goal is to understand the students’ perspective so we can help them improve their work (to educate, not punish), and to provide surroundings that promote learning, rather than suspicion. Many come to university knowing nothing about plagiarism. Many students are not committing the crime of plagiarism, because they have no real intention to mislead. Unless we explain *in advance* why copying is unacceptable, we cannot with good conscience punish them. Therefore we should:

- **Educate.** Explain how to use the ideas of others correctly. It is not sufficient to circulate a threatening statement about plagiarism at the beginning of the year.

- **Set a good example.** Be sure you are not using the words and ideas of others when teaching. There should be no double standards.

- **Recognize and acknowledge the difficulties of avoiding plagiarism in disciplines like science.** It is rarely possible to come up with valid, acceptable original ideas in scientific subjects. In addition, the languages of science are so specific that wording cannot be changed easily. There are few sources of valid information in science, and it is hard to be original when talking about work done by others.

- **Recognize that students have not yet fully developed their abilities to use language.** Students will have trouble rewording text and expressing it as well as the source. A student who puts all ideas into his own words is likely to get a lower mark than one who copies but is not caught. When marking assignments try to reward original effort on the part of the student, even if ideas are awkwardly expressed.

- **Give feedback, in a non-threatening way, before major problems arise.** When you see a few sentences that have been copied while marking, make a casual comment such as, “Be sure you always use your own words,” or “This sounds like a quotation, be sure to use quotation marks.” Equally, comment on the efforts made, “Good effort at reworking these ideas.” If you can recognize efforts at originality, and catch small problems, plagiarism will not be an issue.

2. Copying lab reports or essays written by other students. If you think one student has copied the assignment of another, speak to both of them privately. Do not make accusations. Show them your evidence and ask for an explanation. If there is any chance that the explanation is valid, accept it. If the case is serious, pass it along to the professor. This kind of cheating is more likely to occur if students believe their teacher does not read their work carefully. Mark carefully and make comments and explanations where appropriate. Similarly there will be less copying if assignments are changed each year.

3. Cheating on tests or exams. If you are faced with undeniable cheating, suit your punishment to the seriousness of the crime. It is usually appropriate to bring the matter to the professor’s attention. Advise the student about the Ombud’s Office (4th floor, Student Union Building). If you are being fair, the Ombud will confirm this. If you make a mistake, admit it.

4. Submitting the same essay for different classes. Whether or not this is defined as academic dishonesty really depends upon the policies of individual professors. While in most cases students are expected to do original work for each class, they may receive permission to undertake research, writing, or projects which they submit for more than one class with the *expressed knowledge and consent of all instructors*. You should make it clear to students that, without such consent, work done for another class is not acceptable.

Problem Students

When you encounter students with personal or academic problems, remember you are a teacher, not a psychiatrist. Be friendly and flexible but do not allow yourself to be drawn in as a counsellor. Refer students to university services like the writing workshops, and academic and personal counsellors. (See section on General Interactions.) When students disrupt your classes talk to them privately after class. Remember your power over the students and be gentle in your approach.

Dealing With Grade Disputes

For students, grades are equivalent to pay cheques. They have a right, not only to be graded fairly, but also to know why they have been given a certain grade. You must be willing to explain exactly why you gave the grade you did. Occasionally you will make a mistake, every teacher does. Acknowledge it gracefully and correct it. However, if you are sure you marked fairly, don't allow any student to push you into changing his mark.

Problems with Professors

Most problems with professors can be settled directly by discussion, but a few cannot. Always approach the professor first; if you cannot come to agreement and must go to another authority, inform the professor of your intentions.

General Interactions: Being a Friendly Listener

Many undergraduate students find various aspects of university life stressful; and some experience circumstances or personal difficulties that lead to noticeable distress. Perhaps because they see the TA as familiar and approachable, some students will express their concerns to you.

TAs can help by simply listening in a caring and attentive manner, letting them know you understand what it is like for them, and perhaps helping them figure out what they will decide to do. Focus on listening and providing information, but let them make their own decisions.

Advising and Counselling

1. When to Refer

When brief, friendly interactions are insufficient, or you think a student could benefit from help which you or the course professor cannot provide, encourage the student to contact the appropriate University service.

2. Become Informed about What is Available

It will be useful to know of:

- the academic advising provided at the Student Services Office, and the Registrar's Office;
- the career, personal, and study skills counselling available at Counselling Services;
- the general medical and psychiatric services at Health Services.

Find out about the services which are particularly relevant to your TA work. For example, if you are leading seminar or tutorial discussions, you may notice some students who could benefit from the public speaking anxiety reduction programme at Counselling Services. If you are correcting papers, you may wish to refer some students to the Writing Workshop. If you are correcting mathematical assignments, you will want to be knowledgeable about the Mathematics and Statistics Learning Centre. The Student Services Office can provide you with a written booklet describing the considerable variety of services available at Dalhousie.

3. How To Refer Students

Be diplomatic, positive, and specific. Avoid saying things like “This sounds too serious for me to handle,” or “I think you need professional help.”

You will need to use your own judgement and knowledge of each particular situation. However, it may often be beneficial to:

- First ask if the student would like you to suggest who could help with such issues or problems.
- If the answer is yes, provide the name, location, and telephone number of the relevant person or service.
- Perhaps point out (as will usually be the case) that many other students have similar concerns, and benefit from the type of help you are recommending.

Students in Distress

In addition to the students who express their concerns directly to you, there may be others whom you notice in distress or difficulty. In some cases you may be the first or only University employee to do so. For example, the student may look depressed, or become overly emotional about some minor event, or act very differently than is characteristic for her or him.

Speak to the student privately, objectively indicate what you have observed, ask how things are going, or ask if s/he would like you to provide information about services available on campus.

Students have the right to privacy and independence, including the right to decline help and the right not to discuss things. However, offers of information about services are congruent with those rights, and can be an expression of the University’s caring.

If a student gives you reason to believe s/he is suicidal, dangerous, or seriously dysfunctional in some way, consult promptly with the course professor, who might then contact Health Services, Counselling Services, or other appropriate services.

How will I recognize a learning disability?

An indication of a learning disability in an educational setting is a discrepancy in ability and achievement. You might observe a pattern of uneven abilities such as:

- ☛ Excellent math abilities but poor language skills
- ☛ Good verbal expression but poor written expression
- ☛ Phonetic spelling but sophisticated ideas
- ☛ Learns concepts quickly but can't put ideas on paper
- ☛ Creative and innovative but poor in application
- ☛ Gifted mechanically but weak reading skills
- ☛ Slow rate of response but excellent retention
- ☛ Intuitive learner but difficulty following directions
- ☛ Abstract thinker but time management problems

These are a few examples of how a learning disability might manifest itself. In looking for possible indications of a learning disability, it is as important to look for areas of strength as it is for areas of weakness because they are the real markers of the person's ability.

Learning disabilities are not characterized by fine lines, rather they are individual and diverse in nature. Within the educational field there is not complete agreement as to the definition and parameters of learning disabilities nor of the importance of causal factors. A general point of agreement, though, is that "learning disabled" refers to persons with average to above-average learning ability who have specific areas of deficit.

There is no "magic" way to teach the learning-disabled student known only to "specialists." Rather, the learning-disabled student should be thought of as having particular learning strengths and weaknesses. Be willing to explore ways to assist learning-disabled students. For example, a student with difficulty taking notes might wish to tape lectures. Another might need an opportunity to submit several drafts of a written assignment.

For more information, contact the Disabled Student Advisor at 494-2836.



Teaching Tips for International ITAs

Every new teacher faces a great challenge. For international teaching assistants (ITA), the task of teaching includes reaching across different cultural values and assumptions, different educational systems, different native languages, and non-verbal communication systems. Thus, the challenge is greater, but so is the opportunity. As an ITA, you have the chance to develop a truly sophisticated command of English, to which you may have already devoted a great deal of effort. You also have the opportunity to get inside an important part of Canadian culture, the educational system, to understand and effect it by your contribution. Furthermore, you are invited to enter into an meaningful, cooperative relationship with your students, giving both them and yourself a memorable, enriching experience.

Language Skills

You may think that your biggest problem as an ITA will be your English. Likewise, your students may be concerned, fearing that your difficulties with English will hinder their ability to succeed in the course. If you have trouble expressing yourself in English, if students have trouble understanding you, or you have trouble understanding them, make every effort you can to improve your English. Specifically, make sure that you speak English as much as possible, every day. Seek out English-speaking roommates, office mates, lab partners, co-workers, and friends.

In addition to your efforts to become comfortable in English, openly acknowledge on the first day of class that you and your students may have some difficulty communicating with each other because English is not your native language.

Tips for Ensuring your Students Understand You

1. Speak slowly.
2. Repeat and paraphrase to emphasize important ideas.
3. Tell your students to raise their hands when they don't understand what you are saying.
4. Check the dictionary for pronunciation of key words, and practice them.
5. Practice your presentation out loud.
6. Watch yourself speak into a mirror or use a tape recorder.

Cultural Differences

You may also be surprised at the informal behaviour of students in class and in other interactions with their professors and TAs. For instance, students may wear casual clothes to class. During class, they may eat or drink, read the newspaper, or talk with their friends. They may arrive late or leave early. They may call the teacher by his or her first name and ask questions which seem to challenge the teacher. Such behaviour may shock or offend you, if you are accustomed to a culture in which students are overtly deferential and respectful toward their teachers.

Recognize that your students are not acting disrespectful of you personally or of you as a foreigner. Rather, their behaviour is normal for them. Indeed, many students may behave informally with teachers they like and respect. However, this does not mean that you must tolerate any and all behaviour in your classroom. On the contrary, teachers commonly attempt to discourage behaviour that appears disruptive to the class, such as students talking loudly with one another.

Students expect and appreciate a variety of things from their teachers, some of which may be unlike the expectations of students in your country. For example:

- they expect teachers to explain everything to them very fully, particularly the details of what they are expected to do in the course and how grades are assigned;
- they value teachers who are friendly and open, communicating something about themselves as people;
- they may want teachers to interact with them in class, encouraging student participation and dealing gently with incorrect responses;
- they prefer teachers who make their classes interesting by using a lively presentation style, “relevant” and intriguing examples, and humour;
- they respect teachers who are knowledgeable, but who are also willing to admit that they do not know something when that is the case.

Sitting in on a class given by another TA may provide helpful insight on how students and TAs act and interact. Discuss your concerns about your teaching with your supervisor, your fellow TAs, or with the Office of Instructional Development and Technology.

Adapted from:

Axelson, Elizabeth & Hofer, Barbara* (1991). "Suggestions for the International Teaching Assistant." In B. Black & L.K. Acitelli (Eds.), A Guidebook for University of Michigan Teaching Assistants (pp.5-9). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, The Center for Research on Learning & Teaching. *The authors note that a number of their ideas are derived from Gary Althen's Manual for Foreign Teaching Assistants.

Diamond, N., Hahn, L., Helgesen, M., & Visek, P. (1988). Handbook for Teaching Assistants at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Office of Instructional and Management



TimeManagement

Your TA duties will increase your overall workload, which may already be heavy with the burden of your own academic programme. Moreover the TA duties may be more demanding when you are busiest with your own academic assignments. In order to do both well, and still have some enjoyment in your life, you must be an efficient time manager. Effective use of time is the result of careful planning and appropriate strategies.

Time Planning

Analyze how you presently spend your time

Try monitoring and noting your time use and accomplishments for a week. Many people are surprised by how much, or little, actual time is spent on some things. Compare your time use with your real priorities.

Plan the Year

Look at the year as a whole, noting times when your own academic work peaks as well as when you will be busiest with TA responsibilities. Determine what can be done earlier than it is due in order to even out the workload over the term or year.

Identify tasks that occur daily or weekly and set regular times for them.

Plan the Week

Choose a system for planning your time.

- One simple system is to make a list each night of the tasks you want to do the next day. The list can be ordered in priority.
- Another system is to construct a written schedule for the whole week, specifying your activities on an hour-by-hour basis. This can be made a relatively easy weekly task by initially constructing a typical weekly schedule which includes your class schedule and regular minimum times set aside for weekly academic tasks, TA work, and leisure time. Planning for each week becomes a question of deciding how to spend the remaining time, with reference to long-term projects or special events.

Some Guidelines for What to do When



It is most important to be realistic about what you will accomplish within the time allotted.

Plan to do the difficult or non-preferred tasks during the times you work best.

Plan time for leisure activities. Trying to work all the time eventually results in lower productivity. Moreover, setting aside non-work time allows you to enjoy it without feeling guilty.

Be flexible. Unexpected things come up. When this happens, you can use your daily list of things to do or your weekly schedule to help you clarify your priorities. Usually a planned task can be moved to another time slot, but not just dropped.

Plan time at the end of each evening to relax before going to bed.

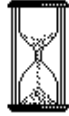
Concentration and Efficiency

Eliminate Distractions

- ✓ Avoid distractions by selecting a quiet, secluded place to work. Clear your desk of everything but the materials needed for the current task.
- ✓ Let others know when you will be busy and should not be disturbed, and when you will be able to do things with them.

Improve Your Concentration by:

- ✓ Setting short, specific goals each time you work, with realistic time limits.
- ✓ Becoming actively involved in the task. Search for something interesting about it. Hold a pencil while studying, to underline or make notes.
- ✓ Planning breaks. You can sustain maximum concentration for only a limited amount of time before fatigue sets in and you become inefficient.



Overcoming Procrastination

People procrastinate for many different reasons. However, procrastination usually occurs at the beginning of large tasks, and/or when the person has doubts about being able to perform the tasks well enough or lacks motivation.

1. **Avoid feeling overwhelmed** by large tasks by breaking them into smaller components and focussing your attention on the small immediate sub-task you are working on.
2. **Don't let perfectionism paralyze you** with self-criticisms and self-doubts. Try to do your work well, but not perfectly. So-called "perfectionism" ties people up as they overdo or redo some components of their work while neglecting others, resulting in a low overall standard of real achievement.
3. **Don't wait until you "feel like it"** to get started. Warm up by doing a small bit of work.
4. **Record your progress** by checking off each task or sub-task on your list or schedule. Enjoy the satisfaction of accomplishing what you set out to do.

Be sure to share this list of strategies for effective time management with your undergraduate students. It may help *them* meet *your* deadlines.

The above suggestions concerning time planning, concentration and overcoming procrastination are adapted excerpts from Studying Effectively and Efficiently: An Integrated System by Polly MacFarlane and Sandra Hodson of the Counselling Centre at Dalhousie University. The book is available at the University Bookstore.



University Resources

“We’re here to help you”

As a Teaching Assistant, you will be respected by students and some may ask for your help. If you are called upon to advise students, you should know what resources and services are available. Below is a list of resources on campus to which students with specific concerns can be referred. Also see the section on General Interactions.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Phone (494-)</u>
Academic Advice	Academic Advisors	#410, Student Union Bldg	2404
Student Writing	Writing Workshop	#3405 Killam Library	3379
Financial Aid	Registrar’s Office	Arts & Admin. Bldg.	2416
International Students	International Student Advisor	Student Union Building	7077
Disabled Students	Disabled Student Advisor	Student Union Building	7077
Black Students	Black Student Advisor	#100, Student Union Bldg	6648
Native Students	Native Education Counsellor	Henson College	8863
Study Skills Career Services Stress Management Personal Counselling	Counselling and Psychological Services	4th fl, Student Union Bldg	2081
Health Care	University Health Services	Howe Hall	2171
Housing	Off-Campus Housing	#120, Student Union	3831
Religious Services	Chaplaincy	#310, Student Union	2287
Conflict Resolution	Ombud’s Office	#403, Student Union	6583
Legal Aid	Legal Aid Clinic	5557 Cunard Street	423-8105
Administrative Concerns	Faculty of Graduate Studies	3rd fl, Arts and Administration Bldg.	2485



Libraries

There are a number of libraries on campus, specializing in different subject areas:

Kellogg Health Sciences Library, Tupper Building, College Street

- Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Health Services Administration, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and other Allied Health Professions

Pharmacy Library, Burbidge Building, College Street

Killam Memorial Library, University Avenue

- Humanities: Art, Languages, Literature, Philosophy, Religion
- Science: Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Physical Sciences
- Social Sciences: Business, Economics, Education, History, Library Science, Military Science, Political Science, Recreation/Leisure, Sociology

Law Library, Weldon Law School, University Avenue

- Criminology, Justice, Law, Regulations

School of Resource and Environmental Studies Library, Robie Street

- Conservation, Environmental Protection, Ocean Resources, especially in Asia

School of Social Work Library, Coburg Road

- Ageing, Counselling, Health Policy, Social Work, Social Welfare

Types of Help Available

Reference/Information: There are reference desks in all libraries. Staff provide instruction in use of library resources and provide information on services and collections.

Library Instruction: Most of the libraries provide library research seminars to any class at the request of the faculty member teaching the class. If a class is expected to use the library for assignments or term papers, a library seminar is an effective way to show students what material is available on their subject and how to find it. For more information, contact the appropriate reference desk.

Research Guides: Most of the libraries produce guides to help students use the library, e.g. the Killam Library has “How to Research Your Term Paper,” “How to Present Bibliographies and Footnotes,” etc. These are generally free and available near the reference desks.

Circulation/Reserve: In addition to regular circulation functions, Reserve is available to provide short-term loans of up to 3 days for required class reading assignments.



Computer Facilities

Student computing on campus is supported with 15 student computer labs, located at the Killam Library Computer Centre and in various departments and facilities. A valid Dalhousie student, faculty, or staff ID is required when using a computer lab and must be presented to the student assistant or other staff person on request.

Biology/Earth Sciences Computer Lab

Location: Room 2084 Biology Department, Life Sciences Centre

Clientele: Biology and Earth Sciences departments students

Equipment: 12 MSDOS systems, dot matrix printers and a laser printer

Staffing: part time, 494-1953

Lab Supervisor: Cathy Lunn, Computer Centre

Carleton Campus Computer Lab

Location: Room 2602, Dentistry Building

Clientele: Students of the Faculties of Dentistry, Health Professions, and Medicine

Equipment: 17 Macintosh systems, dot matrix and laser printers

Staffing: full time, 494-6560

Lab Supervisor: John MacDonald

Computing Science Computer Lab

Location: Room B507, basement Killam Library

Clientele: Students with courses in Computing Science

Equipment: 24 X-windows terminals

Staffing: none

Lab Supervisor: Sandy Greenfield



English Computer Lab

Location: basement, 1434 Henry Street

Clientele: English department students

Equipment: 12 Atari STs, dot matrix printers, department office has laser printer

Staffing: part time

Lab Supervisor: Robert Harrie

Engineering Computer Lab

Location: Room 301B, Dunn Building

Clientele: Engineering department students

Equipment: 30 MSDOS systems, dot matrix and laser printers

Staffing: part time, 494-2209

Lab Supervisor: Reg Peters, Engineering department

Graphics Workstations

Location: Room3 B433, Killam Library; Room 3018C, Life Sciences Centre; Microelectronics Lab, 3rd floor, Dunn Building

Clientele: Students with course or project work requiring graphics applications

Equipment: Silicon Graphics IRIS 4D/25 (in Killam) and
Indigo R4000 Elan workstations (in LSC and Dunn)

Staffing: none

Lab Supervisor: Graphics, Vivien Hannon; System Managers, Vivien Hannon, Adele Evans

History Computer Lab

Location: 1435 Seymour Street

Clientele: History department students

Equipment: 8 MSDOS systems, dot matrix printers

Staffing: none

Lab Supervisor: Alan Thomson



Killam Computer Lab

Location: Rooms B260, B263, B269, and B271, basement Killam Library

Clientele: All Dalhousie students

Equipment: Various MSDOS and Macintosh systems, dot matrix and laser printers

Staffing: full time, 494-3849

Lab Supervisor: Sandy Greenfield

Note: Room B260 is the Killam Computer Training Lab; its facilities are available to students when not in use for courses. Other facilities are also reserved for credit or non-credit courses.

Killam Computer Training Lab

Location: Room B260, basement Killam Library

Clientele: Non-Credit courses offered by University Computing and Information Services (UCIS) in agreement with Henson College

Equipment: 12 PS/2 (386SX) systems, dot matrix and laser printers

Staffing: Teaching Assistants (and as part of Killam Computer Lab)

Lab Supervisor: Sandy Greenfield

Note: Available as part of Killam Computer Lab when not in use for courses.

Law Computer Lab

Location: 1st floor, Weldon Law Library

Clientele: Law students

Equipment: 9 MSDOS and 9 Macintosh systems, dot matrix and laser printers

Staffing: part time, 494-1230

Lab Supervisor: Robert Harrie



Law Computer Training Lab

Location: Room 308, Weldon Law Building

Clientele: Non-Credit Courses offered by UCIS in agreement with Henson College

Equipment: 12 Zenith 286 systems

Staffing: Teaching Assistants during courses

Lab Supervisor: Robert Harrie

Note: Available to Law students when not in use for courses.

Learning Resource Centre

Location: Room B435, Basement Killam Library
Clientele: All Dalhousie students
Equipment: 5 Macintoshes, 18 Packard Bells
Staffing: full time, 494-3692
Lab Supervisor: Brenda Crozsmann



Medical Computing Lab

Location: Tupper Link, Mezzanine Level
Clientele: Faculty of Medicine students
Equipment: 15 Macintoshes, 3 MS DOS systems, dot matrix and laser printing
Staffing: Lab assistants during evening hours
Lab Supervisor: Ruben Ko (Medical Computing and Media Services Department)

Physics Computer Lab

Location: 2nd floor, Dunn Building
Clientele: Physics department students
Equipment: 20 Macintosh systems, dot matrix printing
Staffing: none
Lab Supervisor: Forest Fyfe (Physics department)
Note: Lab usage is scheduled as part of regular course schedules

Political Science Computer Lab

Location: Room 339, Arts & Administration Building
Clientele: Political Science department students
Equipment: 10 MS DOS systems, 3 dot matrix printers
Staffing: full time
Lab Supervisor: Paulette Chiasson



Psychology Computer Lab

Location: Room 4207, Psychology Department, Life Sciences Centre
Clientele: Psychology department students
Equipment: 22 Macintosh systems, dot matrix and laser printers
Staffing: full time during evening hours
Lab Supervisor: John MacDonald
Note: During weekdays, lab is in use for scheduled courses

School of Business Computer Lab

Location: 3rd floor School of Business Building
Clientele: School of Business students
Equipment: 44 MSDOS systems, 16 VT220 terminals, dot matrix and laser printing
Staffing: full time lab monitors and lab assistants
Lab Supervisor: Alan Thomson
Minicomputers: 2 VMS VaxStation 3100s (EARTH & MOON)
1 ULTRIX DecStation 5000 (QUASAR)
System Manager: Eric Rountree



Sociology and Social Anthropology Computer Lab

Location: 3rd floor of the Sociology and Social Anthropology Complex

Clientele: Sociology and Social Anthropology department students

Equipment: 12 MSDOS systems, dot matrix and laser printers

Staffing: part time, 494-1230

Lab Supervisor: Robert Harrie

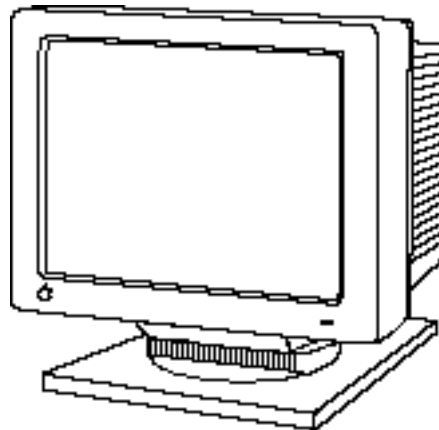
Who has the answers to your computer questions?

Help Desk (Killam Library) 494-2376

**Computer Course Registration
(Henson College) 494-2375**

**Personal Computer Purchase Center
(PCPC) 494-2626**

**Computer Installation and
Hardware Services 494-2216**





Audio-Visual Classroom Services



Audio-Visual and Television equipment is available for loan to Dalhousie faculty, staff, and students from Dalhousie's Instructional Media Services. Use of equipment is normally confined to locations on Dal Campus. It may be borrowed for periods of as little as 1 hour to as long as 3 weeks (depending on availability). Charges may be levied for uses other than classroom instruction. An Audio-Visual Services staff member will deliver and pick up equipment, and will be pleased to give operating instructions should they be required.

Equipment available: Overhead projectors, 16 mm Film Projectors, 35 mm Slide Projectors, Audio-Cassette Recorders, Record Players, 35 mm Film Strip Projectors, Small Public Address Systems, Portable Screens, Flip Charts, Slide-Sync Cassette Systems, VHS Video Playback Machines, VHS Camcorders, and Audio-conferencing Equipment.

For further information, contact Instructional Media Services, Room 230 of the Life Sciences Centre, or phone 494-6471.

Learning Resource Centre

The Learning Resource Centre is made up of four sections:

The Laboratory: Room 433, Killam Library basement

The Lab is used by faculty and students for the viewing of non-print instructional material such as videotapes, audio-tapes, slides, and computer output. Faculty are able to put on reserve material they wish their class to review.

Equipment available for use in the Lab includes reel-to-reel tape players, cassette players, 1/2" VHS Video Machines and Monitors, 3/4" Umatic Video Machines and Monitors, Apple and Packard Bell Computers.

The Multi-Media Room: Room B400, Killam Library basement

The Multi-Media Room is designed for the occasional user of non-print instructional material and can accommodate approximately 40 students. This room has a 16 mm Movie Projector, a 1/2" VHS Video Machine, a 3/4" Video Machine with Large Monitor, a Data Projector, and a Macintosh Computer. This room may be booked by contacting the Learning Resource Centre at 494-2422.





Audio/Video Tapes

Multiple copies of audiotapes may be produced and put in the Lab for student use. The Film and Video Library is also housed in the Learning Resource Centre. Faculty and TAs may borrow tapes from within the University or from the Inter-University Loan Service.

Technical Services

The Technical Service Shop repairs all electronic equipment in the Learning Resource Centre plus equipment from other departments that wish to use the service on a charge-back basis. All types of equipment can be serviced, including Audio and Video Recorders, Monitors, Apple Computers, Slide Projectors, 16 mm Projectors, and Overhead Projectors. Also, preventative maintenance can be done by completely dismantling equipment to clean and replace parts that are showing wear. The servicing time on equipment is approximately 2 to 3 days. Technical Services is located in Room 110 in the Killam Basement (phone 494-3693).

For further information on the Learning Resource Centre, call 494-2422.

APPENDIX 1

Diskette Distribution

The following institutions* have purchased the diskette version of **University Teaching and Learning** for adaptation and distribution on their own campuses.

Canada

University of Alberta
University of British Columbia
University of Calgary
Lakehead University
University of Lethbridge
The University of Manitoba
McGill University
McMaster University
Université de Montréal
University of Saskatchewan
Université de Sherbrooke
University of Toronto
University of Waterloo
University of Western Ontario
University of Windsor

United States

Manhattan College, NY
Murray State University, KY
Rutgers University, NJ
University of California at Berkeley, CA
University of Colorado at Denver, CO
University of Connecticut, CT

Other

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Lincoln University, New Zealand
University College London, England
Murdoch University, Western Australia
Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore

In addition, 132* institutions have purchased print copies of the *Resource Guide*.

* as of June, 1994

APPENDIX 2

Sample Procedure for Lesson Design (emphasis on AV selection)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Define behavioural objectives for lesson | What cognitive, attitudinal, or psycho-motor objectives are students expected to reach? |
| 2. Prescribe instructional events in lesson | For example: introduce, give rationale, present facts, answer questions, provide opportunities for practice, review and summarize |
| 3. Consider group size and necessary stimuli | - Small groups, regular class, large group?
- Audio only, audio and visual, still, motion, colour?
- See Appendix 3 for media selection |
| 4. Assemble short list of suitable media | Base decision on factors in Step 3. |
| 5. Consider costs, availability, and instructor preferences to develop media mix | Reduce selection to two or three items in media mix. (e.g., print, overhead projection, video) |
| 6. a) Select appropriate commercial products
OR
b) Produce your own | Refer to selection criteria for instructional films and videos in Appendix 5 |
| 7. Implement lesson | Use the selected audiovisuals as part of your lesson. |
| 8. Evaluate lesson | How can you improve your lesson? Should more or fewer audiovisuals be used? Sequence changed? Alternate media considered? |

APPENDIX 3

Matching Media to the Presentation Parameters

- Visual** presentation is desirable if:
- the topic deals with concrete observable objects and if the objective is “identifying”, “discriminating”, or “classifying” concepts, or “executing” a task.
 - student learning mode is predominantly visual.
 - learning of symbols, rules, defined concepts through analogies, diagrams, etc. is required.
- Colour** is desirable if:
- the objective involves discrimination of colours.
 - explanation of complex diagrams is part of the topic.
 - motivation for learning is low.
- Movement** is desirable if:
- the topic requires students learn how to recognize and/or copy motions.
 - the topic deals with the functioning of mobile parts of an object.
- Sound** is desirable if:
- sound is an integral part of the topic.
 - a real situation, including sound, is to be simulated.
 - it is convenient to create an agreeable atmosphere (music).
- Touch** is desirable if:
- the objective involves discrimination of texture or movement, etc.
- Written words** are desirable if:
- the main objective is learning concepts, rules, principles and the topic is complex or abstract.
 - the precise message content is critical.

APPENDIX 4

An Audiovisual Checklist

1. Is your audiovisual worth making?
 - Is it essential to the understanding of the topic?
 - Does the topic deserve the emphasis an audiovisual provides?
2. Will words alone describe your point?
 - If words are sufficient, don't make an audiovisual.
3. Does the audiovisual complement the rest of the presentation?
 - Your audiovisual should support, not confuse, the main point of your topic.
4. Is your audiovisual simple (and not ornate)?
 - It should be free from incompatible and complicating symbols, ideas, and art techniques.
5. Is it visually fluent?
 - Is it really one visual or several? What about overlays?
 - Was the art work designed for this medium, or borrowed without modification from another type of presentation?
6. Does it utilize all available techniques which improve its efficiency?
 - Is colour used effectively?
 - Is sound used appropriately?
7. Is the audiovisual readable and/or audible by your audience?
 - Is there an unobstructed view of the screen?
 - Is printing large enough?
 - Is the audio level high enough?
8. How much effort did you put into your audiovisual?
 - Is it as good as you can make it?
 - Have you sought criticism from others?
 - Have you tested the visual?



An Audiovisual Checklist

- Is your audiovisual worth making?
- Will words alone describe your point?
- Does the audiovisual complement the rest of the presentation?
- Is your audiovisual simple (and not ornate)?
- Is it visually fluent?
- Does it utilize all available techniques which improve its efficiency?
- Can your audiovisual be read and/or heard by your audience?
- How much effort did you put into your audiovisual?



APPENDIX 5

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Instructional Films or Television Programmes

Objectives

1. Are the instructional objectives as stated or implied in the lesson clear to the viewer?
2. Does the content of the programme relate to the main objectives, or are there many irrelevancies?

Content

3. Does the amount of time taken to develop each concept, procedure, or example seem appropriate or inappropriate for the intended audience?
4. Is the content organized and so structured as to facilitate learning?
5. Is the material based on expert, up-to-date professional information?
6. Is the vocabulary level appropriate for the intended audience?

Presentation of material

7. Does the presentation provide for optimum repetition of the main ideas (e.g., summaries of main points from time to time and at end; repetition with variation.)?
8. Does the programme effectively use appropriate pictures, film clips, demonstrations, diagrams, and other graphics? (Number and kinds of visuals are not as important as the way in which they are used to support the instruction.)
9. Is the video-photographic presentation clearly perceivable by use of good lighting, appropriate camera shots, sharpness of details, pointers, suitable back ground, etc.? (This does not require a highly technical or engineering evaluation but rather a judgment as to whether or not the programme or film is perceptually clear.)
10. Is the audio intelligible?

11. Is there an appropriate integration of visual and audio?
12. Does the presentation give the impression of authenticity?
13. Do the personality and appearance of the teacher or teachers add to or detract from the effectiveness of the presentation?
14. Do the characteristics and quality of the instructor's or commentator's voice add to or detract from the effectiveness of the presentation?
15. Does the teacher appear on camera for an appropriate amount of time?

Learner Stimulation

16. Does the presentation motivate the student to do supplementary work and study on the problem?
17. Is any testing incorporated into the presentation or presented by the classroom instructor to the students following the telecast to measure the learner's understanding?

General Evaluation

18. What is your overall evaluation of the programme?

Adapted from: Schramm, Wilbur L. Quality in Instructional Television. Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawaii, 1972.

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