

**PIE** *Program for Instructional Excellence*

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## **TA Handbook**



**Florida State University  
The Graduate School**



## WELCOME

Congratulations on your appointment as a teaching assistant (TA) at Florida State University. As a teaching assistant you are important to the quality of undergraduate education. Over the course of your assistantship, you will develop your own style of teaching according to your personality and academic discipline. There is no magic “best” way to teach; many different styles work as long as the instructor engages students in the active learning process and conveys enthusiasm for his/her discipline. This handbook is a guide to help you get started. Your professors and peers are excellent resources for assistance with your teaching.

TA duties range from serving as a grader to full responsibility for teaching a course. Such appointments depend on the discipline being taught and the instructor’s experience and training. They range in time commitment from 10 to 20 hours per week. Stipends vary from discipline to discipline, but each discipline attempts to be competitive in its area. Students should contact the chair or coordinator of graduate students in the appropriate department for information.

If you have questions about classroom procedures, testing, etc., check with your supervisor in your department or refer to any department-specific orientation materials you may have been given. Your first obligation is to heed the expectations of your department and in many cases the professor of record (the professor in charge of teaching the course) with whom you work.

The Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE), a unit of the Graduate School, is dedicated to supporting the efforts of graduate student teaching assistants through its various university-wide programs and services. I hope that you will join us for a cross-discipline discussion of teaching strategies and best practices at our PIE Coffee Hour & Teaching Workshops. The discussion, coffee and pie are always excellent, and free! All graduate students, postdoctoral associates, faculty and staff are welcome to attend.

Best wishes for a terrific year—both as a graduate student and as a TA. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Dr. Lisa Liseno,  
PIE Program Director

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# The Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE)

## What is PIE?

The Program for Instructional Excellence, better known as PIE, is a university-wide program that provides support for graduate student teaching assistants (TAs) across disciplines. PIE is a unit of the Graduate School at FSU. The PIE program is here to assist you in improving your teaching and in advancing your professional development while you are a graduate student. We can answer your questions about teaching or direct you to a helpful resource.



[pie.fsu.edu](http://pie.fsu.edu)

## What services does PIE offer to TAs?

- Basics of Teaching @ FSU online training series
- Graduate Teaching Assistant Associate Assistantship
- Online resources
- Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards
- PIE Coffee Hour & Teaching Workshop Series
- PIE Teaching Conference/TA orientation
- PIE Teaching Training Recognition & Advanced Teaching Training Recognition
- Teaching Consultations (departmental & individual)

## Whom should I contact regarding my questions about teaching at FSU?

Dr. Lisa Liseno,  
Director, Program for Instructional Excellence  
[pie-info@fsu.edu](mailto:pie-info@fsu.edu)  
850-645-7318

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## **Basics of Teaching @ FSU Online Training Series and PIE Coffee Hour and Teaching Workshop Series**

The Basics of Teaching @ FSU online training series is free, open to all FSU graduate students, and is designed to prepare graduate students to serve as teaching assistants at FSU as well as prepare them for their future role as faculty members.

There are six modules in this training series:

1. Developing a course syllabus
2. Knowing your teaching environment
3. Using Blackboard for instruction
4. Planning for teaching-learning activities
5. Student assessment
6. Course evaluation and revision

### **PIE Coffee Hour & Teaching Workshop Series:**

Come join fellow TAs and instructors discuss strategies and techniques that promote excellence in teaching and learning – bring your questions, concerns, and ideas – the coffee and pie will be provided!

**\*Note:** These modules and workshops can be used for satisfying requirements for Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) and Preparing Future Professionals (PFP) certificate. For more information and register for workshops, visit [pie.fsu.edu](http://pie.fsu.edu)

### **Advanced PIE Teaching Training Recognition**

FSU students who have successfully completed the Basics of Teaching @ FSU online training series in no more than two consecutive semesters and have attended at least two PIE Coffee Hour & Teaching Workshops are eligible to receive an Advanced PIE Teaching Training Recognition.



To enroll, please send a request to: [pie-info@fsu.edu](mailto:pie-info@fsu.edu)

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## Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards

PIE administers the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards (OTAA) that recognize graduate student teaching assistants for their distinguished contributions to undergraduate student learning through excellence in instruction. These teaching awards are nomination-based. FSU students, staff, and faculty can nominate TAs for this award. A committee of experienced TAs and faculty selects winners based on a teaching portfolio submitted by the nominee. OTAA recipients receive an honorarium and are recognized at the annual Celebration of Graduate Student Excellence held every Spring.

### Teaching Portfolio

Nominees submit a teaching portfolio that documents their teaching skills and accomplishments. As part of the teaching portfolio, one letter of recommendation from a faculty member who has worked closely with the nominee is required. Teaching assistant duties vary across campus. This is taken into consideration when portfolios are reviewed.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for an OTAA award, a TA must:

- Be an FSU degree-seeking graduate student hired as a TA and in good academic standing;
- Be nominated by an FSU student, staff, or faculty member;
- Submit a teaching portfolio by announced deadline;
- Exhibit outstanding teaching in the classroom, laboratory, or online;
- Have been involved in undergraduate or graduate instruction at FSU for at least two semesters;
- Be NEITHER an OTAA award winner from a previous year NOR a current PIE Teaching Associate



**Check the PIE website ([pie.fsu.edu](http://pie.fsu.edu))** for complete details regarding these awards.

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## Graduate Teaching Associate Assistantship Program

This program helps to improve teaching across campus by helping departments enhance their TA training programs and establish interdisciplinary connections and community among graduate student TAs at FSU. This program is designed to be an outreach to academic departments and programs in support of individual departmental TA training development.

A PIE Teaching Associate is an experienced graduate student teaching assistant (TA) nominated by his/her academic department and trained by the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE). They serve as mentors for other TAs in the department and assist PIE with university workshops, conferences, teaching awards, and other events. Successful candidates will demonstrate an interest in pedagogy and teaching related issues and a commitment to university service and scholarly activities.

### Eligibility

A PIE Teaching Associate must:

- be an FSU graduate student in good academic standing
- have prior teaching experience at FSU
- have a TA appointment for the academic year
- be available for approximately 5 hrs/week during fall and spring semesters, plus summer training and annual PIE Teaching Conference
- have a recommendation from home department



**Check PIE website ([pie.fsu.edu](http://pie.fsu.edu))** for more information, including dates for the information session and application deadline.



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## Preparing Future Faculty (PFF)

The Preparing Future Faculty Program assists Florida State's doctoral students (and others headed toward academic careers) prepare for future faculty work. Through participation in coursework, workshops, and mentoring, PFF Fellows increase their awareness of expectations for faculty performance and enhance their readiness to address research, teaching and related demands of faculty life. Goals include facilitating the placement of FSU students into faculty positions and supporting the finest scholarly accomplishments of FSU's graduates.

Florida State's Preparing Future Faculty Program has five components: Research; Teaching; Career; Mentoring; and Portfolio. The program is offered by The Graduate School with the cooperation of the Office of Research, Career Center, Center for Global Engagement, and a number of Florida State academic departments and colleges.

Fellows who meet specified requirements, often involving participation over a two-year period, are awarded a PFF Graduate Certificate, but individuals may participate in PFF events without the intent of earning a PFF Certificate. The PFF Graduate Certificate Program is an academic certificate program that requires 12 credit-hours. Therefore, a notation will be included on the transcripts of students/postdoctoral associates who complete the PFF Graduate Certificate Program.

For information about the PFF program visit the link below and click on Professional Development.

**[gradschool.fsu.edu](https://gradschool.fsu.edu)**

Questions? Please contact:  
Dr. Judith Devine,  
Senior Associate Dean in the Graduate School,  
[jdevine@fsu.edu](mailto:jdevine@fsu.edu)  
850-644-3501

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## Preparing Future Professionals (PFP)

Many of Florida State University's graduate students are master's students, with a small percentage of those students completing a thesis track. Non-thesis master's students typically pursue careers outside of academia (e.g., industry, government, non-profits). Some thesis master's and doctoral students may also prefer the previous careers. As a result, the Graduate School developed an academic certificate (approved October, 2011), the Preparing Future Professionals (PFP) Certificate.

Requirements include 12 credit-hours of coursework approved by the Graduate School and the major professor/mentor, professional development workshops and/or seminars, an internship/practicum or interviews in the field, a resume, and a professional portfolio. A notation is added to transcripts of students completing the PFP certificate.

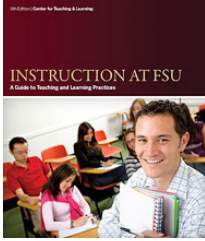
For more information about the PFP program visit the link below and click on Professional Development.

**[gradschool.fsu.edu](http://gradschool.fsu.edu)**

Or you may schedule a meeting about the PFP Certificate Program with  
Dr. Judith Devine,  
Senior Associate Dean in the Graduate School,  
[jdevine@fsu.edu](mailto:jdevine@fsu.edu)  
850-644-3501

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## **Instruction at FSU: A Guide to Teaching & Learning Practices**



This handbook is designed to help instructional faculty and graduate teaching assistants who are interested in being more effective teachers. It offers strategies used by experienced instructors and presents instructional methods and techniques following four components of Instructional Design: Course Planning, Lesson Delivery, Student Testing and Grading, and Course Revision and Evaluation.

Read the chapters online at the link below or download a zipped file of the entire handbook. This book is used for the Basics of Teaching @ FSU training series.

**<http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/instruction-fsu-guide-teaching-learning-practices>**

# **Managing Dual Roles (Instructor & Student)**





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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do I manage students who may be close to my own age?**

Not only are many TAs close in age to undergraduates, but some have also graduated from the same program in which they are now teaching. As a result, often a TA's most pressing concern is how to gain respect and credibility in an instructor role. Maintaining a professional distance is one way to establish your presence as instructor. If you feel you cannot fairly evaluate someone whom you have known socially, it might be best to ask the student to enroll in a different section, if at all possible. If that is not possible, establish clear rules ahead of time with the student.

### **How can I be perceived as credible and in control of the classroom and still be liked?**

Instructors at any level want to be seen as likable, approachable, and in touch with undergraduate concerns; however, being too sociable and extroverted can undermine credibility, especially for TAs. We suggest that TAs establish explicit, reasonable guidelines early in the term and adhere to them consistently. The guidelines and the rationale for each one should be included in the syllabus or distributed as a separate handout. By establishing boundaries at the course onset, the TA is then free to focus on those strategies that will make learning fun and enjoyable.

### **How do I balance the conflicting, simultaneous roles of student and teacher?**

Reinforced by their teaching successes, TAs may increasingly spend more and more time on teaching preparation at the expense of their own coursework. TAs need to remind themselves continually that their primary objective as graduate students is to complete their degree. TAs who find they are falling behind in their own coursework because of the demands of the courses they teach should seek advice in their department and discuss ways to create more balance in their schedules.

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## **How do I manage the interpersonal problems that may arise when I teach?**

It is important to remember that FSU serves a diverse student population, and you can expect a range of student abilities, attitudes, and learning styles. Providing a safe and tolerant learning environment is one of the requirements for any instructor. Often, just talking to a student one-on-one and calmly pointing out a problem will solve it. If the problem continues, you might invite your faculty mentor to observe your class and offer suggestions. If the behavior is especially disruptive or difficult, you may wish to consult the staff at the Counseling Center (644-2003) or encourage the student to seek assistance from them. It will usually magnify the problem if you embarrass the student in front of the class or if you resort to sarcasm or anger.

## **How do I maintain professionalism?**

Undergraduates expect a TA to conduct class with the same professionalism as faculty. Consider the following pointers on maintaining professionalism:

- Avoid discussing departmental faculty, other TAs and their classes, assignments, grading, or course policies.
- Do not socialize extensively with students outside of class unless it is a whole-class activity. Even the appearance of flirting with a student can create misunderstandings and cause problems.
- Make certain you understand the FSU policy on sexual harassment and sexual battery.
- Evaluate students' work fairly and impartially, and do not discuss students' marks in public or give out a grade to anyone but the student to whom it belongs.
- Prepare for all student-instructor encounters. Meet classes as scheduled and keep scheduled office hours.
- Use appropriate language and humor.
- Try to stay on track with course topics.

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## Guidelines to Workload Management

To avoid crisis situations, begin the semester by creating some rules for yourself. You may not always be able to keep them, but you should try to adopt them as general guides.

1. If you must establish priorities (and sometimes you must), remember your own graduate work. One of your greatest responsibilities is to your graduate program. Thinking practically, you must realize that your teaching assistantship is dependent upon successful completion of your own courses.
2. Do not let the work pile up. Break down long-term goals into short-term goals. Large blocks of free time are difficult to find once the semester gets underway; instead, calculate how many papers you would have to read every day to return the papers to students in a reasonable time. If you have 30 students in a class, reading four or five papers each day will enable you to read them all in one week.
3. Be willing to ask for help as the semester progresses. If you find yourself consistently behind with both your graduate work and your teaching, it is time to reassess your methods. Speak to your faculty advisor or TA supervisor about your problem.
4. Learn to say "no." Many TAs take on too many responsibilities. It is much better to do a few things well and completely than to do many things poorly and incompletely.



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## **TIPS for Time Management**

1. Rank all tasks in their order of importance, which will give you a realistic perspective.
2. Make an outline of all deadlines you must meet during the semester. This way you can quickly determine what is due and what you can delay.
3. Enter all tasks and deadlines in a date book or calendar. Looking at this date book daily will allow you to maintain a realistic notion of what remains to be done. Flag important dates in the calendar, and write a reminder in your calendar before the due date for each task, allowing yourself enough lead-time to complete it.
4. Each evening, make up a prioritized “to-do” list for the next day. Each morning, before you begin your work, go over this list to plan your day, starting with the most critical tasks first.
5. Consider creating a wall chart with critical tasks and dates marked. Post it over your desk so that you can read it every day.
6. Use project-management software on your computer to schedule critical tasks and dates.

# **General Teaching Policies**

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**FSU**





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## General Teaching Policies @ FSU

### Academic Calendar

The academic year consists of two semesters, each lasting approximately 15 weeks. Note that faculty contracts typically begin prior to the start of classes. Some instructors teach during the summer, which is divided into several semester scheduling options. A detailed calendar can be accessed in the appropriate registration guide on the registrar's website:

[http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir\\_class/acad\\_calendar.html](http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir_class/acad_calendar.html)

### Attendance (student)

- **Mandatory First Class Meeting Attendance Policy**

University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first day of class. Students who do not attend the first class meeting of a course for which they are registered will be dropped from the course by the academic department that offers the course. This policy applies to all levels of courses and to all campuses and study centers. It remains the student's responsibility to verify course drops and check that fees are adjusted.

- **Attendance**

The instructor decides what effect unexcused absences will have on grades and will explain class attendance and grading policies in writing at the beginning of each semester. Instructors must accommodate absences due to documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities and must do so in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration should also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. All students are expected to abide by each instructor's class attendance policy. Students must also provide advance notice of absences (when possible) as well as relevant documentation regarding absences to the instructor as soon as possible following the illness or event that led to an absence. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, the student is responsible for making up all work that is missed. ***University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered.***

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Students who do not attend the first class meeting of a course for which they are registered will be dropped from the course by the academic department that offers the course. In order to enforce this policy, instructors are required to take attendance at the first class meeting and report absences to the appropriate person in their department or school/college. For further information, consult the FSU General Bulletin. Please note that some colleges and special programs have more stringent requirements for class attendance.

<http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/apdefault.htm>

## Copyrighted Materials

U.S. Copyright Law ([www.copyright.gov/title17](http://www.copyright.gov/title17)) protects the interests of those who create knowledge and works of art; faculty must comply with its requirements. Supplemental course materials may be placed on print or electronic reserve through University Libraries (<https://www.lib.fsu.edu/service/course-reserves>) in compliance with copyright and fair use guidelines. Also, see "Copyright and Fair Use" in Section 6 of the Faculty Handbook.

## Copyright/Fair Use

- **General**

The educational "fair use" exemption to the copyright law is often misunderstood. It is actually a quite limited exemption for classroom use of excerpts of copyrighted materials. These excerpts must be brief and are limited to one chapter, an article from a periodical or newspaper, a short story or essay, or a chart, cartoon, diagram, picture or the like. Moreover, the material may only be used for a single class and may not be developed into a permanent classroom document. An exception would be when a copyright release is obtained from the copyright holder. So-called course packs compiled by legitimate commercial print shops usually have been through this copyright release process.

Further information concerning copyright and fair use may be found at: <http://guides.lib.fsu.edu/copyright>

- **The Teach Act of 2002**

The Teach Act of 2002 essentially extends fair use to online courses; however, there are certain restrictions. The course must be set up so that the materials cannot be retained by the student past the

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class session and the online instruction must be mediated by an instructor. More information on the Teach Act may be found at: <http://distance.fsu.edu/docs/instructors/TEACHAct.pdf>

## **Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodation be provided for individuals with documented physical and/or learning disabilities. Students who are registered with the Student Disability Resource Center (**SDRC**) are accommodated through the combined efforts of individual faculty members and the SDRC.

<https://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc/>

Each course syllabus should include information about requesting accommodations. See sample syllabus language approved by the **Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee** at:

<http://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum/Syllabus-Language>

## **Equal Opportunity, Non-discrimination, and Non-retaliation**

*Policy Statement-* The Florida State University is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer supporting a culturally diverse educational and work environment. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity, non-discrimination and non-retaliation for any member of the University community on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, veterans' or marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected group status. This policy applies to faculty, staff, students, visitors, applicants, and contractors in a manner consistent with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, ordinances, orders and rules, and University's policies, procedures, and processes. It addresses all terms and conditions of employment in addition to student life, campus support services and/or academic environment.

The University expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, whether in assumption, attitudes, acts, or policies. Conduct that intimidates by threat, brings about adversity, or creates a hostile environment, is contrary to the University's commitment of maintaining a harmonious, high

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performance work and educational environment.

Retaliation against an individual, who in good faith brings a discrimination or harassment complaint, participates in the investigation of a complaint, or engages in some other protected activity, is expressly prohibited and will be regarded as a separate and distinct cause for discipline under these procedures.

<http://policies.vpfa.fsu.edu/personnel/3i.html#3>

## **Evaluation of Teaching**

The University evaluates teaching using the Student Perception of Courses and Instructors (SPCI). Departments may also use additional methods of teaching evaluation, including peer evaluations and additional instruments. All instructors are required to have these evaluations administered during the last two weeks of each fall and spring semester for all face-to-face classes with at least 10 students. Results of the SPCI section of the evaluation are public information and are available to students online at:

<https://java.odl.fsu.edu/sussai2/main.jsp>

## **FERPA - Confidentiality of Student Records**

**The Family Educational and Privacy Rights Act (FERPA)** (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> guarantees students access to their educational records and protects those records from unauthorized release to others. Faculty members may access student records only when they have a legitimate need to know the information, such as when serving in an advisory capacity.

Faculty must not release confidential information to others. Because of the risk of identity theft and violation of student privacy law, grades must never be posted by complete social security number, and any records containing social security numbers must be protected carefully and must be shredded when discarded.

The confidentiality of e-mail is not protected; instructors must have students' permission to e-mail grade information. The password-protected course Website system is the preferred way to communicate grades to students. The **Registrar's statement on FERPA rights is found at:** <http://registrar.fsu.edu/ferpa/>

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## Final Exam Policy

### The University Undergraduate Final Exam Policy states:

- Final examinations in all undergraduate courses are discretionary within any given department.
- All students enrolled in an undergraduate course having a final examination, including graduating seniors and graduate students, are required to take the examination at the time scheduled.
- The scheduling of a final examination or a test in lieu of a final examination at any time other than the regularly scheduled final examination period is a violation of University policy.
- A test covering a portion of the semester's work which is given in lieu of a final examination, sometimes called "a unit test," must be given in the regularly scheduled final **examination period**.

Grading System	
A	4.00
A-	3.75
B+	3.25
B	3.00
B-	2.75
C+	2.25
C-	1.75
D+	1.25
D	1.00
D-	0.75
F	0.00

**The final exam schedule** is published on the Registrar's Web site (see below) and is based on the regular class meeting time or is a block examination in which all students in certain courses take final exams at the same time, regardless of class section. Exceptions to this schedule for individual students are made by the academic dean of the unit teaching the course (in response to a written request from the instructor). Exceptions to hold the entire undergraduate course exam at a time different from the published exam schedule are considered by the Undergraduate Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate, in response to a written request received at least three weeks in advance.

If a final exam is given in a graduate course, the exam should follow the established final exam schedule unless clear arrangements are made with the students and the Registrar's Office. Examination papers of students should be kept by faculty members for one year after the end of the semester. Faculty members leaving the University before the completion of that year should leave the examination papers in the departmental files.

**Registrar's Web site:** <http://registrar.fsu.edu/>



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Course Exams or the annual policy memo from the **Office of Faculty Development and Advancement can be found at:**  
<http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics>

## **Grades**

The University employs a plus/minus grading system where grades earn the quality point values. Instructors must explain, in writing, an evaluation (grading) statement that will be used to determine grades in each course. Final grades should be reported to the Registrar's Office by the deadline set each semester and in accordance with the procedures that will be communicated by each academic department. "Incomplete" ("I") grades should be recorded only in exceptional cases when a student, for documented reasons, has failed to complete a well-defined portion of a course, but was passing the course up until the time he or she failed to complete the work. Even under these circumstances, the authority for determining whether to grant an "Incomplete" rests with the instructor. Graduate Teaching Assistants must have approval from the supervising faculty member to grant an "Incomplete." (One exception to this guideline occurs when an "Incomplete" is applied as a result of allegations of academic dishonesty that have not been resolved by the end of a semester.) Deans' offices usually provide guidance to instructors regarding individual cases. Unless an extension of time is requested by the instructor, "Incomplete" grades turn into "Incomplete Expired" (computed as "F" or "U" grades, depending on the course grading format) at the end of the next semester in which the student is enrolled. For this reason, it is critical that faculty work closely with the student and with department staff regarding the clearance of an "Incomplete" grade.

Please see the **General Bulletin** sections on grading policies and grade appeals at: <http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/>

## **Medical "Excuses"**

Documentation regarding missing class because of illness must be provided by the student to the instructor in a timely manner. Instructors may further specify deadlines for documentation submission in their syllabi. The University Health Services will issue

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a signed document attesting to the fact that the student received medical treatment at the Wellness Center. These documents, or other medical information submitted by the student, should be used by instructors in making decisions regarding whether an absence is excused but should not be construed as a “medical excuse.” Ultimately, the authority for deciding whether the documentation presented by the student justifies an excused absence rests with the instructor. Also see “Attendance (student)” in this chapter.

## **Office Hours**

Every member of the teaching faculty is expected to post (in a conspicuous place) and to honor specific office hours during each semester in which he or she conducts classes. While department expectations vary, faculty members typically schedule at least one hour a week for each course taught.

## **Posting of Student Grades**

The password-protected, web-based “Blackboard” System is the most secure method for posting student grades. Because of the risk of identity theft and violation of student privacy law, grades must never be posted by complete social security number, and any records containing social security numbers must be protected carefully and must be shredded when discarded. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (**FERPA**) requires the student’s consent to public posting of his or her grades by name or other personal identifier, including a portion of the social security number. When posting grades of students by an identifier for students who have given such consent, the faculty member should not arrange the list in alphabetical order.

## **Religious Holy Days**

Florida State University policy on observance of religious holy days provides that each student shall, on notifying his or her instructor in advance, be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of his or her faith. While the student will be held responsible for the material covered in his or her absence, each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the work missed. Instructors and University administrators shall in no way

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arbitrarily penalize students who are absent from academic and social activities because of religious holy day observance.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT** Policy Statement- Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based on a person's gender. Sexual harassment is contrary to the University's values and moral standards, which recognize the dignity and worth of each person, as well as a violation of federal and State laws and University rules and policies. Sexual harassment cannot and will not be tolerated at Florida State University, whether by faculty, students, or staff; or by others while on property owned by or under the control of the University.

Questions regarding the above may be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (EOC) at **(850) 645-6519**.

Each faculty and staff member is required to attend a sexual harassment training session. It is important to review these policies and remember that sexual harassment may occur between faculty, faculty and staff, faculty and students and between students.

**<http://policies.vpfa.fsu.edu/personnel/3i.html#4>**

## **Syllabus**

University policy requires that a course syllabus be distributed at the beginning of the semester that includes the written course objectives and an evaluation (grading) statement. This statement

should indicate what procedures will be used to evaluate students and should make it possible to discern the approximate weight of each grade component. All syllabi should also include an Americans with Disabilities Act statement, a statement regarding academic integrity, and the attendance policy (if applicable). It is recommended that a faculty member include a statement of his/her policy and/or expectations regarding classroom conduct and missed work. Once the course has begun, no changes should be made to the syllabus that will substantially affect the implementation of the instructor's grading [evaluation] statement. For more information, go to:

**[http://distance.fsu.edu/docs/instruction\\_at\\_fsu/Chptr3.pdf](http://distance.fsu.edu/docs/instruction_at_fsu/Chptr3.pdf)**

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## **Textbook Notification**

The Board of Governors' interpretation of the 2008 legislative HB 603 (2008-78 Laws of Florida) regarding textbook affordability and notification requires state universities to:

- Post on their websites a list of textbooks required for each course not less than 30 days prior to the first day of class for each term; and
- Include as part of the list the titles, all authors listed, publishers, edition numbers, copyright dates, published dates, and other information necessary to identify the specific textbooks required for the course.

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## **Textbook Use**

Requiring the use of a textbook written by the instructor of the course, by a relative of the instructor, or by a team of authors that includes the instructor, is considered a conflict of interest when the potential royalty income exceeds \$500 (Section 112.313, Florida Statutes). If a faculty member wishes to use a textbook under these circumstances and will receive more than \$500 in one year from that use, he or she must request permission from the President in writing, through the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement. The memo should include a justification of why the required textbook is the only one suited for the author's class, the number of students expected to enroll in the class for each term, and include as part of the list:

- Book title;
- All authors;
- Publishers;
- Edition number;
- Copyright dates and published dates; and
- Other information necessary to identify the specific textbook required for the course

## **Textbook Adoption Application Guide:**

<http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/fsu-policies-textbook-adoption>

## **Textbook Orders**

In response to concerns expressed by students regarding the escalating price of textbooks, the Faculty Senate and the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement urge all instructors to:

- Place orders for textbooks required for fall courses by mid-May or earlier; for spring courses by mid-September or earlier; and for summer courses by first of April or earlier;
- Make decisions regarding adoption of new textbook editions very carefully. If there are no substantive changes in a new edition, consider staying with the current edition.

All textbook orders must be placed with the FSU Bookstore at least 30 days prior to the first day of class for each term, so that all required textbooks for each course can be listed on the FSU Bookstore website in compliance with this new posting requirement.

# **What to Do If Problems Arise**





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## What to Do if Problems Arise

**The Florida State University** has several policies and procedures in place that can help to resolve problems that arise in the academic environment. The Academic Honor Policy emphasizes the University's values regarding academic integrity and outlines procedures for resolving cases of alleged dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) that occur. The grade appeals policy handles students' concerns about final grades in a course, and the Student Conduct Code helps faculty respond to inappropriate student conduct not directly related to the integrity of their academic work. The sexual harassment policy protects the rights of both faculty and students to an environment free of intimidation, and the general grievance process helps to resolve situations in which students allege that academic regulations and procedures outside the realms of grade appeals and academic integrity have been improperly applied. In specific instances, the Faculty Senate Student Academic Relations Committee (**SARC**) serves as the final arbiter for both general grievances and grade appeals.

### Resources:

#### Academic Honor Policy

The active involvement of all faculty members is essential to the effective implementation of the Academic Honor Policy. For this reason, all instructors should familiarize themselves with this policy. The policy and all associated forms may also be found online at:

**<http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>**

Questions should be directed to the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (850-644-6876).

#### Class Disruption

Students are expected to participate in class activities without causing disruption or infringing on the rights of others. They are also expected to comply with the reasonable order of any University official, including an instructor. Behavior that does not meet these standards can subject the student to charges under the Student Conduct Code (**<http://dos.fsu.edu/srr/conduct-codes/student-conduct-code>**). Instructors may ask students to leave class when their behavior is disrupting the learning process.



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Instructors who have concerns about disruptive student behavior should contact the Dean of Students (850-644-2428 or <https://dos.fsu.edu/>). The FSU Police Department (911, 850-644-1234 or <http://police.fsu.edu/>) will respond directly to classroom situations at any time and should be called if an instructor believes that a class disruption might pose a risk to his or her safety or to the safety of students. The Student Situation Resolution Team coordinates communication and problem solving efforts in situations involving distressed and distressing students whose behavior is causing concern to the University community. It may be accessed by contacting either the Dean of Students or the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (<http://fda.fsu.edu>).

## **Grade Appeals**

The grade appeals system affords an opportunity for undergraduate or graduate students to appeal a final course grade under certain circumstances. Faculty judgment of student academic performance is inherent in the grading process and hence should not be overturned except when the student can show that the grade awarded represents a gross violation of the instructor's own specified grading standards and therefore was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner. The grading standards utilized during the grade appeals process are those that were contained in the instructor's syllabus at the beginning of the semester. The system does not apply to preliminary or comprehensive exams or to thesis or dissertation defenses; related issues are reviewed by the Student Academic Relations Committee via the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement .

**Step 1.** Within 30 calendar days following the date that final grades are made available to students, the student must contact the instructor in question to discuss the grade and attempt to resolve any differences. The student should document any attempts to contact the instructor to establish that the appeal was begun within this 30-day period. In the event that the instructor is not available, the student should provide that documentation to the instructor's

program or department chair. Either the student or the instructor may consult with the appropriate program or department chair during this process.

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**Step 2.** If no resolution is reached within the 30-day period, after the student's documented attempt, the student has an additional 15 calendar days to submit a written statement to the program or department chair. This statement must include an account of attempts to resolve the issue, as well as the evidence that forms the basis for the appeal. Within 20 calendar days thereafter, the department or program chair will arrange for a meeting of a grade appeals screening committee composed of three students enrolled in the academic unit offering the course to review the appeal. Appropriate students who have no conflict of interest will be chosen to serve on this screening committee by a student organization associated with the program or department, if such an organization exists. If none exists or if members of such an organization are not available, the department or program chair will select appropriate students who have no conflict of interest. Both the student and the instructor may attend the meeting.

\*The role of the screening committee is solely to determine whether the student has presented sufficient evidence to warrant further review. Within five calendar days after this meeting, the screening committee will render its decision in writing (recommend/do not recommend further review) to the program or department chair, the student, and the instructor. A negative decision will end the appeal. A positive decision will trigger the next step in the process.

**Step 3.** Within 20 calendar days of a positive decision from the grade appeals screening committee, the program or department chair will appoint and arrange for a meeting of a grade appeals board. This board is composed of three faculty members and two students other than those who served on the screening committee. The purpose of this board is to determine whether or not to uphold the final grade assigned by the instructor. The board will consider only the evidence provided by the student and the instructor in making the determination. Both the student and the instructor may attend the meeting. The grade will be upheld unless the evidence shows that the grade was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory

manner, as a result of a gross violation of the instructor's own grading standards. If the original grade is not upheld, the board will recommend that an alternative grade be assigned by the program or department chair. If the student has evidence that this grade

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appeals process has deviated substantially from these established procedures, resulting in a biased decision, the student may consult with the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement regarding referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee.

### **Grievances (students on main campus)**

Students who allege that academic regulations and procedures have been improperly applied in specific instances may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. In this process, the student brings a complaint first to the instructor, then to the department chair, and finally to the academic dean appropriate to the course involved, stopping at the level at which the complaint is resolved. If no resolution is reached, the student brings the complaint to the attention of the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement for either resolution or referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee of the Faculty Senate. A graduate student whose complaint is unresolved must see the Dean of The Graduate School prior to meeting with the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.

The Student Academic Relations Committee has the authority to direct, through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, that corrective action be taken when justified.

### **Student Academic Relations Committee**

The Faculty Senate Committee on Student Academic Relations (SARC) hears appeals from students who allege that decisions about their academic work have been made improperly or unprofessionally in colleges or schools. The Committee is a last resort for grievances and does not rule on academic work itself, but on procedures and faculty actions that affect academic work or evaluations of work. Referral to SARC takes place through the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.

### **Student Conduct Code**

The Student Conduct Code, which governs disruptive behavior in the classroom as well as other non-academic expectations for student conduct, can be found at:

**<http://dos.fsu.edu/srr/conduct-codes/student-conduct-code>**

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The Student Conduct Code is implemented by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Dean of Students Department.

**<https://dos.fsu.edu/>**

# FSU Teaching Resources



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## FSU Teaching Resources

**Teaching Assistants (TAs)** should be aware of the types of available resources at FSU to support them and their students. Programs and services that can help TAs with their teaching responsibilities as well as some that support undergraduate students are listed in this section. If you need detailed information about the range of services available at the University refer to:

- The Florida State University General Bulletin (undergraduate edition) at:  
<http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/apdefault.htm>
- The Graduate Bulletin at:  
<http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/apdefault.htm>
- The Graduate Student Handbook at:  
<http://gradschool.fsu.edu/New-Current-Students/Graduate-Student-Handbook>

The **Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE)** at the Graduate School provides university-wide support for the teaching efforts of graduate student teaching assistants through its various services. PIE also assists departments with graduate student teaching training needs, as well as in improving TAs' instructional skills and knowledge of University regulations regarding teaching.

<http://pie.fsu.edu>

### **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**

The mission of ACE is to help all FSU undergraduate students develop study skills and personal success habits that enhance learning to promote the highest level of scholarship and academic achievement. ACE assists students with time management, organizational strategies, effective note taking, preparing for exams, and so forth. Additionally, ACE plays a key role in connecting undergraduate students to the range of academic support services and programs that are available at Florida State University.

<http://ace.fsu.edu>

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## **Assessment and Testing**

Assessment & Testing at the Office of Distance Learning offers services to students, instructors, and administrators. These services include testing unit exams, proctored distance learning exams, testing unit guidelines for students, course evaluations, scanning services, and other services. Instructors can also find information about creating and administering tests and assessments on the website.

[\*\*http://distance.fsu.edu/testing\*\*](http://distance.fsu.edu/testing)

## **Blackboard User Support**

Blackboard is the main learning management system (LMS) used at FSU, for students, instructors and administrators. If you need any help, go to *Support* tab after you login, then search by categories, or contact the Support via the *Need Help* section.

## **Career Center**

The Career Center has many resources to assist in achieving career-related goals as you follow your path through graduate school. They can help you identify tools associated with job searches, credentials, internships, job listings, career expos, marketing your skills, professional associations, relocation information, executive search firms, life changes/transitions, and financial aid resources.

[\*\*http://www.career.fsu.edu\*\*](http://www.career.fsu.edu)

## **Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (C.A.R.E. )**

The Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement provides preparation, orientation and academic support programming for students who are among the first in their family to attend college and may face unique challenges in college because of economic, cultural or educational circumstances.

[\*\*http://care.fsu.edu\*\*](http://care.fsu.edu)

## **Center for Global Engagement (CGE)**

The CGE facilitates international diversity and fosters global understanding and awareness within the FSU community. It provides support services to international students, scholars, faculty and staff, and provides information about intercultural programs and international exchange programs.

[\*\*http://www.cge.fsu.edu\*\*](http://www.cge.fsu.edu)

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## **Division of Student Affairs**

The Division of Student Affairs collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to create welcoming, supportive and challenging environments that maximize opportunities for student learning and success. Through high quality programs, the Division facilitates student development, celebrates differences, and promotes civic and global responsibility.

**<http://studentaffairs.fsu.edu>**

## **Florida State University International Programs**

These programs assist students in studying abroad through one of Florida State's programs.



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## **Florida State University Libraries**

The mission of University Libraries is to support and enhance the learning, teaching, research, and service activities of the Florida State University by providing organized access to quality information in all formats, promoting information literacy, preserving information, and engaging in collaborative partnerships to disseminate ideas to advance intellectual discovery.

Teaching Assistants and their students can take advantage of many library services. The UBorrow and Interlibrary Loan services allow FSU students to request books and articles from other libraries across Florida and the world. Research assistance is offered by professional librarians in person, over the telephone, via e-mail, and through live Internet chat sessions. Library and information literacy instruction sessions are available upon request to classes and groups in library instruction rooms or your classroom. Library liaisons offer resources and assistance customized to each academic department's needs. University libraries offers a variety of tutoring and other academic services. The Libraries are committed to offering as many resources to distance learners as possible, including virtual research assistance, delivery of library materials, and online instruction sessions.

Supplemental materials for courses may be placed on course reserve for the semester when the course is offered. Materials placed on reserve in the library may include books and videos/DVDs and may be items from the Libraries' collection or personal copies belonging to the instructor. Links to electronic journal articles, book chapters, and many feature films can be added to course Blackboard sites. Any items placed on reserve must meet the conditions of copyright law.

Teaching Assistants are eligible to register for the Library Express Delivery service. LED is a service that delivers materials from the Libraries' collection as well as materials from other libraries requested through UBorrow and Interlibrary Loan to designated department locations.

**FSU library guide to copyright**  
**<http://guides.lib.fsu.edu/copyright>**

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FSU library guide to plagiarism

<http://guides.lib.fsu.edu/plagiarism>

Find more information on these services and much more at:

<http://www.lib.fsu.edu>

### **Florida State University Police Department (FSUPD)**

FSUPD is committed to providing Florida State University with a safe and secure higher education environment conducive to the goals of education and research.

<http://www.police.fsu.edu>

### **Florida State University Registrar (*FERPA information*)**

Each semester, the Florida State University publishes information for students and the public regarding their rights and protection of their education records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.

<http://registrar.fsu.edu/ferpa/apdefault.htm>

### **The Graduate School**

The Graduate School supports graduate students in every program. They provide free professional development workshops as well as manage the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) and Preparing Future Professionals (PFP) graduate certificate programs.

<http://www.gradschool.fsu.edu>

### **Instruction at FSU**

Instruction at FSU: A Guide to Teaching & Learning Practices is a handbook designed to help instructional faculty and graduate teaching assistants who are interested in being more effective teachers. It offers strategies used by experienced instructors and presents instructional methods and techniques following four components of Instructional Design: Course Planning, Lesson Delivery, Student Testing and Grading, and Course Revision and Evaluation. The handbook is available online, see website for details: <https://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/instruction-fsu-guide-teaching-learning-practices>

### **Office of Distance Learning (ODL)**

ODL manages FSU Blackboard (<http://campus.fsu.edu>) and provides support to online learning students, to FSU instructors of online courses, and to administrators. You can select your role from

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## Office of Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid exists to assist students with securing federal, state and institutional financial aid to achieve their degree. The types of financial aid includes scholarships, grants, and loans, for undergraduate and graduate students. For more information, go to : <http://financialaid.fsu.edu>

## Reading Writing Center

The Reading Writing Center is part of the English Department at FSU. It offers FREE one-on-one reading and writing tutorials to all FSU students. Go to their website for more information.

<http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center>

## Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)

SDRC was established to serve as an advocate for FSU students with disabilities and ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided. The SDRC works with faculty and staff, in and out of the classroom, to provides support services at no cost, offering an opportunity for students with disabilities to achieve their academic and personal goals. <http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc/>

## University Counseling Center (UCC)

The UCC is a welcoming and confidential place on campus where students can come to discuss issues ranging from homesickness and adjustment to college to relationships concerns, eating disorders, substance use, anxiety, and depression. They offer Individual, Couples, Group, and Crisis Intervention services by licensed and professionally trained staff to currently enrolled FSU students. Services are paid for through student fees and are offered at no additional charge. <http://counseling.fsu.edu>

## University Health Services

University Health Services provides medical care and outreach services to a diverse student population and eligible recipients in a safe and supportive environment. In addition, support services regarding health insurance, immunizations and compliance are also provided. <http://www.tshc.fsu.edu>

# Teaching Tips





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## Teaching TIPS for TAs

### Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

The “seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education,” originally framed by Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson in 1986, is a concise summary of decades of educational research findings about the kinds of teaching/learning activities most likely to improve learning outcomes.

#### **1. Good practice encourages student-faculty contact.**

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students’ intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

#### **2. Good practice encourages cooperation among students.**

Learning is enhanced when it is more of a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one’s own ideas and responding to others’ reactions improve thinking and deepen understanding.

**3. Good practice encourages active learning.** Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn just sitting in classes listening to the teacher, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

**4. Good practice gives prompt feedback.** Knowing what you know and don’t know about learning is key. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. To get started, students need help to assess their prior knowledge and competence. In classes, students need

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frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during the semester until the end, students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

**5. Good practice emphasizes time on task.** Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Students need help in learning time management. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and other professional staff can establish the basis for high performance for all.

**6. Good practice communicates high expectations.** Expect more and you will get it. High expectations are important for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well-motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations for themselves.

**7. Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.** There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the lab or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students first need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them, then they can be pushed to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.

**SOURCE:** Chickering, A.W., and Gamson, Z.F. (1991). *Applying the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Number 47, Fall 1991. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc

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## Bringing Out the Best in Your Students

Students are in charge of their own success. Their choices on a daily basis will determine what they learn in your class and their ability to apply it to future coursework. However, as a faculty member, you have significant influence on their learning and study behaviors. Here are some strategies for “bringing out the best” in your students!

### **1. Require students to attend class.**

- Take attendance – many instructors are using technology (PRS or clickers) to make this easier. (And experience shows that course pass rates increase when attendance counts!)
- Include a provision in the syllabus regarding how unexcused absences will impact final grade.
- Give quizzes periodically and/or on days that students are likely to skip class.
- Encourage attendance and share your own rationale about why it is important.
- Refer students to their dean’s office to discuss their options if they are missing class excessively for health or personal reasons.

### **2. Give timely feedback on tests and assignments so that students know where they stand and get help early if needed.**

- Design your syllabus so that students know their grades on several assignments and/or tests by the beginning of the 7th week (last week to drop classes) or the 8th week (mid-term). This will give them time to make changes or get help!
- Make grading a time-sensitive priority and use the Blackboard grade book to post grades.
- Provide ways for students to review their test errors so they can learn from them.

### **3. Make it personal -- get to know students individually as much as possible.**

- Use photo rosters to learn student names in and before class.



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- Encourage students to visit during your office hours.
  - If class size permits, include an individual or group meeting with the instructor as part of the course requirements.
  - Meet with students individually to discuss disruptive or inappropriate behavior.

#### **4. Encourage the highest level of academic integrity among your students.**

- Discuss the Academic Honor Policy on the first day of class.
- Change test material for different sections and semesters.
- Break large writing assignments into stages (e.g., topic/outline, draft, final).
- Develop unique writing assignments for which it is difficult for students to use another's work.
- Require students to submit their assignments via Safe Assignment or Turnitin Assignment on Blackboard.
- Meet with a student immediately if you suspect an academic honesty violation. Contact the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement for guidance regarding this process.

#### **5. Take the time to teach study skills and success strategies in the context of your discipline.**

- Give advice about how to take notes on your lecture. (Math notes are different from history notes – and printed PowerPoint slides don't always make good notes!)
- Post sample problems or study resources on Blackboard.
- Utilize techniques that promote student engagement with course content beyond passively sitting and listening (e.g., panel discussions, student debates, or team-based learning).
- Provide examples of how successful students have studied for your tests in the past (e.g., practice essay questions for higher level thinking vs. memorization).

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- Encourage students to consult with the Reading/Writing Center or other tutors as they work on draft papers or projects.

**6. Let students know what you expect in the classroom and how you grade.**

- Review your syllabus on the first day to highlight important policies, dates, and expectations.
- Explain your grading rubrics to students – what constitutes an “A” grade vs. a “C” grade?
- Provide clear directions on assignments and establish deadlines in advance so that students can plan accordingly.
- Provide individual and group feedback on returned assignments. Share examples of high-quality work so that students can better understand your expectations.

**7. Identify and encourage talent.**

- Discuss your research agenda and your discipline with students who express an interest in learning more about you and your career.
- Agree to serve as a faculty mentor for an undergraduate student interested in research opportunities. Contact the Office of Undergraduate Research for more information.
- Encourage the Honors in the Major (thesis) for outstanding undergraduate students. Contact the University Honors Program for more information.
- Make students aware of opportunities to compete for national scholarships or fellowships, especially as related to your discipline or experience. Contact the Office of National Fellowships for more information.
- Encourage your advanced students to become a tutor with one of our on-campus peer tutoring programs in Academic Center for Excellence (ACE).

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**8. Refer students to on-campus academic support services if they need outside help with subject matters, study skills, or time management.**

- Let students know about review sessions, study groups, or on-campus tutoring opportunities in class, via Blackboard, and on your syllabus.
- Include the FSU Tutoring Statement in your syllabus so that students know where to go for a comprehensive list of free on-campus tutoring programs.
- Refer students to ACE for study skills workshops, credit courses, personal academic consultations, and web resources .
- Visit the ACE website for a complete list of academic and student support services at Florida State University.

**Sources of this section:**

- Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)  
<http://ace.fsu.edu>  
[ace@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:ace@admin.fsu.edu)  
(850) 645-9151
- Office of Faculty Development and Advancement  
<http://fda.fsu.edu>
- Office of National Fellowship  
<http://onf.fsu.edu>
- Office of Undergraduate Research  
<http://our.fsu.edu>

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## Teaching: A Quick Tip Sheet

### Organization:

- Be prepared
- Organize the class time:
  - **Beginning:** Short review of lecture of last week
  - **Middle:** This is the content for that class period; present problems with examples and be aware of where students typically have problems.
  - **Conclusion:** Discuss next class time, assignments, and what they should have learned during this class.

### Professionalism:

- Dress for respect
- Start class on time and end class on time
- Respect all students

### Communication:

- Get to know your students (on a professional level)
  - Come early to class and stay a few minutes late
  - Learn students' names and call them by name
  - Introduce yourself (your educational background, why you're interested in this discipline, why you chose FSU, and any previous teaching experience).
- Make eye contact with students
- Promote interaction by:
  - Encouraging questions (e.g. verbal cues: "Why is that true?", "How is that different from...?" and "Can you elaborate?")
  - Responding to students questions in a constructive way (e.g. verbal cues: "Correct, however you might want to also think of ...", "That's a great point I hadn't thought of that" and "I can see how it might appear that way, but remember rule...").

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- Asking open-ended questions (e.g. verbal cues: “How did you arrive at that answer?” “How does that compare...?”)
  - Make every effort to be heard
    - Address the students when you have a question or are answering a question
    - Project so that everyone can hear
    - Repeat questions so that all students know what question you are answering
  - Make every effort to be understood
    - Pronounce your name for the students
    - Discuss your accent if appropriate
    - Encourage students to ask for clarification
    - Let students know, verbally, when you don’t understand them
  - Use language and voice as a tool for organization and gaining (regaining) student attention
    - Use organizational language to help students organize their thoughts (e.g. verbal cues: “First, we’re going to...”, “Next, we’re going to discuss...”, “Finally...”)
    - Be organized in your delivery of materials, and make that organization clear both verbally and visually
    - Be expressive- Modulate your voice by emphasizing important points and changing your tones to increase attention. Don’t use a monotone voice!

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## Ideas for the First Three Weeks

### Helping Students Make Transitions

1. Hit the ground running on the first day of class with substantial content.
2. Take attendance: roll call, clipboard, sign in, seating chart.
3. Introduce teaching assistants by slides, short presentation, or self-introduction.
4. Hand out an informative, artistic, and user-friendly syllabus.
5. Give an assignment on the first day to be collected at the next meeting.
6. Start laboratory experiments and other exercises the first time lab meets.
7. Call attention (written and oral) to what makes good lab practice: completing work to be done, procedures, equipment, clean up, maintenance, safety, conservation of supplies, full use of lab time, etc.
8. Administer a learning style inventory to help students find out about themselves.
9. Direct students to the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) for help on learning skills, time management, and other support.
10. Tell students the estimated time they will need to study for this course.
11. Hand out supplemental learning aids: library use, study tips, supplemental readings and exercises.
12. Explain how to study for the types of tests you give.
13. List ground rules in your syllabus regarding absence, late work, testing procedures, grading, and general decorum, and maintain these rules.
14. Announce office hours frequently and hold them.
15. Show students how to handle learning in large classes and in personal situations.
16. Give sample test questions and answers.
17. Explain the differences between legitimate collaboration and academic dishonesty.

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18. Seek out a different student each day and get to know something about him or her.
  19. Ask students to write about what important things are currently going on in their lives.
  20. Find out about students' jobs if they are working (how many hours a week, and what kinds of jobs they hold).

### **Directing Students' Attention**

21. Greet students at the door when they enter the classroom.
22. Start the class on time.
23. Make a grand stage entrance to hush a large class and gain attention.
24. Give a pre-test on the day's topic.
25. Start the lecture with a puzzle, question, paradox, picture, or cartoon on slides or transparency to focus on the day's topic.
26. Elicit student questions and concerns at the beginning of the class and list them on the chalkboard to be answered during the hour.
27. Have students write down what they think the important issues or key points of the day's lecture will be.
28. Ask students who read the student newspaper what is in the news today.

### **Challenging Students**

29. Have students write out their expectations for the course and their own goals for learning.
30. Use various forms of presentation in every class meeting.
31. Stage a figurative "coffee break" about 20 minutes into the hour: tell an anecdote, invite students to put down pens and pencils, refer to a current event, shift media.
32. Incorporate community resources: plays, concerts, government agencies, businesses, and the outdoors.
33. Show a film in a novel way: pause it for discussion, show only a few frames, anticipate ending, hand out a viewing or critique sheet, play and replay parts.
34. Form a student panel to present alternative views of the same concept.

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35. Share your philosophy of teaching with your students.
  36. Stage a change-your-mind debate with students moving to different parts of the classroom to signal change in opinion during the discussion.
  37. Conduct a “living” demographic survey by having students move to different parts of the classroom: size of high school, rural vs. urban, or consumer preferences.
  38. Tell about your current research interests and how you got there from your own beginnings in the discipline.
  39. Conduct a role-play to make a point or to lay out issues.
  40. Let students assume the role of a professional in the discipline: e.g. philosopher, literary critic, biologist, agronomist, political scientist, engineer.
  41. Conduct idea-generating or brainstorming sessions to expand horizons.
  42. Give students two passages of material containing alternative views to compare and contrast.
  43. Distribute a list of the unsolved problems, dilemmas or great questions in your discipline and invite students to claim one as their own to investigate.
  44. Ask students what books they’ve read recently.
  45. Ask what is going on in the state legislature on this subject which may affect their future.
  46. Let your students see the enthusiasm you have for your subject and your love of learning.
  47. Take students with you to hear guest speakers or special programs on campus.
  48. Plan “scholar-gypsy” lesson or unit to show the excitement of discovery in your discipline.

### **Providing Support**

49. Collect students’ current phone numbers and addresses and let them know that you may need to reach them.
50. Check out absentees. Call or write a personal note.
51. Diagnose students’ prior knowledge regarding course prerequisites by questionnaire or pre-test and give them feedback as soon as possible.
52. Hand out study questions or study guides.



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53. Be redundant; students should hear, read or see key material at least three times presented in three different ways.
  54. Allow students to demonstrate progress in learning: summary quiz over the day's work or a written reaction to the day's material.
  55. Use non-graded feedback to let students know how they are doing: post answers to ungraded quizzes and problem sets, exercises in class, oral feedback.
  56. Reward behavior you want: praise, stars, honor roll, personal note.
  57. Use a light touch: smile, tell a good joke, break test anxiety with a sympathetic comment.
  58. Organize. Give visible structure by posting the day's "menu" on chalk- board or overhead.
  59. Use multiple media: overhead, slides, film, videotape, audio tape, models, sample material.
  60. Use multiple examples, in multiple media to illustrate key points and important concepts.
  61. Make appointments with all students (individually or in small groups).
  62. Hand out wallet-sized telephone cards with all important telephone numbers listed: office department, resource centers, teaching assistant, lab.
  63. Print all important course dates on a card that can be handed out and taped to a mirror.
  64. Eavesdrop on students before or after class and join their conversation about course topics.
  65. Maintain an open lab grade book with current grades during lab time so that students can check their progress.
  66. Check to see if any students are having problems with any academic or campus matters and direct those who are to appropriate offices or resources.
  67. Tell students what they need to do to receive an "A" in your course.
  68. Stop the work to find out what your students are thinking, feeling and doing in their everyday lives.

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## Encouraging Active Learning

69. Have students write something.
70. Have students keep journals in which they comment ask questions and answer questions about course topics.
71. Invite students to critique each other's essays or short answer on tests for readability or content.
72. Invite students to ask questions and wait for the response.
73. Probe student responses to questions and wait for the response.
74. Put students into pairs or "learning cells" to quiz each other over material for the day.
75. Give students an opportunity to voice opinions about the subject matter.
76. Have students apply subject matter to solve real problems.
77. Give students red, yellow, and green cards (made of poster board) and periodically call for a vote on an issue by asking for a simultaneous show of cards.
78. Roam the aisles of a large classroom and carry on running conversations with students as they work on course problems (a portable microphone helps).
79. Ask a question directed to one student and wait for an answer.
80. Place a suggestion box in the rear of the room and encourage students to make written comments every time the class meets.
81. Do oral show-of-hands multiple choice tests for summary review and instant feedback.
82. Use task groups to accomplish specific objectives.
83. Grade quizzes and exercises in class as a learning tool.
84. Give students plenty of opportunity for practice before a major test.
85. Give a test early in the semester and return it graded in the next class meeting.
86. Have students write questions on index cards to be collected and answered the next class period.
87. Make collaborate assignments for several students to work on together.

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88. Assign written paraphrases and summaries of difficult reading.
  89. Give students a take-home problem relating to the day's lecture.
  90. Encourage students to bring current news items to class which relate to the subject matter and post these on a bulletin board nearby.

### **Building Community**

91. Learn names. Everyone makes an effort to learn at least a few names.
92. Set up a buddy system so students can contact each other about assignments and coursework.
93. Find out about your students via questions on an index card.
94. Take pictures of students (snapshots in small groups, mug shots) and post in classroom, office, or lab.
95. Arrange helping trios of students to assist each other in learning and growing.
96. Form small groups for getting acquainted; mix and form new groups several times.
97. Assign a team project early in the semester and provide time to work with team during class time.
98. Help students form study groups to operate outside the classroom.
99. Solicit suggestions from students for outside resources and guest speakers on course topics.

### **Feedback on Teaching**

100. Gather student feedback in the first three weeks of the semester to improve teaching and learning.

\*Source: <http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/facdev/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm>

## Factors that Impact Student Learning

Factors We Cannot Control But Can Influence	Factors We Cannot Control But Can Be Sensitive To	Factors We Can Control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Skills</li> <li>• Time Management</li> <li>• Student Preparation</li> <li>• Locus of Control</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Student Attitudes</li> <li>• Goals</li> <li>• Interest in Subject Matter</li> <li>• Self-Confidence/ Esteem</li> <li>• Student Confidence</li> <li>• Student Responsibility</li> <li>• Metacognitive Strategies</li> <li>• Level of Difficulty</li> <li>• Academic Maturity</li> <li>• Student Integrity</li> <li>• Student Expectations</li> <li>• Relevance</li> </ul> <p><i>*Source unknown</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior Knowledge</li> <li>• Home Life and Family Issues</li> <li>• Financial Concerns</li> <li>• Health Issues</li> <li>• Personal Relationships</li> <li>• Time of Day</li> <li>• Class Size</li> <li>• Ability</li> <li>• Work Issues</li> <li>• Cultural Diversity</li> <li>• Learning Styles</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Student Support (emotional/financial)</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Disability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching Strategies</li> <li>• Assignments</li> <li>• Teaching Style</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Reinforcement</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Presentation Style</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Preparation</li> <li>• Teaching Materials</li> <li>• Learning Outcomes</li> <li>• Faculty Engagement</li> <li>• Clarity of Presentation</li> <li>• Expectations</li> <li>• Classroom Learning Environment</li> <li>• Teaching Attitude</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Competence</li> </ul>

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## Techniques to Engage Students Resources on Active Learning

### What is active learning?

Active learning is a broad term used to describe 'learning by doing'. In active learning process, students engage in activities such as reading, writing, discussion, problem solving that foster deeper thinking about course content. Instructors can use many approaches to promote active learning and involve students in such higher order thinking tasks as **analysis, synthesis and evaluation** rather than passively sitting and listening to a lecture. (<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tsal>)

### How can active learning be incorporated into my course?

Elements of active learning may include talking, listening, reading, writing, discussing and reflecting. Strategies for incorporating active learning and higher order thinking skills range from simple to complex. Regardless of the level, the goal remains the same: Increase understanding and retention by having students reflect upon and interact with the material and with each other.

### Techniques and activities that engage students:

- One minute paper: pose either a specific or open-ended question and have students respond in writing for one or two minutes.
- Muddiest (or clearest) point: ask students to write about the "muddiest" point of the day's lecture or discussion.
- Think/pair/share: give students a question or problem to solve and have them work 2–5 minutes (alone). Have them discuss their ideas for 3-5 minutes with the students next to them (pair). Finally, ask or choose student pairs to share their ideas with the whole class (share).
- Panel discussions and Student debates: give students or teams a topic to consider and research. Have them present arguments in support of their position to the class. Allow other teams to respond.

- Punctuate a lecture or discussion with different questioning techniques, such as *diagnostic* (how do you interpret and explain?), *priority* (what do you consider most important?), *prediction* (what do you think would happen if?), and *summarizing* (what inferences can be made from the case, what generalizations?).
- Foster active listening: pause during important points in a lecture to let the material sink in. Move around the room, making eye contact with students and ask if anyone has questions or needs clarification.
- Have students use flash cards or personal response system (clickers) to indicate their level of comprehension during a discussion or lecture.
- Collaborative learning: have students work together online or in the classroom to solve problems or analyze cases. Discussion boards, wikis and white boards are just a few of the tools students can use to share information and exchange ideas. Provide clear guidelines for participants, including how group projects and individual contributions will be graded.
- Integrate multimedia, including audio and video clips, into course lectures; have students interpret and react.

## **Resources**

### ***Active Learning:***

- The University of Hull – Platform for Active Learning:  
<http://www.hull.ac.uk/pal/section-1/index.html>
- Using Mid-Semester Evaluations to Encourage Active Learning:  
<http://trc.virginia.edu/resources/using-mid-semester-evaluations-to-encourage-active-learning-2>
- Active Learning for the College Classroom:  
<http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/>
- Active Learning for the College Classroom:  
<http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/>

### ***Team Based Learning:***

- The Essential Elements of Team Based Learning:  
[http://vd.ucr.ac.cr/sedes/?wpfb\\_dl=10](http://vd.ucr.ac.cr/sedes/?wpfb_dl=10)

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- Team Based Learning Collaborative:  
<http://www.teambasedlearning.org>

### ***Collaborative Learning/Group Work:***

- Encouraging study groups:  
<http://ctl.byu.edu/tip/encouraging-study-groups>
- 20 Collaborative Learning Tips and Strategies for Teachers:  
<http://www.teachthought.com/learning/20-collaborative-learning-tips-and-strategies>

### ***Critical Thinking:***

- FSU Critical Thinking Initiatives:  
<https://criticalthinking.fsu.edu/>
- Teaching Critical Thinking Through Online Discussion:  
<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EQM0048.pdf>
- The Critical Thinking Community:  
<http://www.criticalthinking.org>

### ***Problem-Based Learning:***

- Teaching Strategies: Problem-based Learning:  
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tspb1>
- Speaking of Teaching--Problem-based learning:  
[http://web.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/Newsletter/problem\\_based\\_learning.pdf](http://web.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/Newsletter/problem_based_learning.pdf)

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# Classroom Assessment Essentials

Developed by Urska Dobersek and Connie Eudy

1. **Assessments are collection and interpretation of all the data gathered from students.**
2. **Assessment is important to:**
  - Be accountable (e.g., Am I meeting the standards?)
  - Make educational decisions (e.g., Did I meet the objectives; How well do my students understand the material?).
3. **Use different types of assessments:**
  - Traditional assessment: multiple choice, true/false, essay, completion item tests, quizzes.
  - Authentic assessment: performance based assessment, portfolio, and hands- and minds-on activities.

## Examples

- **Course assignments:** Students often consider course assignments to be a fairer measurement of learning than exams because they can demonstrate a greater range of abilities and work patterns.
- **Examinations/tests:** Standardized (commercial) or instructor developed – structured as multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, solve problems (math & science), short answer, essay and open book exams.
- **Performance based assessment:** These are tasks that engage the students in the discovery or creative process, scientific reasoning, and problem solving. A performance assessment can be a demonstration, a presentation, a tutorial to assess another's work.
- **Portfolio development:** As an assessment tool, student portfolio captures the evidence of student learning over time, in multiple formats and various contexts, ideally, it includes a student's reflection on his or her own learning. A student portfolio may include: formal written papers, problem-solving projects and solutions, essays, assignments, artwork, pictures, videotapes of class presentations, journal entries, event reports, teamwork projects and reports, applications, research, and instructor and peer feedback. Essentially, **a portfolio provides the story of an educational journey.**



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- **Problem-based assessment:** This is to assess general or discipline-specific mastery. Problem-based assessment provides the students' opportunities to recognize and identify the problems (issues, questions, etc.), develop multiple solutions, justify or critique the solution, and make decisions.

- **Self- and peer-assessment:** Self- and peer- assessment engage students in the processes of observing, questioning against standards, and seeking alternatives or corrections. Self-assessment encourages students to reflect continuously and actively make judgments on their performance based on course expectations.

#### **4. Assess at different times:**

- a. **Formative assessments** are brief, used on a daily basis to inform about the instructional decision making (e.g., review the concepts covered, move on to the next topic), and can be administer very frequently.

Examples: quiz, journal entry, concept organizer/map, verbally asking questions.

- b. **Summative assessments** are lengthy, used to provide a measure of students' learning, and are administered after some period of instruction.

Examples: midterm, final exam.

#### **5. Assess at different cognitive levels**

(see Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge for more information).

#### **6. Assess frequently** and provide timely helpful feedback to improve learning.

#### **7. Assessment process:**

- a. Formulate statements of intended learning outcomes (i.e., objectives)
- b. Develop or select assessment
- c. Administer the assessment
- d. Evaluate assessment findings (i.e., data analysis to determine validity and reliability of the data)
- e. Use results to enhance teaching and learning

#### **8. Testing Tips:**

##### **a. Creating the test:**

- Test items should match your statements of intended learning outcomes.

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- Preferably use previously developed test items that demonstrate sufficient reliability and validity evidences.
  - Avoid biases (e.g., cultural, gender).i
  - Group items of similar format together.
  - Arrange items from easy to hard.
  - Check answer key to be sure the answers follow a fairly random pattern(s).
  - Keep items and their options on the same page.
  - Check test directions.
  - Provide space for name and date.
  - Proofread the test.

**b. Administering the test:**

- Maintain positive attitude.
- Minimize distractions.
- Equalize advantages.
- Avoid surprises.
- Clarify rules.
- Rotate distribution.
- Remind students to check their copies.
- Monitor students.
- Give time warnings.
- Collect test uniformly.

**c. Scoring the test:**

- Prepare an answer key.
- check the answer key.
- score blindly (e.g., essay)
- Check scoring.
- Record scores.

**d. Analyzing the test:**





- Qualitative
  1. Test objectives
  2. Content validity
  3. Technical item quality
- Quantitative
  1. Item discrimination
  2. Item difficulty

**9 \*Assessment should be used to improve student learning and enhance instruction!**

# Communication Tools for Teaching and Learning

Tool	What can it do for instruction?	Resources
<b>e-mail</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Providing individualized verification &amp; feedback;</li><li>-Group email for announcement, reminder, clarification, and information sharing.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>University email</li><li>Google mail (gmail)</li><li>Yahoo mail</li><li>MSN mail (hotmail)</li></ul>
<b>Blog</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-study journals</li><li>-Group project</li><li>-Peer review/assessment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="http://www.blogger.com">www.blogger.com</a></li><li><a href="http://www.wordpress.org">www.wordpress.org</a></li><li><a href="http://blogs.yahoo.com">blogs.yahoo.com</a></li></ul>
<b>Wiki</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-collaboration on projects</li><li>-note taking</li><li>-knowledge management</li><li>-online database</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="http://www.mediawiki.org">www.mediawiki.org</a></li><li><a href="http://info.tikiwiki.org">info.tikiwiki.org</a></li><li><a href="http://www.dokuwiki.org">www.dokuwiki.org</a></li></ul>
<b>e-portfolio</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-collection of work</li><li>-development of career expectation</li><li>-motivating students</li><li>-assessment tool</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="http://www.career.fs.u.edu/portfolio/">http://www.career.fs.u.edu/portfolio/</a></li><li><a href="http://www.elgg.net">www.elgg.net</a> (free)</li><li><a href="http://www.chalkandwire.com/">www.chalkandwire.com/</a></li><li><a href="http://www.taskstream.com">www.taskstream.com</a></li></ul>
<b>Social networks</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-building community</li><li>-exploring common topics and interests</li><li>-sharing information and resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="http://www.Facebook.com">www.Facebook.com</a></li><li><a href="http://www.Linkedin.com">www.Linkedin.com</a></li><li><a href="http://twitter.com">twitter.com</a></li></ul>

# Communication Tools for Teaching and Learning

Tool	What can it do for instruction?	Resources
<p><i>Online survey</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-mid-term self-survey</li> <li>-collecting end of class (topic, session, etc.) data</li> <li>-opinion, suggestion, and satisfaction</li> <li>-voting</li> <li>-social scheduling</li> </ul>	<p>www.surveymonkey.com            www.qualtrics.com            Google documents            www.doodle.com</p>
<p><i>Online quiz</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-unit quiz and class quiz</li> <li>-call attention</li> <li>-collecting information on student learning</li> </ul>	<p>BlackBoard test            www.questionwriter.com/free-quiz-software.html            www.classmarker.com</p>
<p><i>Audio/video</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-providing audio feedback to students improves communication</li> <li>-adding audio to text-file</li> <li>-video demonstration extends visibility</li> </ul>	<p>Audacity.sourceforge.net (free audio recording and editing software)            Camstudio.org (screen recording software)            Adobe Captivate</p>
<p><i>Learning management tools</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-course management</li> <li>-tracking students activities</li> <li>-assessment</li> <li>-communication tools embedded</li> </ul>	<p>Blackboard            Moodle</p>



**One very powerful communication tool is face-to-face interaction with students!**

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## Tips for Fostering Diversity in the Classroom

Developed by Dr. Carrie Sandahl, School of Theatre

### Questions to ask yourself:

1. What aspects of identity affect the way in which we see the world as both teachers and students? Which of these aspects are visible and which are not?
2. What values do I hold that are consistent with and different from the dominant culture?
3. Are my classroom norms and objectives clear?
4. What values may be embedded in my discipline that may confuse or disturb some students?
5. Are there cultural biases in the examples that I use?
6. What biases, fears, and stereotypes do I bring into the classroom?

### Pointers:

1. What you think of as normal or human behavior may be cultural. Gestures, eye contact, and appropriate student-teacher interaction, for example, vary according to culture.
2. Don't assume that what you mean is what is understood.
3. You don't have to like or accept different behavior, but you should try to understand it.
4. Most people do behave rationally; you just have to discover the rationale.
5. Everyone has a race, ethnicity, and nationality. Be careful not to set up your own cultural identity as the norm.
6. Don't ask students to represent the groups to which they belong. Don't assume members of these groups know their history or culture.
7. Avoid stereotypes in hypothetical examples.
8. Learn students' names and how to pronounce them.

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9. Keep your audience in mind when preparing your lessons. Vary your examples so that you don't favor students with similar cultural references to yours.
  10. Be aware of your own non-verbal behavior. Does your behavior either welcome or exclude certain students?
  11. Deal with racist, sexist, homo phobic, or other discriminatory comments. Otherwise the classroom atmosphere can be poisoned.
  12. If possible, make your course content inclusive. Address diversity issues in your teaching. To what extent does your syllabus assume a universality of human experience?
  13. Let students make mistakes, change their minds, and engage in debate. Provide students opportunities to explore other points of view.
  14. Offer materials in a variety of formats (oral, written, Internet, Audio-visual, discussion, lecture, etc.).

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## Conducting a Laboratory Session

A laboratory session implies active learning! It is a chance for students to work with and talk to each other, to experiment, explore, discuss, reflect and draw appropriate conclusions from their work. Some lab sessions aim to acquaint students with practical skills and techniques relevant to the discipline whereas others may focus on the development of skills in scientific inquiry.

### Tips:

- Get familiar with all equipment, materials and procedures of the experiment
- Be knowledgeable on procedures for coping with emergencies
- Conduct an effective demonstration with explanation, emphasizing important points
- Interact with students throughout the process
- Seek help when you can't deal with any emergency situation or potential danger

### 1. Prepare ahead

- Prepare ahead of time
- Preview textual materials and lab manuals
- Discuss lab session expectations with lecturer beforehand

### 2. Know the lab and the safety procedures

- Get familiar with all the equipment and materials to be used
- Find out where essential supplies are stored and ascertain who is responsible for ordering them
- Know how to cope with equipment breakdown
- If possible, perform the experiment once in advance to ensure it works
- It is also a good chance to identify all the learning points or all possible outcomes in the process and estimate the time required
- Prepare lab notes to supplement the manual, if needed

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### 3. Interact with students

- Provide clear and complete instruction at the very beginning of the lab session
- Try to break down the demonstration (of equipment, the experiment process or both) into several meaningful steps
- Explain and emphasize key points. Check understanding from students by asking relevant questions or inviting a few to try on the equipment
- Listen to questions that are asked and problems that arise during the lab
- During the session, you may ask process questions like:
  - How did you begin?
  - Where did you first experience difficulty?
  - Are there other options available to you?

### 4. Coach students

- In case of difficulties, avoid jumping right in and completing the task for the students. Use process questions to help students identify their own problems and solve them. This is particularly important to student development of skills in scientific inquiry
- Get the whole group together for debriefing. Try not to lecture but summarize what the students have said and highlight major learning points

### 5. Post-lab feedback/evaluation

- Jot down notes for future improvement and share them with the lecturer, technicians and other demonstrators.
- Read and evaluate student lab write-ups to assess individual or group success.

**Source:** <http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/lab-classes>  
[http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p7\\_6](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p7_6)  
<http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/laboratory-teaching>







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