Teaching Tip: Let’s Get Critical
Try taking a few minutes at least once a week to do an activity called “let’s get critical.” Simply ask students a short critical thinking question pertaining to a lecture topic from that week. This can help address the importance of critical thinking and become a component of your course evaluation. It can also be used as an attendance tool.

Letter from the Editor:
A week without classes can interrupt the flow of material and send students’ minds wandering. Unexpected departures due to weather are particularly challenging; however, spring break can also put a hitch in an otherwise great semester. Keep your class on track and plan for the break by scheduling midterms, papers, readings, extra credit assignments, or discussion board post requirements after the break has concluded. Put some thought into how your class will benefit from the break without forgetting that there is still a lot to do before finals.

The PIE Hotline Q&A:
Dear PIE,
This semester I have a student who is not performing well on exams. I know this student studies and comes to office hours. How can I help them succeed on the next exam?
Sincerely,
Unsure of how to help,

Dear Unsure of how to help,
First, you need to diagnose why your student isn’t succeeding. For example, perhaps the student didn’t prepare appropriately, suffers from test anxiety, or lacks proper exam-taking strategies. Alternatively, the exam may not align with the course’s learning objectives, or the exam questions might be confusing or poorly formatted. Once you diagnose the issue(s), you can provide appropriate resources to the student or edit your exams accordingly.
Sincerely,
PIE

Book Recommendation:
“Teaching With Compassion”
By Peter Kaufman and Janine Schipper
This book compares the act of teaching to the doctor’s Hippocratic oath, creating 7 pledges for teachers to follow. The book is full of activities and tips on how we can be more compassionate towards our students, while still pushing them to meet high academic standards.

Campus Resources: PRE
Midterm time is near! Check your students’ progress – those who are falling behind may benefit from outreach from FSU’s Proactive Referral and Engagement (PRE) Program. Upon referral, PRE staff will attempt to address students’ needs, and may also refer students to tutoring and other services. See PRE for details: http://ace.fsu.edu/pre.

PIE Resource: Peer Teaching Observations
The PIE Program is now offering Peer Teaching Observations. If you would like constructive feedback from other teaching assistants on methods to use in the classroom, please reach out to us. Check out the following link for more information: https://fsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0vRg47lJQjYmix

TA Spotlight: Kate Hill
Kate Hill, PIE’s TA of the Month, was nominated for the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award last year (2018), and has been a PIE Associate for the Department of Biology from 2015-present. At FSU, Kate has taught Biology for non-majors and assisted in developing the new Biology 2 Laboratory, which incorporates inquiry-based learning methods. She has also served as a TA for Conservation Biology and Marine Biology. Kate believes that learning should be an exploratory process in which students ask questions, gather and assimilate evidence, draw conclusions, and construct explanations. One of Kate’s students had this to say after taking a course with her: “Kate was very interactive and made sure to teach the material so that it would stick.” Thank you, Kate, for all you do for our students at FSU!

To nominate a TA to highlight in our PIE Newsletter, please email us at PIE-info@fsu.edu
FEBRUARY/MARCH EVENTS

EVENTS ON CAMPUS

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TUES 2/19 – ONLINE TEACHING TIPS
Join us to go over the basics of what an instructor needs to know when teaching an online course, and discuss tips and techniques for building an engaging online learning environment.

Presenters: Jennifer Kellett & Spencer Youngberg

Click here to register.

WED 3/6 – 3:30-5PM - TA PANEL Q&A SESSION
Have a question not yet covered in a workshop? Don’t see a topic scheduled that could serve your teaching needs? This event aims to tackle all of those questions and more by combining your questions and a collection of TAs who have extensive experience in the classroom. Send in your questions at the PIE helpline: pie-info@fsu.edu!

Presenters: J.T. Bandzuh, Vivianne Asturizaga

Click here to register.

MON 4/8 — SPECIAL TIME: 10AM-11:30AM CRAFTING A LEARNING-CENTERED SYLLABUS
Creating an effective syllabus is essential for setting the tone for the semester and is an important component of the academic job search. This session will discuss the process of creating a syllabus that clearly communicates learning objectives and course expectations. We will conclude with suggestions for how to utilize the syllabus as a learning tool to promote student success in your course. Presenters: Kate Hill, Jeffrey Conley

Click here to register.