

Graduate Teaching Assistant Development & Training

Annotated Bibliography of Select Print, Video, & Online Resources (Materials available for loan at the CTE Library, 212 Gore Hall; ext. 2027)

Print Resources

Curzan, A., & Damour, L. (2000). *First day to final grade: A graduate student's guide to teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

This handbook is designed to help new graduate TAs with their instructional responsibilities. The text is written to function as a quick reference tool. It centers on the “how tos” of teaching, such as designing a lesson, facilitating a discussion, grading. It also introduces a variety of teaching approaches focused on active student learning.

Audience: Junior TAs and faculty who supervise TAs.

Davis, W., Smith, J., & Smith, R. (Eds). (2003). *Ready to teach. Graduate teaching assistants prepare for today and for tomorrow*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

This refereed collection of papers based on presentations made at the Sixth National Conference on the Education and Employment of Graduate Teaching Assistants reflects the diversity of scholarship and practice involved in TA development.

Audience: Senior TAs, faculty who supervise TAs, and individuals involved in TA preparation.

Nyquist, J. D., & Wulff, D. H. (1996). *Working effectively with graduate assistants*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

This research-based and practice-oriented book has a twofold purpose: Providing faculty with a better understanding of how to help prepare and nurture the next generation of university teachers, scholars, and researchers. This book discusses the key issues and provides specific tips, resources, and strategies that both RA and TA supervisors may use for supervision. It also features a chapter focused on the specific needs of international graduate assistants.

Audience: Faculty, staff and administrators involved in the training and development of both graduate RAs and TAs

Prieto, L. R. & Meyers, S. A. (Eds.) (2001). *The teaching assistant training handbook: How to prepare TAs for their responsibilities*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press

This book focuses on the design, implementation, assessment and ongoing improvement of TA training programs that are conducted both at the departmental or university-wide levels. The authors illustrate a wide range of strategies to prepare TAs for their teaching responsibilities, including orientation programs, workshops, courses, on-going supervision, and experiential activities.

Audience: Faculty, staff, and administrators who train and supervise TAs

Print Resources (continued)

The Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press. (published quarterly).

This journal is designed to address two areas of graduate student development: (1) preparation for the multiple roles as TAs; and (2) preparation for future faculty.

Sample topic areas:

- Innovative approaches to TA training
- Research into the socialization of graduate students for their various tasks
- Disciplinary differences in attitudes towards, and approaches to, teaching assistantships and TA training
- Commentary and work by TAs themselves
- TA program development efforts and practices
- Institutional considerations in the employment of TAs
- Issues of general concern in international TA development

Audience: Faculty, staff, and administrators who train and supervise TAs and international TAs; students, faculty, staff and administrators involved in preparing future faculty efforts.

Luo, J., Grady, M., & Bellows, L.H. (2001). Instructional issues for teaching assistants. *Innovative Higher Education*, 25 (3), 209-230. New York: Human Sciences Press.

This study examines TAs' perceptions of various instructional issues and explores whether their perceptions are affected by nationality, gender, and academic discipline.

Marincovich, M., Prostko, J., & F. Stout. (Eds.). 1998). *The professional development of graduate teaching assistants*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

This comprehensive TA training handbook provides a clear framework for implementing and assessing an effective program both at the discipline-specific and university levels. It also addresses issues related to the development of international TAs.

International Graduate Teaching Assistants

Sarkisian, E. (1997). *Teaching American students: A guide for international faculty and teaching assistants in colleges and universities*. Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.

Many faculty and graduate students from other countries have language difficulties in the American classroom; they know that their students may have trouble understanding them, and that they may have problems understanding their students. What these teachers may not expect are other surprises: that different cultures make different assumptions about the academic background of college students, how students learn, the appropriate roles of teachers and students, and even the fundamental purpose of a college education. This guide explains students' expectations and offers practical strategies, including how to communicate more easily with undergraduates, how to give clear presentations, and how to teach interactively. The guide also includes quotations and advice from international faculty and TAs: a bibliography of resources on language, teaching, and culture; and appendices with concrete suggestions on topics from planning the first day of class to grading papers and problem sets.

Audience: International faculty and TAs as well as students, faculty and staff who train, supervise and mentor international TAs.

Video Resources (VHS format)

The art of discussion leading: A class with Chris Christensen. (1989). Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. (28 minutes)

Professor Christensen, who has taught for nearly fifty years at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, initiates a group of apprentice teachers into the challenges of discussion leading. Under his guidance, the group analyzes a teaching case. Includes classroom scenes, reflections on teaching by Professor Christensen, and interviews with participants.

Race in the Classroom: A Multiplicity of Experience. (1993). Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. (19 minutes)

Five vignettes depicting moments in college courses when the race or culture of participants, a race-related topic, or racial dynamics become a major factor in teaching and learning. Each vignette is based on an actual classroom incident. These scenes do not offer specific answers, but are intended instead to spark discussion on these important and difficult issues.

Teaching in America: A Guide for International Faculty. (1993). Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. (38 minutes)

Practical advice on the culture of the American classroom, student expectations, and techniques for successful teaching. Interviews with international faculty and teaching fellows at Harvard University deal with topics ranging from language problems to how to keep discussions lively. Classroom scenes from courses in anthropology, economics, and physics with an analysis of successful teaching strategies adopted by international instructors.

How to speak: Lecture tips from Patrick Winston. (1997). Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. (45 minutes)

In this skillful lecture, Professor Winston of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology offers tips on how to give an effective talk, cleverly illustrating his suggestions by using them himself. He emphasizes how to start a lecture, cycling in on the material, using verbal punctuation to indicate transitions, describing "near misses" that strengthen the intended concept, and asking questions. He also talks about using the blackboard, overhead projections, and props.

Dealing with Problems. (1989). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Center for Instructional Development. (12 minutes)

The prospect of facing a class of students for the first time can produce anxiety for instructors. This video allows instructors to discuss problematic classroom situations and to increase their confidence by mentally rehearsing and planning for difficult situations. The eleven vignettes explore problems such as cheating, grading, sexual harassment, disruptive students, and students who are reluctant to participate.

Teaching in the Diverse Classroom. (1991). Seattle, WA: Center for Instructional Development and Research. (36 minutes)

Instructors who strive to create inclusive classrooms may encounter difficulties because of the diversity of race, ethnicity, learning styles, ability, class, and sexual orientation of students within their classroom. Through student and faculty interviews, as well as scenes from actual classes, suggestions are made to create classrooms that foster effective teaching and learning for all students.

Video Resources (continued)

Thinking Together: Collaborative Learning in Science. (1992). Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning (18 minutes)

Collaborative learning stresses active student engagement, allowing students to work with one another in class and to master difficult material by pooling their intellectual resources. This technique increases their understanding of concepts and engenders more confidence in their work. The video presents three models of collaborative learning currently used in Harvard science classrooms and shows students actively involved in discussing problems and devising solutions with the help of their instructor.

What Students Want: Teaching from a Student's Perspective. (1993). Cambridge, MA: Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning (24 minutes)

Interviews with over forty undergraduates provide candid comments on: preferred lecturing and discussion-leading styles; workload; relations among students, TAs, and professors; personal issues of individuality, race and gender in the classroom; and definitions of effective teaching. The connection between teacher and student emerges as crucial for the quality of instruction.

Online Resources

Faculty CYBER Handbook on Teaching <<http://ase.tufts.edu/cae/>>

The online handbook is searchable by subject category (e.g., "Lab Sections" or "Diversity Issues") or by keyword of the user's own choosing (e.g., "gender" or "discussion" or "test" or "section" or "problem"). The site is supported by the Center for Academic Excellence, Tufts University.

A selection of *Online TA Manuals* from various institutions can be found at <www.udel.edu/cte/taresources.htm>

The University of Delaware online TA Handbook can be accessed at <www.udel.edu/cte/TAbook/>

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