

GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
WILMINGTON

Resource Handbook
for
Graduate Teaching Assistants



AUGUST 18, 2006

WELCOME TO UNCW!

As a graduate teaching assistant (TA), you have an important role in assuring that the university's instructional activities are of the highest quality. Your effectiveness as a TA will be increased if you become aware of several important university policies and the many resources UNCW offers TAs and their undergraduate students. This handbook outlines various policies and best practices that are relevant to you. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the information in this manual and keep it handy for future reference. The manual also highlights several centers and programs on campus that you and your students can access to facilitate teaching and educational experiences.

Each member of the Graduate School is pleased to welcome you to UNCW. We hope your learning and teaching experiences are outstanding and within the tradition of excellence of the graduate programs at this university. Should you have questions or need assistance anywhere along the way, please contact us.

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A WELCOME FROM THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

WHAT IS THE GSA?

GSA stands for the UNCW Graduate Student Association. Our purpose is to encourage, recognize, and assist all graduate students academically and socially, and to promote the interests and welfare of graduate students within the university. The GSA works closely with the Graduate School, the Student Government Association, and graduate students to enhance their experiences at UNCW.

To accomplish our goals, the GSA works through departmental representatives and graduate students working on committees to facilitate grant opportunities, address graduate student issues, and to provide endless networking possibilities. Being an active member of the GSA will enhance your organizational understanding and leadership skills, and will offer you the opportunity to form valuable relationships within and across the university community.

Without your involvement how will we know what issues you are facing? Being an active member will give you a voice when it comes to concerns specific to graduate students and can help you gain resources for graduate students in your department. The time commitment is not burdensome; we meet once a month (on the last Sunday of the month) to discuss upcoming events, grant applications, and other issues affecting graduate students.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the GSA or have any questions about what we do, please contact GSA president, Leigh Muscle, at lkm6818@uncw.edu

For more information on the GSA visit our Web site at <http://student.uncw.edu/org/gsa/>

Welcome to the UNCW Graduate School. We encourage you to become an active member of the GSA and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

Sincerely,

The Officers and Members of the Graduate Student Association

GRADUATE SCHOOL AT UNCW...WHO ARE WE? WHAT ARE WE?

The University of North Carolina Wilmington is a community of scholars dedicated to excellence in teaching, learning, research, artistic achievement, and service to local and global communities. UNCW is a growing and evolving comprehensive university that values close relationships among students, faculty, and staff in a diverse, supportive, and challenging intellectual environment. The Graduate School provides leadership and coordination in developing graduate programs that complement UNCW's undergraduate offerings. These programs are consistent with identified local and national needs as well as the university's mission and are designed to prepare students for successful careers in basic and applied research, provide the necessary background and experience needed for a wide range of professional positions, and prepare interested students in continuing their graduate education at doctoral institutions. Currently, the Graduate School administers programs of study in the following areas:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Marine Biology
- Master of Arts (MA) in English, History, Liberal Studies, Mathematics, and Psychology
- Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Secondary Education with Options in Science, English, History and Mathematics
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Education (MEd) in Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education, Language and Literacy Education, Special Education, Secondary Education, and Curriculum/Instruction Supervision
- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (MFA)
- Master of Public Administration (MPA)
- Master of School Administration (MSA)
- Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA)
- Master of Science (MS) in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science and Information Systems, Geology, Instructional Technology, Marine Science and Marine Biology, and Mathematics
- Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
- Master of Social Work (MSW)

- Post-Baccalaureate Certificates in Applied Statistics, Environmental Studies, Gerontology, Hispanic Studies, and Instructional Technology Specialist.

In addition, planning is underway for a number of new master's degrees and certificate programs.

For the eighth consecutive year the University of North Carolina Wilmington is ranked in the top ten public comprehensive universities in the South in annual college rankings by *U.S. News & World Report* (2005). <http://appserv02.uncw.edu/news/article.asp?ID=1687>

We are proud of our achievements and look forward to working with you as we continue to build excellence in education. To assist you in moving into the university community both as a new graduate student and graduate teaching assistant, an **Orientation for New Graduate Teaching Assistants** is conducted by the Graduate School prior to the beginning of classes each fall. College and departmental orientations for specific academic areas are also held to further clarify the specific roles and responsibilities you will have in your individual programs. The Graduate School and the Center for Teaching Excellence collaborate in creating and offering ongoing workshops that TAs will take in order to be able to teach in the classroom. You will learn more about these opportunities as the semester progresses. **In the meantime, congratulations on being at UNCW and enjoy the opportunities that await you here!**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We want to thank the following universities and their respective deans for giving the Graduate School at UNCW permission to adapt and use materials from their publications in this handbook. Every attempt has been made to properly cite and attribute the materials used in the production of this manual.

[This is a work in progress.](#) Please let us know how the materials presented in the manual work for you and what other kinds of information would be helpful to you in your graduate teaching assistant role.

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Send your feedback to: sandellk@uncw.edu

THANKS GO TO:

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SECTION ONE: ROLES AND DUTIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT IN THE WORLD OF THE UNIVERSITY

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland

<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

The assigned duties of a TA are consistent with the aims and objectives of the teaching and research missions of the university. An appointment of 20 hours per week is considered a full-time assistantship; a 10 hour per week appointment is considered a half-time assistantship. [Please reference APPENDIX A for guidelines from the UNC-GA.](#)

Specific duties of TAs vary from one department to another. For the majority of teaching assistants, however, assignments and responsibilities fall into several categories:

- Assuming teaching responsibility for a laboratory or discussion session of a course;
- Assuming teaching responsibility for a classroom section of a multi-sectional course, under the close supervision of the director(s) of the course;
- Assisting a faculty member in the grading, advising, and administrative duties necessary for a course(s);
- Assisting in general departmental administrative duties, such as advising or the administration of community programs, workshops, etc.

Within departments, assignments depend on the department's needs and the experience and academic qualifications of the assistant. All graduate TAs serving in any capacity are under the direction and close supervision of a regularly-appointed member of the faculty.

TIME COMMITMENTS: Graduate TAs may be required to come to campus prior to the actual beginning of classes to assist with orientation and class-preparation duties. TAs usually complete their formal duties when final examinations have been graded. In theory, the teaching assistantship requires 20 hours per week; however, the actual time TAs devote to their assignments varies. For example, in some disciplines, a new TA may find that a task such as grading initially requires more time than the usual 20-hour week allows. However, assigned duties during other weeks may entail less than 20 hours of

work. The hours spent in preparation, classroom or laboratory time, and grading differ from one discipline to another.

GRADING: Although it is perhaps a tedious job, grading is also one of the most important and most difficult. Grading exams and papers for a course that you are not teaching demands a great deal of coordination with the faculty member in charge. TAs often assist in the construction of exam questions, which requires an intimate knowledge of the course and the instructor's intentions. TAs may also be asked to keep records of student grades, meet with students who have questions about their grades, and calculate final grades. In such instances, TAs naturally would want to attend the lead professor's lectures to be able to explain to students how their grade was determined.

LEADING DISCUSSION SESSIONS: Typically, breakout discussion or recitation sections are scheduled for large classes to provide opportunities for greater student involvement. These sections are held to allow time for questions, to discuss the week's lectures, or to work through sets of questions related to the lecture. Other types of sections have specific learning objectives, and the TA may be expected to teach the material through lecture or other means. As with grading, leading group discussions requires a great deal of coordination with the instructor responsible for the course. Typically, the discussion leader must also grade students in his/her section, either for participation or more substantive levels of performance. In some departments the discussion leaders are also expected to share grading duties for the entire course.

As part of a teaching team, TAs may be required to attend the lead professor's lectures. It makes sense that your work with students in a particular course requires you to be as familiar with the content as they are!

LAB INSTRUCTION: Laboratory instructors often fulfill the same function as discussion leaders in other fields, but their duties are usually better defined. Lab instructors are responsible for performing experiments or demonstrations essential to course work in the large sections. TAs often supervise students as they perform experiments or complete exercises from a lab manual. The degree to which the lab work is integrated with other course work also affects the TA's job, and if the coordination is poor or the lab

manual inadequate, a conscientious TA will try to compensate for these shortcomings. Finally, lab instructors are also responsible for the physical safety of their students, and must teach lab safety as well as academic content. Laboratory science departments supply laboratory safety information to lab teaching assistants.

AUTONOMOUS TEACHING: Teaching a course independently is one of the most rewarding experiences for a TA. It is also a heavy responsibility because the investment of time is greater than most TAs expect. In special cases, such as studio instruction in the fine arts and freshman English, students require more individual attention than in other courses. Fortunately, these assignments are not usually given to inexperienced or untrained TAs.

TAs must have 18 hours of graduate level work completed before they can be assigned as the instructor of record for any course. Beyond content expertise, full-course teaching requires knowledge of teaching strategies and procedures and an appreciation of the abilities of students taking the course. **Because we believe that superior teaching is so important at UNCW, all TAs are expected to attend courses or workshops on teaching provided by the Graduate School and the Center for Teaching Excellence (<http://www.uncw.edu/cte>), as well as training opportunities offered in the various schools or departments.** You will receive e-mail notices of workshops or other instructional content sessions that will assist you in preparing to teach and enhancing your teaching skills.

WORKING WITH YOUR FACULTY SUPERVISOR: In some departments, a course coordinator supervises a group of TAs who teach sections of the same course or a related set of courses. In other departments TAs are assigned to work for a particular professor in that professor's courses. In either case, the kind of relationship you have with your supervisor will affect your performance as a TA.

If you are working as a discussion leader or grader, having a clear definition of your duties is critical. If you do not ask questions, the course professor will often assume that you know what you are supposed to do. Try to get a statement of your duties in writing to

reduce the chances of misinterpretation. You should feel comfortable asking for precise answers about:

- The purpose of discussion sections and the amount of freedom TAs have to choose methods and content;
- Whether you will be required to attend lecture sessions, and if so, what your duties will be;
- The extent to which you will be involved in exam writing and grading;
- Student attendance requirements;
- How you can get information on teaching techniques and opportunities for practice;
- The kind of teaching (lecture, discussion, tutoring) TAs are expected to do; and,
- Timing of and methods for feedback and evaluation of your teaching.

TEACHING PORTFOLIOS: While the Graduate School does not require TAs to have portfolios, we recommend that you seriously consider them as a tool that will help strengthen your position in entering the job market, or in applying to doctoral programs. A teaching portfolio is a collection of documents and reflective essays representing a person's professional development and accomplishments. Because there is an ever-growing concern about the quality of teaching on college campuses, more and more universities and colleges are considering the importance of teaching in hiring, promotion and tenure decisions. While a teaching portfolio is unique to the individual it represents, portfolios generally include the following kinds of material/documents:

(1) Materials Produced by You

- Reflective statements describing your teaching philosophy, objectives, and strategies;
- Representative course syllabi;
- Description of the steps you have taken to evaluate and improve your teaching;
- Description of any contributions you have made to professional journals on teaching, workshops you have developed and presented on teaching, or other professional accomplishments;
- Description of the kinds of classes you have taught such as seminars, survey courses, core courses, etc., and the types of students you have had in class.

(2) Materials Provided by Others

- Statements from professors, mentors, or colleagues who have observed your teaching or reviewed your professional, teaching-related activities;
- Samples of outstanding work completed by students under your direction;
- Honors or recognitions you have received for your teaching;
- Information about the effect of your course on student career choices; and,
- Statements by alumni on the quality of your teaching.

CONSTANTLY COLLECT AND ORGANIZE YOUR DATA. As a TA, you should start documenting your teaching from the first day you receive your contract. Save your syllabi, ask your students if you may keep copies of their graded papers, have your supervisor observe your class and write up his/her observation, keep copies of your SPOTS, etc. Examine your teaching. Attend CTE workshops. Take time to think about the big philosophical questions of university teaching. These might include:

- Why do I want to teach? What are the values I believe in that I want to integrate into my teaching and academic life?
- What makes a great teacher? Do I have any of those qualities? Are there qualities I can develop?
- What is the value of my contribution to the University in general? What is the importance of my course in particular?
- Have I constructed my course so that there is a rationale and sequence to the way I approach the material? Will I be able to communicate this clearly to my students?
- How do my course objectives connect to what I want my students to know or do once they leave my course?
- How will I measure student learning outcomes?
- How do I move my students from where they are on the first day of class to where I want them to be at various points during the semester? How will I know if they are where they are supposed to be? How can this be demonstrated?
- How can I evaluate how well I am doing in reaching my teaching goals as the semester progresses?
- How do my class methods, activities and assignments align with my philosophy of education and my course objectives?

- How do I account for different student learning styles in my course preparation and delivery?

Information in this section adapted from: [The Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland](http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html). <http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

To be eligible for a graduate teaching assistantship, students should possess an undergraduate degree with substantial work in the field involved in the appointment. They should be fully admitted to a graduate program and focusing their full-time efforts toward their degree. The TA applicant should have achieved, and should continue to maintain, a GPA of 3.0 or better. Applicants should be studying for an advanced degree in the field to which they are appointed as TAs, or in a closely related field in which they have a substantial background. [TAs who have full responsibility for teaching a class minimally must have 18 hours of graduate credits in the subject area being taught.](#)

APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

Since the terms of individual appointments may vary across programs, it is the responsibility of the department head or program coordinator to make the offer of appointment in an official letter. The letter should provide full information on the terms of the graduate teaching assistantship, including:

- Title, percentage of time as a TA (1/2 or full time), and length of appointment.
- Stipend level and remission of tuition, where appropriate.
- Maximum and minimum student course load.
- Description of duties.
- Name and position of mentor/supervisor.
- Evaluation procedures and timeframes.
- Resources available, including equipment, supplies, office space, and training aids.
- Procedure and timing for reappointment.
- Deadline for acceptance of applications and reapplications.

After a graduate student has accepted a teaching assistantship, the department head or graduate program coordinator should provide the student with this handbook or its

university Web site, along with any departmental TA guidelines. Graduate program coordinators will notify TAs of orientation meetings and other training opportunities as soon as they are scheduled. Each TA shall be put in touch with a designated faculty mentor/supervisor prior to assuming her or his graduate teaching assistantship duties.

CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

A TA is expected to make steady progress toward her or his degree while serving as a TA. The combined course load and graduate teaching assistantship responsibilities should facilitate a student's progress rather than hinder it. Ordinarily, a student holding a teaching assistantship should not engage in employment other than the assistantship.

In order to hold and maintain the TA position, students must be registered during the fall and spring semesters. Specific course loads of TAs should be determined in consultation with their individual faculty advisors or mentors. Teaching assistants must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average. Graduate TAs are not permitted to teach courses carrying graduate credit or to enroll in the courses for which they are assigned TA responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A fundamental responsibility of a TA is both to work closely with the faculty mentor/supervisor in carrying out assigned duties and to make good progress toward the completion of her/his degree program. If a student's workload and academic program are properly coordinated, these responsibilities will be compatible. Whether working in a laboratory, classroom, office, or other setting, the TA is obligated to maintain standards of academic honesty and integrity and to report violations of these to the faculty supervisor. Graduate TAs should keep themselves well informed of departmental, college, and institutional regulations.

If problems arise in the work assignment, TAs should seek help first from their faculty mentor or supervisor. Even if students encounter few problems in carrying out the TA role, they are responsible for getting the most out of their apprenticeship experience. This means that TAs, in consultation with their faculty mentors/supervisors, should assess their work experience on a continuing basis in order to improve their

performance and to obtain the best possible learning experience. Each TA should identify and specify personal educational and learning goals early in the term of appointment and work with his/her faculty mentor to achieve them - write them down and use them as a contract for work within the department.

Only under certain circumstances and after a thorough departmental or college screening process does a TA teach a course as the instructor of record. In these cases the teaching assistant works under the supervision of an experienced faculty member. **No TA is given major responsibility for a class without having prior experience working with a faculty member, 18 hours of graduate level courses, and documented attendance at required workshops.** These expectations assure that TAs at UNCW work to gain teaching skills and a strong grasp of the essentials of the academic discipline.

EVALUATION

TAs are evaluated by the department(s) or program(s) in which they have teaching assignments. Common components of TA departmental and/or college programs should include the following aspects:

- Provision of departmental or college TA guidelines in addition to the university guidelines.
- Provision of departmental or college-level orientations and/or teaching effectiveness workshops in addition to the annual **Orientation to Teaching for New Graduate Teaching assistants** and other required workshops conducted by the Center for Teaching Excellence and/or the Graduate School.
- Regular meetings between TAs and faculty.
- Regular evaluations of TAs by both students (SPOTS) and faculty.

Evaluation is a crucial part of the TA experience and outcome-based assessment. There should be an ongoing process of communication between TAs and their faculty mentors. At least one formal summative evaluation should occur annually in a manner equitable to all TAs in each academic unit. Formative evaluation should be an ongoing supportive process that helps TAs identify strengths and areas for growth or improvement, as well as building upon their strengths in preparing for excellence in teaching.

A good way to find out how you are doing in your TA role in a course is to give an anonymous mid-course evaluation to your students. Ask students to write out brief answers to the following kinds of questions. Once collected and evaluated, take the aggregate feedback to your students and let them know how their answers have affected your thinking about the rest of the course. Examples follow:

MID-COURSE FEEDBACK 1

Please answer the questions below anonymously and honestly, and include details as appropriate. The purpose of seeking your feedback is to help determine how the course is going at this point and what areas might be altered or improved to better meet your learning needs.

- What have you learned in this course that has been particularly interesting, helpful or exciting?
- At this point in the semester, what covered content/topics are either confusing, unclear or need more discussion in class?
- How would you rate the teacher's ability to facilitate a positive learning environment in the class?
- Is the learning atmosphere a positive one for all students, regardless of race, gender, disability or other individual differences? Please give brief examples.
- How is/are the text(s) adding to or serving as a barrier to your learning?
- Please give any other constructive feedback that you think would help meet your identified learning needs in this class.

MID-COURSE FEEDBACK 2

Please complete the form below anonymously and honestly, and include details as appropriate. The purpose of your feedback is to help determine how the course is going at this point and what areas might be improved to better meet your learning needs. Areas you may wish to comment on could include: assignments, homework, teaching style, fairness, the textbook and other materials, class environment and interaction, etc. However, please comment on any aspects that are important to you.

- What's going right?
- What would you like to see changed?
- What would help you get more out of this course?
- What more could you do to facilitate your own learning?

REAPPOINTMENT

Priority for reappointment will be given to TAs making good progress toward completion of their degrees that are also recognized by faculty and students for performing well in their TA duties. These criteria should be measured in specific ways announced in advance of reapplication. Consideration for reappointment will be based upon:

- Overall GPA;
- Minimum GPA of at least 3.0 for the current academic year;
- Written evaluation by the academic advisor;
- Formal evaluation by the faculty mentor supervising the work of the TA;
- Length of time in teaching assistantship position; and,
- Length of time in degree program.

Reappointment is not automatic for students meeting the minimum criteria. Final decisions are based on departmental needs, financial resources, and the intent to provide as many graduate students as possible with teaching assistantship opportunities.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING ASSISTANTS

International students must present evidence of their ability to speak, read, and write the English language. Students from foreign countries where English is not the primary language must present the results of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) examination as a part of their application for admission. A minimum score of 213 (computerized test), 550 (paper test), or a minimum score of 80 on the Internet-based test (TOEFL iBT) is required for admission to all programs, but this score does not guarantee acceptance. For those applicants who do not meet the TOEFL requirements, UNCW offers conditional acceptance to degree programs for those students who successfully complete the UNCW ESL program and are academically admissible to the university. In addition to the TOEFL, international applicants who do not speak English as a primary language and who wish to become teaching assistants are required to demonstrate competence in oral communication skills if the teaching assistantship involves classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, or tutoring. A minimum score of 45 on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or a minimum of 25 on the speaking section of the TOEFL iBT or an examination of comparable score on an equivalent test is required to be eligible for an instructional assignment. Minimum score criteria may vary among graduate programs.

THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland

<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

UNCW undergraduates benefit from having international TAs. As all people of the world increasingly participate in the global community, and appreciation of diversity within and among different cultures is a primary goal of the university, it is necessary for all students to feel comfortable interacting with those who might speak with foreign accents, who also bring a variety of perspectives on teaching, learning and university experience. That said, being an international TA can be a challenge. Some international TAs are self-conscious about their proficiency in spoken and written English and/or are frustrated by certain student attitudes towards school, work, teachers, and classmates that would be unacceptable in their native culture. International TAs should not suffer with self-consciousness or frustration. They should address the presenting challenges and use their internationality to their advantage in the classroom. To make the most of their

teaching experience, international TAs can do the following kinds of activities to help them join with their new colleagues and students:

- Discuss teaching concerns and expectations with their supervising professors, mentors, graduate directors, the staff at the Center for Teaching Excellence, and other TAs, both international and American;
- Form a group with other international students to develop their English speaking skills;
- Read through the **International Teaching Assistant Handbook: An Introduction to University and College Teaching in the United States** which is available at <http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/ITA/title.html>
- Connect with UNCW's Office of International Programs to learn of support and activities available to you. See: <http://www.uncw.edu/intprogs/sitemap.html>

FITTING INTO THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Adapted from TA Handbook, Washington University in St. Louis,
<http://artsci.wustl.edu/GSAS/Teaching/Resources/TAHandbook.html>

Teaching assistants play an important role in the undergraduate learning experience. Duties differ widely across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, as well as within the different departments and programs themselves. TAs can be found supervising labs; leading discussion sections; assigning and grading papers; writing, proctoring, and grading exams; helping with equipment; tutoring; holding office hours; and lecturing in classes. While responsibilities vary from department to department, your work may give you the opportunity to perform many of these activities. Depending upon the department you are in, you may progress to greater responsibilities as you gain more experience. You should check with your assigned faculty mentor to determine the progression of teaching assignments and the training options available in your department or through the Center for Teaching Excellence or Graduate School.

FITTING INTO THE GRADUATE EXPERIENCE

Teaching assistants take on multiple roles at UNCW. You are a student working toward mastering a discipline to become a professional in your chosen field; you are a role model for the students in your classes; and you are acquiring the skills of teaching through study and practice as a beginning instructor. Balancing these roles requires thought and planning. As you begin to teach, remember that your department is showing its confidence in your potential to be an effective instructor by selecting you as a TA.

Your ability to exhibit confidence in your status as a credible professional in the classes you teach will increase as you become more knowledgeable and experienced in both your discipline and teaching.

As you might expect, in the beginning, adapting to both roles will be demanding. Time management is a crucial component of this “juggling” of roles. Your success hinges on your ability to plan ahead through understanding what needs to be accomplished when, and through effectively managing your time by identifying and dealing with priorities. Be sure to consider the various resources - including people - you will need to complete your work. For example, if you need to copy handouts for your students, you want to be sure to finish the handout with enough time to photocopy it before your class starts.

Experienced TAs and the faculty mentor for whom you work can help you estimate how much time your TA duties might take. You should ask your mentor how much time you should budget, for example, to grade a section of mid-term examinations. After you have gained more experience, you will have a better idea of how slowly or quickly you can complete specific tasks. It is also important to realize that when your workload as a student becomes heaviest, your workload as a TA often also increases because your undergraduates are completing their work on the same timetable as you. During these times, it is particularly important for you to plan ahead and prioritize your task lists. Also, stay in close communication with your faculty mentor so that any time management issues you have for completing your own work can be addressed.

Remember that the TA position is an apprenticeship – it is a considerable responsibility. Under the supervision of experienced faculty, you will develop teaching expertise and a richer understanding of your discipline. Ultimately, it is the professor of the course for whom you are a TA who decides about issues of academic integrity, student grades, or responsibility for class material. You should consult with the course professor when you have questions or need advice. Determining what protocols the professor wants you to follow in regard to both your relationship to the students and your relationship with her/him is useful.

SECTION TWO: IMPORTANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT UNCW

A number of policies and procedures exist to guide students enrolled at UNCW. Many of these are contained in the following documents: UNCW Student Handbook, Code of Student Life <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/doso/documents/Code.Of.Student.Life.pdf>, and UNCW Graduate Catalogue http://www.uncw.edu/grad_info/documents/2006_07GraduateCatalogue.PDF You can refer to these documents when you want more in-depth information. To get you started, we present key policies and procedures to help you understand important aspects of your role as a new teaching assistant at UNCW.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

The University of North Carolina system of colleges and universities is dedicated to the transmission and advancement of knowledge and understanding. Academic freedom is essential to the achievement of these purposes. UNCW supports and encourages freedom of inquiry for faculty members and students as they responsibly pursue these goals through teaching, learning, research, and discussion and publication free from internal or external restraints that would unreasonably restrict their academic endeavors.

Faculty and students at UNCW share responsibility for maintaining an environment in which academic freedom flourishes and the rights of each member of the academic community are respected. The university shall not abridge either the freedom of students engaged in responsible pursuit of knowledge or their right to fair and impartial evaluation of their academic performance. All students shall be responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that helps to enhance an environment of learning in which the rights, dignity, worth and freedom of each member of the academic community are respected.

UNCW STATEMENT ON ETHICAL STANDARDS

The university is committed to maintaining the highest professional standards in all of its academic and administrative operations; promoting ethical practices among its administrators, faculty, staff, and students; and ensuring a level of accountability appropriate for a public institution. Individuals are expected to obey all federal, state, and

local laws including those pertaining to equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, and harassment.

Personal interactions among university community members should be characterized by truthfulness, openness to new ideas, civility, and consideration for the rights of others. Each member of the university should respect the right of others to freedom of thought, opinion, speech, and association.

Individuals shall present information accurately, comply with policies to the best of their ability, and use the institution's resources appropriately. Each employee is responsible for avoiding real or apparent conflicts of interests, ensuring that authority is exercised within a framework of accountability, and ensuring that information is managed in accordance with relevant public record and privacy statutes. Employees must ensure that the university's interests are foremost in all official decision making and shall remove themselves from decision making roles which involve the employee in any personal capacity or which involve friends or family members.

The achievement and continuation of an ethical educational and administrative environment is a shared responsibility among administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Consultation with appropriate university departments or officials will be treated as confidential to the extent allowed by law. Employees may exercise a right of appeal through the chain of command up to and including their division vice chancellor or the senior officer responsible for the academic or administrative function at issue. Individuals shall be free from retaliation for voicing concerns.

Related Policies: A number of university policies establish ethical guidelines or standards for appropriate professional conduct for particular educational or administrative functions. These policies include, but are not limited to, responsible use of electronic resources, the harassment prevention policy, misuse of state property policy, policy on academic freedom and tenure, policy on freedom of expression, academic honor code, EEO/AA policy, statement on diversity in the university community, policy on scientific research, policy on protection of human subjects, and conflicts of interests policy. The following are brief summaries of the principles embodied in three key areas.

- **Electronic Resources Ethics:** Computing resources are available for processing university business and communications. Access to and use of computing technology places a responsibility on each employee to conduct computing business in the same ethical manner that is required of all other official conduct with added concerns for:
 - (a) Legal use of licensed software;
 - (b) Protection of confidential information;
 - (c) Authorized use of hardware/software/periphery devices;
 - (d) Authorized access to and valid use of data;
 - (e) Asset management;
 - (f) Right to privacy; and,
 - (g) Respect for and safeguarding of security passwords, user identity, and system access.
- **Research Ethics:** Research shall be characterized by the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior. Every effort shall be made to ensure that all research data or results of projects or programs sponsored by, or under the administrative supervision of, the university are represented completely and accurately. Additionally, all research involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board, and all research involving the use of animals must be approved by the Institution's Animal Care and Use Committee.
- **Business Ethics:** Employees may have no financial interest in the outcome of any business dealings in which they have authority to act on behalf of the university.

Reporting Concerns and Complaints: Individuals who have concerns about the conduct of a particular individual or the propriety of a given situation should:

- (1) Consult with the director of the office responsible for the educational or administrative function at issue; or,
- (2) Notify their department chair, dean, director, or an administrator in their supervisory chain at a level sufficient to allow objectivity in evaluating the subject of concern.

Concerns about ethical practices may also be reported anonymously to the State Auditor's Fraud and Abuse Hotline by calling 1-800-730-8477. The vice chancellor or senior officer responsible for the academic or administrative function at issue shall

respond to university community members who express concerns about ethical practices to the extent allowed by law and shall inform the chancellor regarding their response.

UNCW'S COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The University of North Carolina Wilmington is committed to and will provide equality of educational and employment opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex, age, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, veteran status, or relationship to other university constituents - except where sex, age, or ability represent bona fide educational or occupational qualifications or where marital status is a statutorily established eligibility criterion for state-funded employee benefit programs.

To ensure that equal educational and employment opportunity exist throughout the university, a results-oriented equal opportunity/affirmative action program has been implemented to overcome the effects of past discrimination and to eliminate any artificial barriers to educational or employment opportunities for all qualified individuals that may exist in any of our programs. The University of North Carolina Wilmington is committed to this program and is aware that with its implementation, positive benefits will be received from the greater utilization and development of previously underutilized human resources.

DIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

In an effort to address the needs of the total university community, the university has publicly endorsed the following statement on diversity in the university community:

As an institution of higher learning, the University of North Carolina Wilmington represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students and is committed to maintaining a campus environment that values that diversity. The university aims to achieve within all areas of the university community, a diverse student body, faculty, and staff capable of providing for excellence in the education of its students and for the enrichment of the university community. The university defines diversity in the following ways:

- (1) The representation of populations shaped by historical circumstances and by cultural identities, or a combination of the two; and,**

(2) **The representation of populations shaped by varying socio-economic circumstances** (UNCW Graduate Catalog, 2006-2007).

The university supports policies, curricula, and cocurricular activities that encourage understanding of and appreciation for all members of its community and will not tolerate any harassment of or disrespect for persons because of age, sex, color, race, religion, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, political belief or affiliation, disability, veteran status, marital status, or membership or nonmembership in any organization. For more information concerning ways in which our multicultural learning community may be nurtured and protected, or for complaint resolution procedures, contact the:

- Chancellor's Human Relations Advisory Committee at <http://www.uncw.edu/chancellor/committees-human.html>
- Office of Campus Diversity at <http://www.uncw.edu/diversity/OCD/>
- Office of the Dean of Students at <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/doso/>
- Office of Academic Affairs at <http://www.uncw.edu/aa/>
- Office of Human Resources at <http://www.uncw.edu/hr/>

There are other offices and services that represent UNCW's continuous efforts to become a more diverse university community. Among these are:

- The Women's Resource Center;
- The Upperman African American Cultural Center; and,
- Centro Hispano.

UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND RETALIATION

In its newly revised policy, UNCW has expanded the coverage of harassment to include all legally protected categories in addition to sexual harassment. The updated policy and procedures can be viewed on the university's policy web page at <http://www.uncw.edu/policies/> As graduate teaching assistants who are **considered university employees**, you must be careful to avoid any behaviors that might constitute harassment. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Offensive jokes about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexual or gender traits, religion, age, and etc.;
- (2) Insults, threats or bribes;

- (3) Offensive written notes or phone calls;
- (4) Suggestive or insulting gestures; and,
- (5) Unwanted touching of a sexual nature (e.g., brushing, patting, pinching).

If you believe you are the target of harassment, the policies and procedures that exist are there to protect you as well as your students. For more detailed information on issues of harassment in the workplace see: <http://www.uncw.edu/policies/02-200-harassmentprevention.htm>

IMPROPER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

The university does not condone amorous relationships between students and employees. Members of the university community, [including teaching assistants in the employ of the university](#), should avoid such liaisons, which can harm affected students and damage the integrity of the academic enterprise. In two types of situations, university prohibition and punishment of amorous relationship is deemed necessary:

- When the employee is responsible for evaluating or supervising the affected student; or,
- When the student is a minor, as defined by North Carolina law.

The following policies apply to all employees and students of UNCW:

A. Prohibited Conduct

- (1) It is misconduct, subject to disciplinary action, for a university employee, incident to any instructional, research, administrative or other university employment responsibility or authority, to evaluate or supervise any enrolled student of the institution with whom he or she has an amorous relationship or to whom he or she is related by blood, law or marriage.
- (2) It is misconduct, subject to disciplinary action, for a university employee to engage in sexual activity with any enrolled student of the institution, other than his or her spouse, who is a minor below the age of 18 years.

B. Corrective Action

“Improper relations” as defined in this policy focuses on potential conflicts of interests, conflicts of interests, or the appearance of conflicts of interests related to supervision or evaluation of students or other university employees in the

performance of duties. If the potential for such conflicts arises, university employees involved in such relationships are required to disclose the possibility of any conflict of interest to their immediate supervisor (unless the immediate supervisor is the person involved in this conflict of interest, in which case the reporting line is to the next level of administrative authority) and to take immediate action to eliminate any potential source of conflicts of interests. That is, university employees must recuse themselves of any official duty which would create a conflict of interest or potential for conflict of interest. In such cases, university employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution to the matter with the help of the immediate supervisor (or appropriate administrative authority) by making alternate arrangements in which work tasks can be performed in the absence of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest.

If the matter cannot be resolved informally and if individuals knowingly continue in a supervisory or evaluative relationship in which such a conflict of interests exists, then those individuals shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the university. Anyone who believes that a violation of this policy has occurred is encouraged to refer the matter to the appropriate supervisory authority (unless the immediate supervisor is the person involved in this conflict of interest, in which case the reporting line is to the next level of administrative authority) or to the university EEO/AA officer. In such cases, the appropriate supervisor should implement a formal review procedure for personal discrimination.

RULES REGARDING PROTECTION OF STUDENT INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

PURPOSE: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA, also known as the “Buckley Amendment”), guarantees certain rights for students and eligible parents regarding access to, confidentiality of, and correction of the student’s education records. FERPA provides that a student may inspect his or her own education records. If the student finds the records to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights, the student may request amendment to the record. FERPA also

provides that a student's personally identifiable information may not be released to someone else unless:

- (1) The student has given a proper written consent for disclosure; or,
- (2) Provisions of FERPA or federal regulations issued pursuant to FERPA permit the information to be released without the student's consent.

DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION: The university may release the following directory information to the public without the student's consent: name; class; college and major; dates of attendance; degree(s) earned; honors and awards received, including selection to the dean's or chancellor's list, honorary organization, or the GPA range for the selection; address; telephone number; most recent previous educational institution attended; date and place of birth; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and the weight and height of members of athletic teams. Under FERPA, the student has the right to request that the disclosure of directory information be withheld.

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION: The university may release personally identifiable information from student education records without the student's consent to school officials who have a legitimate educational interest to access the records.

INSPECTION AND REVIEW OF RECORDS: FERPA provides students with the right to inspect and review (within 45 days of request) information contained in their education records, challenge the contents of their education records and to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they feel the decisions of the hearing panels to be unacceptable. The UNCW Registrar has been designated to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student education records. For additional information go to: <http://www.uncw.edu/reg/>

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR TAs? The information presented here is for general guidance on matters of interest to faculty, staff, and students at UNCW and does not constitute legal advice. Additionally, information on campus and university policies is for informational purposes only and is subject to change without notice. For the most current information, please see the official campus/university version of these policies as

posted on the official Web site at: <http://www.uncw.edu/policies/04-150-ferpa.htm>
Additional information can also be found at: <http://counsel.cua.edu/ferpa/>

HOW DOES FERPA AFFECT FACULTY AND OTHER COURSE INSTRUCTORS?

FERPA affects your actions as an instructor in three main areas:

- (1) Your capacity to discuss a student's performance with a parent or guardian;
- (2) The conditions under which you may provide references that discuss a student's performance; and,
- (3) Your actions in posting grades and returning graded work to students.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN A PARENT OR GUARDIAN CALLS TO FIND OUT HOW A STUDENT IS DOING IN MY CLASS? Refer the calls to the Office of the Registrar where staff will obtain or confirm the required documentation (e.g., that the student has given consent to the disclosure or that the student is the parent's legal dependent).

IF I RECEIVE A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT A STUDENT FROM A PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER OR FACULTY OR STAFF MEMBER IN A PROGRAM TO WHICH THE STUDENT HAS APPLIED FOR ADMISSION, ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON WHAT I CAN SAY? Yes. You may not provide a verbal or written reference for a student that discusses the student's educational performance unless you have written permission from the student.

WHAT ABOUT POSTING GRADES? You cannot post grades by class roster, even with the names blanked out, or leave papers/tests in a box for students to collect. If you comply with the following guidelines, you may post grades without compromising a student's privacy rights or violating the law:

- (1) Assign each student in the class a unique number known only to you and that student.
- (2) Sort your list in numerical order.
- (3) Do not display student scores or grades publicly in association with names, Social Security Numbers, or any portion of a Social Security Number, or any other personal identifiers.

- (4) Do not post a copy of your class roster or Final Grade List, even with the names removed. These lists are in alphabetical order, and viewers of the list may be able to infer students' identities.
- (5) Do not put papers or lab reports containing student names and grades in publicly accessible places. In particular, do not put papers into a common box where students must go through everyone else's papers to find their own. Do not pass back papers by circulating an entire set for individuals to pull out their own. **No one should have access to the scores or grades of other students in the class.**

Note: At the instructor's discretion, students may request a personal notification of a final grade by providing a stamped self-addressed envelope or asking the instructor to send an INDIVIDUAL e-mail of the final grade to the student's UNCW e-mail address. The instructor must not send a class list of all grades.

IF I HAVE THE STUDENTS' SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS, WHY CAN'T I USE THEM WHEN POSTING GRADES? Even if you have access, the SSN is not considered public information and should not be used in any way by instructors. The SSN and any portion of the number are considered private and confidential and cannot be disclosed.

SECTION THREE: RESOURCES FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS

There are many resources for faculty and students at UNCW. Please familiarize yourself with the information that follows. This is a description of selected programs that you and/or your students may want or need to access. Remember to discuss student concerns with your faculty mentor/supervisor before taking any action.

GRADUATE ADVISING

The Graduate School administers numerous programs of study leading to graduate degrees. Each of these programs has a graduate coordinator who reviews the applications and oversees their progress through the departmental evaluation and acceptance process. Upon acceptance to the Graduate School, the student is assigned or selects, by mutual consent, an advisor who will assist the student in planning a program of study. In the areas where a thesis is a part of the degree requirement, a thesis committee is also assigned to or selected with the consent of the advisor and the committee members to advise and monitor the student's progress on the thesis.

The Registrar provides PIN numbers to the departments for currently enrolled students to preregister via SEANET. The graduate coordinator is responsible for seeing that students are advised regarding courses in which they should enroll.

UNCW STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICES AND SERVICES

UNCW has a vast array of services that can be accessed to help students deal with academic, personal, or career issues. As a TA you should be aware that these services exist and that your students may be referred to them.

CAREER SERVICES

The central purpose of Career Services is to help students prepare for academic and career success. The center assists freshmen and sophomores with self-assessment, values clarification and occupational data to help them make informed choices of academic majors. Career Services also provides opportunities for internships and discovering the relationship of skills acquired to the broader work world. Career Services helps graduating seniors translate their academic achievements, co-curricular

activities and work experiences into successful job campaigns or graduate school applications. For more information, visit Career Services on the Internet at: www.uncw.edu/stuaff/career.

DISABILITY SERVICES

The University of North Carolina Wilmington is open and accessible to students with disabilities. We are committed to providing assistance to enable qualified students to accomplish their educational goals, as well as assuring equal opportunity to derive all of the benefits of campus life. Disability Services has devoted much energy to meeting the requirements of Section 504, Federal Rehabilitation Act, and to the Americans with Disability Act. In addition, this office serves as a full-time advocate for students with disabilities, as well as a resource for faculty, staff and administration. Students needing accommodations should contact the director of Disability Services and provide appropriate documentation of the disability.

NATIONAL TESTING PROGRAM

The National Testing Program, in cooperation with Educational Testing Service and the Psychological Corporation, coordinates the administration of national certification and admissions exams. The computer-based testing center offers the following exams: CLEP, GMAT, GRE, NET, Praxis I Series, TOEFL, NBPTS, MPJE and MAT. Paper-based testing is also available for the Praxis I and II Series, GRE subject exams and LSAT by pre-registration. The Graduate School uses the GMAT, GRE, MAT and TOEFL. Testing accommodations can be made by calling (910) 962-7444.

UNIVERSITY LEARNING SERVICES

University Learning Services is comprised of The Math Lab, Tutoring and Learning Center, and the Writing Place, is committed to providing an environment that challenges and supports students in reaching their academic goals, integrates learning support resources and services with course content, supports the learning objectives of faculty across the curriculum, and advances the educational and retention efforts of UNCW.

THE MATH LAB

The purpose of the Math Lab is to help students make the transition from high school-level mathematics courses to college-level mathematics courses. Students can receive help with note-taking skills, how to approach a math assignment, and study strategies for math exam preparation. Free tutoring is available for all 100-level mathematics and basic statistics courses. Students can use either drop-in hours or schedule an appointment for more individualized assistance. Several computers are available in The Math Lab with course specific software for students who want to work on math and statistics assignments. The Math Lab also coordinates UNCW mathematics placement testing for new students; additional diagnostics testing in mathematics is also provided. Hours and services can vary by semester. For more information, call (910) 962-7215 or visit the Math Lab Web site at: www.uncw.edu/mathlab.

TUTORING AND LEARNING CENTER

The Tutoring and Learning Center, located on the first floor of Westside Hall, offers assistance to all UNCW students in developing the skills necessary to become successful, independent learners. Free tutoring is offered in all Basic Studies courses as well as some selected upper level courses. Students meet weekly with trained peer tutors to increase comprehension in the course content and hone study and test-taking skills. In addition to traditional tutoring services, the Tutoring and Learning Center also coordinates **Supplemental Instruction (SI)**. SI is a series of peer assisted study sessions offered several times each week to help students in traditionally difficult courses such as biology, chemistry and physics. All students enrolled in courses which offer SI are encouraged to attend. Sessions are free, voluntary and promote better understanding of course content as well as improved study skills.

Students needing help with general study skills are encouraged to attend the **Academic Skills Workshops**, which cover such topics as time management, learning styles, textbook reading strategies, note-taking methods, and test-taking skills. The Tutoring and Learning Center also provides outreach services by tailoring presentations for campus organizations and selected courses. In addition, any UNCW student may schedule an appointment to meet one-on-one with a study skills consultant to discuss his or her individual academic goals and develop strategies to achieve them. For more

information, visit the Tutoring and Learning Center Web site at: www.uncw.edu/stuaff/tlc;
e-mail: tlc@uncw.edu or call (910) 962-3549.

WRITING PLACE

The goal of the Writing Place, located on the first floor of Westside Hall, is to help students develop and improve their writing skills in all courses across the curriculum. Working with a peer staff composed of interns, teaching assistants, community consultants and volunteers, the Writing Place helps students mature as writers. Focusing on the larger issues of any paper - organization, development, analysis, introductions and conclusions - the consultant and student work together to make clear and strengthen the goals of the paper.

Programs are available on an ongoing basis for special populations such as international students for whom English is a second language, learning disabled, non-traditional and those students whose academic writing skills are underdeveloped. For more information, call (910) 962-7155 or visit our Web site at: www.uncw.edu/stuaff/writingplace. This service is free to all UNCW students.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

All freshmen and undeclared transfer students are accepted to and remain in the University College until they declare their major intentions, usually by the middle of their sophomore year. The University College provides a number of services and programs to assist students in making a smooth transition to their new university academic environment. In addition to the information that follows, you can access more information about the program at: <http://www.uncw.edu/gc/>

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ADVISING

The University College provides academic advising to all incoming students until such time as they declare their majors. Students are advised either by professional advisors in the University College Advising Center or by University College faculty advisors drawn from the College of Arts and Sciences and the Schools of Business, Education and Nursing. Advisors provide their students with guidance and encouragement in selecting courses and deciding on majors, meeting academic requirements, maintaining required

scholastic standards, and considering possible career choices. Advisors meet with students as they plan for course registration each semester. University College advisors can provide students with referrals to various specialized support services within the university to assist them in overcoming difficulties, in exploring options, and in achieving academic and personal success. Advisors also monitor their students' mid-semester academic progress and their end-of-semester grades, and work with students who are having academic difficulty. The University College has designed several intervention programs to help students recover from academic failure and to regain academic eligibility. The **Successful Educational Achievement Plan** (SEA Plan) program, designed for students on academic warning, is based on the negotiation of a contract between the student and the advisor providing for specific course selections, required follow-up meetings, assistance from other academic support offices, or other appropriate actions. A similar summer program is provided to aid those students who have been declared ineligible to continue regular term enrollment.

STUDENT ATHLETE ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Student Athlete Academic Support program, a joint effort of the University College and the university athletic program, seeks to help student athletes balance the sometimes conflicting demands of academic and athletic responsibilities. The success of the program can be seen in the high grade point averages of UNCW athletes and their high graduation rates.

Once student athletes are admitted to the university, the Student Athlete Academic Support advisors assist them with registration, sequencing and scheduling of required courses, and selection of a major. They also arrange for tutoring assistance and monitor students' grades, class attendance, study habits, and progress toward a degree. Once a student athlete declares a major, the program's advisors continue to monitor academic performance and progress in conjunction with the student's departmental advisor.

Central to the role of this program is the maintenance of a strong working relationship between the program advisors and the university's athletic department and coaches. The advisors are knowledgeable about NCAA and CAA rules that apply to eligibility for practice and competition. They are available for consultation when unusual or difficult

rule interpretations are needed. They also play a key role in the athletic-academic certification process for all student athletes.

UNIVERSITY STUDIES

The University College coordinates and presents several special course offerings to assist students in making successful adjustment to college life, developing research skills, and enriching their educational experience.

Freshman Seminar: The Freshman Seminar is a two-credit hour course providing first semester freshmen a unique introduction to UNCW. The course is designed to support the mission of University College. Academic and affective performance objectives assist students in making a successful transition to university life, developing sound study and problem solving skills, and engaging in career exploration and research. Developing mentor relationships with instructors and academic advisors is also emphasized and connections to UNCW support services are established. The atmosphere within this small class setting is one of open communication, mutual respect, and celebration of the diversity of the university community.

Learning Communities (LC). First-year students have the opportunity to participate in a Learning Community during their first semester at UNCW. A Learning Community is a group of students enrolled in two or three classes together. These clustered courses are organized around common themes or skill acquisition.

Freshman Seminar Learning Communities connect fall semester freshman seminars with designated basic studies courses. This 5-6 credit hour module facilitates the development of problem solving skills and cognitive strategies within the context of a specific course topic or theme. It provides an opportunity to apply freshman seminar skills directly to the shared basic study course. It also emphasizes the formation of student support systems with peers, academic advisors, and UNCW services. Freshman Seminar Learning Communities provide students an opportunity to increase intellectual acuity while exploring issues critical to their long-term success.

COMPUTER LABS

Our mission is to enhance the educational experience of students, faculty and staff through General Access Computer Labs and Laptop Check-Out Programs. Our goal is to provide excellent service that is student oriented and to provide clean, friendly and productive environments for using current technology. Information Technology Systems Division offers:

- **5 General Access Computer Labs:** Staffed and open to all students with a valid UNCW One Card ID.
- **3 Laptop Checkout Programs:** Available to all students with a valid UNCW One Card ID and for use within that building only.
- **6 Residence Hall Computer Labs:** Unstaffed and open to students residing in the respective residence halls.
- **1 Graduate Computer Lab:** Open to Graduate Students only, with a valid UNCW One Card ID.

Graduate Lab	#	Type of Computer	
Randall Library Upstairs	10 1 1	Computers Scanner Printer	
General Access Labs	#	Type Of Computer	Phone Number
Randall Library	47 1 2	Computers Scanner Printers	962-3604
Bear Hall 165	36 1	Computers Printer	962-3607
S & B 221	25 1	Computers Printer	962-3709
Schwartz Hall	13 1 1	Computers Scanner Printer	962-3826

Laptop Checkout	#	Type of Computer	Phone Number
Randall Library Circulation Desk	23 1	Laptops Printer	962-3272
TSC/Hoggard Hall Technology Support Center	6 1	Laptops Printer	962-4357
Residence Hall Labs	#	Type of Computer	
Belk	8 1	Computers Printer (no paper supplied)	
Galloway	10 1	Computers Printer (no paper supplied)	
Graham/Hewlett	7 1	Computers Printer (no paper supplied)	
Cornerstone	7 1	Computers Printer (no paper supplied)	
Honors House	6 1	Computers Printer (no paper supplied)	
International House	6 1	Computers Printer (no paper supplied)	

SOFTWARE THAT IS AVAILABLE IN ITSD LABS INCLUDES:

Windows XP	Maple 10
Microsoft Office 2003	SPSS 13
Adobe Reader 7.0	SAS
Quick Time 7	Visual Studio
Windows Media Player 10	Java
Real Player	JCreator 3.5
Roxio Easy CD Creator	R 2.1
Premier Assistive Disability Software	SAM 2003
	Eclipse 3.1

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

MISSION STATEMENT

The Women's Studies and Resource Center strives to create an interdisciplinary community of scholars working in the areas of sex, gender, and women's issues. The Center offers research, programming, education, and advocacy to promote gender equality, both locally and globally. The center also provides information and referrals for a variety of UNCW and community services and resources. For more information on the events and resources of the WRC go to: <http://www.uncw.edu/wrc/>

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

MISSION STATEMENT

"Our purpose is to encourage, recognize, and assist all graduate students academically and socially, as well as to promote the interests and welfare of graduate students within the university." **Your GSA works for you!** Get involved and become an integral part of the programs and services of the GSA. See: <http://student.uncw.edu/org/gsa/index.htm>

THE CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) at the University of North Carolina Wilmington is dedicated to assisting the university in fulfilling its commitment to strengthening undergraduate and graduate instruction. CTE recognizes that excellence in teaching is only achieved through teaching scholarship, which involves continuous scrutiny of course content and methods of instruction, knowledge of modern educational techniques and practices, and analysis of the effects of different teaching methods on student learning. Developing new courses and improving existing ones are fundamental to maintaining the integrity and vitality of the university's educational programs.

The mission of the Center for Teaching Excellence is to foster a campus-wide climate where teaching is highly valued, as well as provide leadership in the application of scholarship to teaching. CTE assumes that the primary responsibility for developing and improving educational programs resides with the faculty who, as teacher/scholars,

possess both the knowledge of the disciplines and the skills to evaluate and implement effective instructional practices. CTE encourages efforts to achieve excellence in teaching by running programs for course development and improvement, implementing new instructional technologies, and providing support services.

In order to further enhance the resources of the Center for Teaching Excellence and to increase opportunities for professional development in teaching for UNCW faculty, CTE participates in a variety of resource-sharing consortia, both formal and informal, with the University of North Carolina system. In addition, CTE participates in statewide and national associations that support the mission of improving higher education through professional development in teaching.

The mission of CTE is specifically supportive, and participation by the faculty is entirely voluntary. The interaction between Center personnel and the faculty is confidential and separate from any formal assessment process of the University. For more information go to: <http://www.uncw.edu/cte/>

WILLIAM MADISON RANDALL LIBRARY

The Randall Library is full of wonderful resources and services for students and faculty. The items listed in the pages that follow are just a few of the interesting items you can connect to via the library

Web site at: <http://library.uncw.edu/web/services.html>

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

Administration:	962-3270
Instruction:	962-7810
Outreach:	962-4271
Reference Desk:	962-3760
Circulation Desk:	962-3272

QUICK LINKS TO THE LIBRARY

(The online TA Manual will connect you to these sites)

- Building Hours
- Directions
- Disability Services
- Faculty Services
- Graduate Student Resources
- Distance Learners Information
- Circulation Homepage
- Reserves Homepage
- Interlibrary Loan Homepage

OUTREACH FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Randall Library offers many services for graduate students to enrich the research and learning experience. Please see the directory below, or contact your department's [Primary Contact Librarian](#) who can assist you with all of your information needs.

[STAR](#) A one-on-one guidance and support system for graduate students, with thesis assistance provided by your personal librarian.

[Mediated Searches and Citation Analysis](#) A literature review search and citation analysis service available to graduate students working on theses or participating in research grants and projects.

[Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery](#) A free service from Randall Library that allows you to request materials not available in Randall Library's collection. Just provide the citation and we'll find it for you.

[Table-of-Contents Alerting Services](#) Randall Library's Table of Contents (TOC) service has been developed to assist graduate students in keeping up with literature in their respective fields.

OUTREACH FOR FACULTY

Randall Library offers many services for faculty to enrich university scholarship, teaching, and research. Please see the directory below, or contact your department's [Primary Contact Librarian](#) who can assist you with all of your information needs.

Course Assistance:

- Schedule a Library Instruction Session
- Evaluating Web sites
- Dealing with Plagiarism
- Effectively Using the Library in Your Class
- Drop-in Clinics to Help Your Students
- Using Reserves

Research Assistance:

- Grant Resources
- Ordering Books
- Copyright Information
- Table of Contents (TOC) Service
- Interlibrary Loan
- Citation Analysis
- Mediated Searching
- Research Assistance Program (RAP)

Faculty Resources:

- Project Fund Request Form

Faculty FAQ



SECTION FOUR: THE STUDENT AS TEACHER IN TRAINING

Materials adapted from the University of California at San Diego and Washington University in St.

Louis: http://www.ctd.ucsd.edu/resources/teaching_tips/index.htm

<http://artsci.wustl.edu/GSAS/Teaching/Resources/TAHandbook.html>

COMMON TEACHING QUESTIONS AND TIPS

What Do Teaching Assistants Need To Know Before The First Class?

Because your TA functions are department specific, it is essential to speak as soon as possible with the professor for whom you are a TA. Here are some questions you will want to ask her/him at your initial meeting:

- (1) What are my TA duties for this course? What kind of time commitment can I expect to give to my duties?
- (2) How many and what types of section meetings will I be expected to hold? When and where does the course meet?
- (3) Will you prepare issues to discuss or will I be responsible for developing the material covered?
- (4) Are the student participation/attendance requirements for the sessions for which I am responsible detailed on the course syllabus, or should I prepare a handout for the first meeting detailing these expectations?
- (5) Am I expected to attend course lectures? What role do I play when I attend lectures?
- (6) What are the required texts? Am I required to select them? How do I obtain desk copies?
- (7) What will my role be in testing, evaluating, and grading students? What criteria should be used?
- (8) What are the standards for determining a pass or fail grade for this course? How will this standard be communicated to the students? Whose responsibility is it to tell the student if she/he is failing?
- (9) How many office hours should I schedule? Do I have a specified office? If so, how can I get keys to it and to the building?
- (10) Will the two of us (or all of us if a course has several TAs) meet regularly, and if so, how often? Whose responsibility is it to schedule these meetings?
- (11) How am I to be evaluated and by what criteria?

(12) What is the protocol you expect me to follow regarding issues of academic integrity, grade questions, or of students who seem to be academically or emotionally at risk?

HOW CAN YOU BE AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING ASSISTANT?

Materials adapted from the University of California at San Diego and Washington University in St.

Louis: http://www.ctd.ucsd.edu/resources/teaching_tips/index.htm

<http://artsci.wustl.edu/GSAS/Teaching/Resources/TAHandbook.html>

- Learn your students' names right away. This is an important indication that you are concerned about them as individuals.
- Converse informally with students before or after class; find out what interests and motivates them.
- Arrive a few minutes early and don't race out of the room when class is over.
- Make eye contact and talk directly to students; the impact of your message will be greater.
- Use different techniques to draw less participative students into discussions without making them uncomfortable. For example, asking a large group to break into smaller groups to discuss a question often gives quiet students a less threatening forum in which to present their ideas.
- Learn to listen carefully to what students say and respond thoughtfully. Remember that your students' self-esteem might be on the line.
- Leave your ego outside the classroom; admit you don't know something if you don't. Be sure to find out the answer to something you don't know and relate it to the student or group at the next meeting.
- To encourage discussion, ask questions to which there may be a variety of answers. Who, what, why, when and where queries can provoke answers beyond "yes" and "no". Follow the students' answers with brief responses that incorporate requests for additional information. Ask students to comment on what other students have said.
- Reward participation by using students' ideas in subsequent lectures, discussions, or labs (with attribution).

- Be sensitive to the fact that students are under a lot of stress from course work and increasing pressure to perform from parents, and they might therefore seem overly grade-conscious.
- Clearly communicate and faithfully adhere to your office hours. Office hours are important because students who are reluctant to talk in a class, section, or lab may clarify their point or problem more clearly one-on-one.
- Provide your e-mail address to students in your sections; be sure to check it frequently.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO BE WELL PREPARED?

Just like you, undergraduate students expect and appreciate good preparation. Careful organization of material for presentation indicates that you are serious about teaching. In addition, good preparation will make your lessons run more smoothly; a few extra minutes of thinking about what you want to accomplish can save you from what might seem like an eternity of embarrassment in front of students. Probably the single most important step in gaining respect and establishing authority is to be prepared. Students will admire and respect a teacher who takes their time seriously and who has worthwhile things to do with that time.

Here are Some Important Preparatory Steps to Take Before You Enter the Classroom:

- (1) Be familiar with the materials covered in lectures. Be sure to reread whatever materials have been assigned to the students.
- (2) Try to anticipate what sections of the materials the students may find difficult and prepare different approaches to understanding these areas.
- (3) Develop specific goals that can be reasonably achieved in a single class period. It may be necessary to readjust the number of goals according to student responses.
- (4) Visualize how you want each aspect of your lesson to work. You might do this by making an outline of the instructional plan or writing out the lecture and highlighting the key elements. Rehearsing can also help.

Once You Are in the Classroom, Consider Doing the Following:

- (1) At the beginning of the class, spend a couple of minutes reminding students of the last class and indicate how the day's material progresses from and relates to it.

- (2) Write on the board or announce the topics that will be covered and the learning objectives for the day. This summary will orient everyone to your plan.
- (3) Without appearing to be rigid or disinterested in discussion that gets too far off course, stick as close to the instructional plan as possible.
- (4) Prepare a little beyond the lesson to avoid getting through early with nothing more to say.
- (5) Somewhere near the end of the class, stop and summarize the information presented and restate the learning objectives. Try to frame the day's experience within the context of the larger, overall course goals. Then discuss what will be covered in the next class, make or repeat the next assignment, and indicate future learning objectives.
- (6) It is important not only to be prepared but also to be predictable. Learning is best conducted in an environment in which the obligations and responsibilities of all parties are clear and consistent.

OTHER ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE YOUR TEACHING SKILLS

- (1) Observe other instructors in action. Specifically note what it is about their preparation and delivery that makes them interesting and effective. Find out who on campus is considered especially compelling in the classroom and ask permission to observe them.
- (2) Reflect back on your favorite undergraduate teachers and think about what made them interesting and effective. Also, think about the feedback they gave you on written work that was useful to your learning when you were an undergraduate student.
- (3) Invite people you respect to observe your teaching. In many departments it is routine to have faculty periodically observe, but you might want to ask others, including more experienced TAs, for their opinions.
- (4) Attend a variety of teaching workshops, seminars, and lectures around the UNCW campus. Pay attention to and take advantage of teaching workshops offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Graduate School.
- (5) Check with your department about videotaping your own classroom teaching. Use the videotape to assess what you do well along with the areas you identify as needing additional work.

- (6) Attending lectures by visiting faculty also can offer an interesting array of instructional examples. Again, make note of what it is about a person's style that makes her/him particularly engaging, confusing, or boring.
- (7) Keep up to date in your field by reading journal articles and other relevant publications. Breadth and currency of knowledge enhances classroom effectiveness.

BEING FAIR TO UNDERGRADUATES

Fairness is more complicated than you might imagine. Know that undergraduates are quite skilled at sensing when some of their classmates appear to get more attention from you. There have been cases where some undergraduates felt that select students had been given an unfair advantage by a TA. Sometimes there is a fine line between trying to help a particularly assertive or needy student and giving that student an unfair advantage over others in securing a better grade on a test or other assignment.

There are some students who will seek to gain advantage by trying to ingratiate themselves with you in an effort to do well in a course. There are others who are simply more compulsive about taking every legitimate advantage to learn, and there are those who have serious academic problems and turn to you for needed help. No matter what the circumstance, **you must be careful to treat every student in a consistent and fair manner**. This means being fair to those students in your course or section who are not overtly seeking your aid. The same help and information that is offered to one student should be offered to all.

Remember that appearances can be deceiving. While you may not intentionally be giving special advantage to certain students, others in the class may perceive that you are. Being open and honest about what type of help is available to everyone and keeping relationships with students on a professional level will work toward giving you the reputation of being impartial and fair. **This is one of the most important reasons why becoming buddies with students who are under your instruction is not a good idea**. If students become your social friends they may accidentally learn more than they should about what will be on a test or gain advantage in other ways. Even when this is not the

case, other students in the course may assume that your student friends are getting more information just because of what appears to be a close relationship.

ADDRESSING REQUESTS FOR PERSONAL ADVICE

Undergraduates often seek advice from TAs. While the students may begin with academic concerns, they may end up seeking personal counsel. As you might know, personal matters and academic issues frequently go hand in hand. If a student does seek personal advice, it is likely to be most constructive to:

- Follow procedures provided by your department;
- Listen carefully to understand how the student sees the situation, and tell the student that you will discuss her or his problem with a faculty member and that one of you will get back in touch with the student;
- Consult with those people who can help the student find the campus resources that would be the most helpful.

Remember that your primary responsibility is the student's academic development and that your expertise lies in your knowledge of your discipline. Even if a student does not come to you directly about a problem, you may notice signs in her/his written work or class behavior that indicate the student may be grappling with personal difficulties. If such a case arises, you should bring your observations to the attention of a faculty member or the chairperson in your department, or the **Student Health Services, Counseling Center, or the Dean of Students Office**. If a student appears to be in a **psychological or personal crisis**, you can call the Student Health Services (962-3280) or the Counseling Center (962-3746) to consult about appropriate action or to receive immediate attention for the student, if needed. In the event of an **emergency**, you can receive assistance by calling **University Police at 962-3184**.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DISTRESSED STUDENTS

Adapted from: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depression.cfm#ptdep1>

Common Stressors in College Life Include:

- (1) Greater academic demands.
- (2) Being on one's own in a new environment.

- (3) Changes in family relations.
- (4) Financial responsibilities.
- (5) Changes in one's social life.
- (6) Exposure to new people, ideas, and temptations.
- (7) Awareness of one's sexual identity and orientation.
- (8) Preparing for life after graduation.

Some Signs and Symptoms of Distress

The following signs and symptoms may indicate that a student is experiencing health or mental health issues that could benefit from a referral to the UNCW Counseling Center or the Student Health Center.

- (1) Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood.
- (2) Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism.
- (3) Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness.
- (4) Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex.
- (5) Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down".
- (6) Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions.
- (7) Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping.
- (8) Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain.
- (9) Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts.
- (10) Restlessness, irritability.
- (11) Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain.
- (12) Abnormal or excessive elation; grandiose notions; increased talking; racing thoughts.
- (13) Markedly increased energy.
- (14) Poor judgment.
- (15) Inappropriate social behavior.
- (16) Excessive absence from class without justification.

You should never feel that you have to handle a student's problems or issues on your own; in fact, you should always consult your mentor or the graduate advisor as your first

[step in deciding what to do when concerns arise](#). Here are some additional suggestions to assist students who may be having difficulties.

- (1) Don't dismiss or trivialize a student's emotional distress (i.e., the breakup of a love relationship, poor grades, DUI, argument with a parent, etc.).
- (2) If a student appears depressed, anxious, or unable to cope academically or otherwise, refer the student to the Counseling Center.
- (3) If a student is [physically or verbally threatening](#) you or other students, quickly get to the nearest phone and [call Campus Police \(Ext. 4911\)](#). Do not threaten or challenge the student. If a disturbance takes place during class, try to get the other students out of the classroom quickly and quietly.
- (4) [Take any threat or report of harm to self or others seriously](#); lives may depend on your taking appropriate action. At the very least, contact the Counseling Center or the Dean of Students Office.

When a Student Stops Attending Class

A student who disappears from class is a particular cause for concern. There are cases when a student who has failed an exam may simply give up and unnecessarily receive a failing grade. Of even greater concern is the student who is performing adequately and stops attending class. If none of the student's classmates has information about the student in question, this can signal a serious problem. You should discuss with your mentor or advisor what steps to taking in trying to contact the student by phone to determine the reasons for the student's nonattendance. This takes time but, since you may be the first person to notice that a student has stopped attending class; take action. Find out what your department's protocol is. Don't let a student fall between gaps in systems. Finally, if your attempts to find out the status of a student are unsuccessful, call [The Dean of Students Office \(Ext. 3119\)](#), and staff there will try to make contact. [The importance of identifying and trying to reach missing students cannot be overemphasized.](#)

Consultation with the Counseling Center

If you have questions about a student or are unsure about whether or how to approach him or her to make a referral, call the [Counseling Center at 962-3746](#) and ask to speak to a counselor. The consultation may help you to:

- (1) Assess the seriousness of the situation;
- (2) Learn about available resources on and off campus;
- (3) Clarify your own feelings about the student and how you can help most; and,
- (4) Decide how to best initiate the referral process with the student.

Referring a Student to the Counseling Center

When you have conferred with the instructor of the course in which the student you are concerned about is enrolled, you and the instructor may decide to refer the student to the Counseling Center. In raising the issues of referral, you will usually do best to be straightforward about your concern for the student's welfare. Except in emergencies, the most important point is to present the concern in a way that enables the student to freely accept, consider, or refuse your recommendation. Some people need time to consider whether or not to seek counseling. Also, calling the Counseling Center to provide background information about the student is very helpful after you have made a referral.

Some ways in which you can proceed with a referral are to:

- (1) Suggest in a calm and supportive manner that the student call for an appointment, perhaps using your telephone for privacy.
- (2) Suggest that the student make an appointment by a certain date.
- (3) Offer to make the initial contact with the Counseling Center for the student.
- (4) In an emergency, phone for an immediate appointment. It may even be helpful and supportive to offer to walk with the student to the Counseling Center.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COUNSELING CENTER

[See: http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/SDS/counsel.html](http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/SDS/counsel.html)

What is Counseling?

Counseling is a collaborative process between counselor and client. This relationship is an important one and includes:

- A caring, respectful environment.
- Mutually agreed upon goals for counseling.
- Answers to your questions about this process.

How Do I Make an Appointment? [Call 962-3746 or come by the 2nd floor of Westside Hall and schedule an initial intake session with the receptionist.](#)

What if I Need to be Seen Quickly? The Counseling Center has staff available daily for "walk-in" clients. Following a brief intake session to assess your needs, you will be referred for individual, group counseling or other appropriate services.

What Does It cost? Counseling services are free to enrolled students.

Off Campus Referrals. From time to time referrals are made off campus to better meet a student's individual needs.

Confidentiality. In accordance with ethical standards and state and federal law, Counseling Center staff take every reasonable precaution to protect your privacy. The identities of those using our services, along with the personally identifiable disclosures made in counseling, are held in confidence. Confidential information is not shared with anyone outside the center without your written consent unless there is a clear and imminent danger to you or to others, or as a result of a special court order. There is no information about your counseling kept with your academic or health records at UNCW.

UNCW HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY TOWARD ANY TYPE OF VIOLENCE

REPORTS, CONCERNS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE IN THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

As a TA you will find that It is not uncommon for students to be involved in interpersonal relationships where violence and abuse is present. Young students may not realize that a relationship is abusive or violent, and they may not know how to talk about their concerns or with whom to speak. They may believe that they have brought violence upon themselves as a deserved response from an intimate partner. Occasionally, a student will wonder if her or his uncomfortable interaction with a professor is improper or constitutes sexual harassment. She or he may express fear that reporting a professor will threaten her or his grade or academic record. There are many ways that students will bring concerns to your attention; not all of them will be clear and direct. It is vital that you are aware of and open to recognizing the signs of violence and other forms of abuse, coercion or harassment.

As a TA, even if you do not know how to immediately respond to a disclosure of possible abuse, it is your responsibility to know of the resources that are available to help students with this issue. **It is never acceptable to have a student tell you that violence is occurring in her or his life and not take some action on the basis of this information.** If information comes to you that suggests a student is in a violent relationship (either as the victim or perpetrator), you should first seek counsel with your faculty mentor. There are many resources and services on campus that are available to you and your student. These include: The **CARE** program through the Office of Student Affairs at <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/care/index.htm>

WHAT IS CARE?

CARE is a resource center located on the second floor of Westside Hall, along with the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, and CROSSROADS.

- **CARE is about options.** Any student affected by issues of violence and harassment has a variety of options and services available on and off campus. CARE staff will identify and discuss those options with students.
- **CARE is for survivors.** Recovering from sexual assault or relationship violence is a process. Survivors may look for services in close proximity to an event or up to years later.
- **CARE is for those affected by violence.** When someone we love is the victim of a sexual assault or is involved in an abusive relationship, we can feel sad, angry, and helpless. CARE provides information, resources and a place to talk.
- **CARE engages the campus.** Through trainings, programs, and awareness campaigns, the professional staff and peer educators of CARE join our partners across campus in education to raise awareness and change the campus environment.
- **CARE is a collaborative.** Our campus partners include University Police, the Office of the Dean of Students, Counseling Center, Health Services, the Women's Resource Center, and Housing and Residential Life. We work collaboratively with the Rape Crisis Center and Domestic Violence Shelter and Services. The coordinators of CARE maintain a strong link to CROSSROADS and the Counseling Center, two areas that are intimately linked to these issues.

OUR MISSION

The UNCW Collaboration for Assault Response and Education is the campus initiative dedicated to intervening on a **broad spectrum of violent behaviors, including sexual assault, relationship abuse, stalking and harassment.** We offer a comprehensive range of violence intervention programs, trainings, and educational campaigns to the UNCW campus. We respond to students who have been victimized by providing supportive services, including crisis

response, individual advocacy and coordination with both on-campus and off-campus resources. We provide empathetic consultation to students, faculty and staff who are affected by their own or another's experience with abuse or assault. CARE collaborates with on- and off-campus constituents who are also involved in raising awareness of, intervening in and expertly responding to these issues. As we work to reduce overt and covert expressions of violence, we actively promote the maintenance and continuing development of a campus environment characterized by support and respect.

HOW TO CONTACT US

The CARE Office is located on the second floor of Westside Hall, inside the Student Health Center waiting room. CARE can be contacted at [910-962-CARE](tel:910-962-CARE). After hours emergency consultation is also available by contacting University Police dispatch at [962-3184](tel:962-3184).

- The **SAFE RELATE: HELP WITH VIOLENT AND ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM** provides information on different issues related to interpersonal violence, assault and safety on the UNCW campus. See <http://www.uncw.edu/safe%2Drelate/index.html> for more information. UNCW Campus Police officers are highly trained and sensitive to the issues of interpersonal violence.
- **RAD self-defense courses** for women are offered during the school year through the campus police department. <http://www.uncw.edu/ba/police/pindex.htm#RAD>
- The **Campus Counseling Center** offers individual and group services as well as referrals for service to deal with issues of interpersonal violence. Contact information is provided below.

CRISES & EMERGENCIES

WHAT TO DO...

DURING REGULAR HOURS, CRISIS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAY BE ACCESSED BY CALLING THE **COUNSELING CENTER AT 962-3746**. AFTER HOURS, CRISIS AND EMERGENCY CONSULTATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY CALLING THE **CRISIS LINE AT 910-392-7408** OR THE **UNIVERSITY POLICE AT 962-3184 OR 4911**.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Counseling Center: 910-962-3746

Collaboration for Assault Response & Prevention: 962-CARE

University Police: 910-962-3184 or 4911 (from campus phone)

Dean of Students Office: 910-962-3119

Crisis Line: 910-392-7408

Off-Campus Police: 911

Cape Fear Hospital: 910-452-8112

New Hanover Regional Medical Center: 910-343-7000

The [Office of the Dean of Students](#) has an array of services to help students. Of particular interest regarding issues concerning safety and violence prevention is the availability of crisis intervention services.

CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES

As the primary advocate for our UNCW student body, the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) is often called upon during situations of crisis and emergency. The range of crisis situations may include, but are not limited to, issues of death; serious illness; victim of harassment, assault or other violent and serious crime; or a loss of a significant relationship. Once notified, the staff will respond to the needs of the victim through personal contact, and assist the individual with deciding the best options available at that moment. In addition, the staff member will engage other professional staff throughout the university community who can help provide support, information and resolution.

Whenever classes are in session, a professional staff member in the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) is available to respond to crisis and emergency situations. If you or a friend is dealing with a significant crisis, contact our office immediately at [962-3119](#).

After 5pm or during the weekend, we can be contacted through the [University Police](#) by calling [962-3184](#).

[When in doubt about a situation you observe or hear about directly from a student or others, do not let the matter go unattended. Consult with your faculty mentor or the chair of your department. Contact the various service providers on campus to see what services are available to offer a student in crisis or in a dangerous situation!](#)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCEDURES

Information in the following sections includes materials adapted from Washington University in St. Louis <http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/GSAS/Teaching/Resources/TAHandbook.html>

UNCW exists to facilitate the pursuit, acquisition, and transmission of knowledge. Academic integrity is essential to our activity as researchers, teachers, and students. As a teaching assistant, you should approach the issue of academic integrity from the perspectives of encouraging integrity and preventing cheating.

What Can TAs Do to Prevent Integrity Violations?

“Everybody’s doing it.” Cheating among undergraduate students is common, on the rise, and discouraging to non-cheaters. A 1992 national study of 6096 undergraduate students at 31 of the nation’s most prestigious and highly selective universities found that 67.4% of students reported cheating at least once as undergraduates (Cahoon & Rogers). (<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/edpolicy/projects/genatrit/Papers/cheating.pdf>)

Cheating takes many forms, ranging from glancing at another student's work during a test to extensive plagiarism on written assignments. You can discourage potentially dishonest behavior if you:

- (1) Give clear direction to students about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- (2) Clarify during the early stages of contact with students that plagiarism, cheating, data fabrication, and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable and have serious consequences.
- (3) Create an environment that makes dishonesty more difficult.
- (4) Finally, if your efforts at prevention fail and some students cheat, you must deal with the infraction in an appropriate manner.

The **UNCW Code of Student Life** specifically addresses academic dishonesty offenses: The University of North Carolina Wilmington is committed to the proposition that the pursuit of truth requires the presence of honesty among all involved. It is therefore this institution’s stated policy that **no form of dishonesty among its faculty or students will be tolerated**. Although all members of the university community are encouraged to report occurrences of dishonesty, each individual is principally responsible for his or her own

honesty. The following definitions and procedures are provided to help everyone realize the high value that is placed on academic integrity and the means that will be employed to insure its preservation (2006).

Academic Dishonesty Offenses

At UNCW Violation of any of the following standards subjects any student to disciplinary action:

Plagiarism means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another person's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own work. It is doubly unethical, since it deprives the true author of his/her rightful credit and then gives that credit to someone to whom it is not due. Three examples of plagiarism are described by Martin and Ohmann (1963) in their book **The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition**:

- **Word-for-Word Copying.** Whenever someone else is directly quoted, honesty and courtesy require acknowledgment of the source. The quoted material should be placed in quotation marks and its exact location should be indicated, either in the text of the student's paper or in a footnote.
- **The Mosaic.** To intersperse a few words of one's own here and there while basically copying the work of another is obviously unethical, unless one clearly acknowledges that this is being done. Should there be a valid reason for doing so then quotation marks or a general footnote should be used to show what belongs to the source and what one's own contribution is.
- **The Paraphrase.** Once more the crucial point is acknowledgment. Sometimes one can paraphrase in order to simplify, abbreviate, or improve upon an original, but the reader deserves to know what is being presented to him and whose work it represents. Therefore, acknowledgment of the source is required within the text of the student's paper or by footnote.

Bribery is the offering, giving, receiving or soliciting of any consideration in order to obtain a grade or other treatment not otherwise earned by the student through his/her own academic performance.

Cheating is any conduct during a program, course, quiz or examination which involves the unauthorized use of written or oral information, or information obtained by any other means of communication, including:

- The unauthorized buying, selling, trading or theft of any examination, quiz, term paper or project.
- The unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device during any program, course, quiz, or examination or in connection with laboratory reports or other materials related to academic performance.
- The unauthorized use of laboratory reports, term reports, theses, or written materials in whole or in part.
- The unauthorized assistance or collaboration on any test, assignment, or project.
- The unauthorized use by a student of another student's work or the falsification of any other student's work.
- Participating in, or permitting any of the above activities.

It is not unusual for faculty to be upset or disappointed when they discover cheating or other violations of academic honesty. It is helpful to understand that such student misconduct is often the result of panic in not getting work done, pressure to make good grades, fear of failure, or values that are inconsistent with university expectations. Sometimes students are truly confused about what constitutes cheating or are poorly educated with regard to proper conduct. **It is not safe to assume that students have already learned what constitutes acceptable conduct from their high school experience.** This is especially true regarding citation of source material and plagiarism, including use of information from internet sources.

How Can TAs Establish the Right Expectations?

Place a statement about academic integrity in the course syllabus and devote some time to the issue on the first day of class. You might also remind students to read the information on academic integrity policy for undergraduate students in the UNCW Code of Student Life (2006). Cautioning students that you will not hesitate to take an integrity

question to the department chair or to your faculty mentor emphasizes your commitment to ethical behavior. If students understand that you view integrity as an important element in your class, an ethical and positive learning environment will be reinforced.

How Can You Clarify the Rules on Source Citation, Take-home Exams, and Assignments?

Sometimes specific rules regarding citation of sources are not well understood by students; therefore, instructions are crucial in clarifying your expectations. On take-home exams, for example, students may be confused about whether and which sources may be used and if so, what sort of attribution is acceptable. The same is true for papers. If formal citation is expected, recommend or require that a particular manual or style sheet be used.

If homework is given on a regular basis, it is important to define whether collaboration is acceptable or not, and if so, what level of collaboration. Rules about group projects require special delineation. Writing the rules and giving each student a copy is the best way to make your expectations clearly understood. Writing rule-reminders on the board can help to reinforce these concepts.

What Preventive Measures Can You Take to Reduce Integrity Infractions on Tests and Papers?

Tests: Testing in a crowded room is often an invitation to cheat. Temptation is particularly high when students are crammed together taking an objective exam. Some recommendations for testing include:

- On multiple-choice or short answer tests, make two or three versions by mixing up the order of the questions.
- Instructing students to put all books and belongings in the front or back of the room before taking an exam.
- Issuing dated and numbered blue books, or providing a separate sheet for answers.
- Constructing a seating chart in advance to discourage collaboration.
- If room permits, avoid having students sitting right next to one another or right in front or behind one another.

- If desks are not fixed to the floor, turn every other row in the opposite direction.
- Observe the entire room during the exam by walking around the room and standing in the back.
- If you believe that students may be taking exams for others, consider checking IDs.

Papers: Certain steps make it more difficult for a student to turn in a plagiarized paper or someone else's work. They include:

- Making absolutely sure your expectations regarding citation are clearly understood; a short lesson about attribution is always a good idea. Providing your rules in writing is best.
- Being sure students know you are open to discussion about style and construction on an individual basis.
- Getting a good in-class writing sample from students early in the course or asking to see an early draft of a paper helps to ensure that submitted work is the student's own.
- Providing a restricted list of topics or questions can minimize temptation to use previously written material.
- Constructing a list of acceptable sources also makes checking doubtful passages easier.

What Can You Do If a Student Cheats or Plagiarizes?

Before accusing a student of any integrity infraction, be sure the evidence supports the accusation. Mere suspicion is not enough. Discuss your concerns with your faculty mentor or the head of your department or program.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Visit your classroom prior to the first day of class. Familiarize yourself with emergency exits and evacuation procedures and know where the nearest phone is in case of an emergency. If you have a “smart” classroom, be sure you know the access codes and how to operate all of the equipment prior to starting your class. (You are prudent to have backup hard copies of your presentations, etc. with you in case the equipment is not working). If you use maps, overhead projectors, etc., be sure the room is equipped to handle these needs. If you find yourself in a room that is too small, too big, poorly suited to the subject material, without whiteboard markers or chalk, and so on, please check with the administrative assistant in your home department.

TEACHING AND TECHNOLOGY

Information in the following sections includes materials adapted from Washington University in St. Louis: <http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/GSAS/Teaching/Resources/TAHandbook.html>

The goal of integrating technology into classroom courses is to pedagogically enhance learning with the help of technology, not merely to technologically enhance our courses. If you are planning to integrate technology into your classroom teaching, think about:

- **Pedagogical considerations:** Identify course goals and students' learning needs.
- **Technological considerations:** Determine in what ways technology does and does NOT enhance your in-classroom teaching.
- **Support considerations:** Identify personnel on campus with whom you will need to collaborate.
- **Student access considerations:** Identify what type of access your students have.
- **Training considerations:** Identify the training you may need and the time it will require not only to develop useful Web sites but also to manage their use effectively throughout the course.
- **Copyright considerations:** Identify that part of your content which may require notification or permission from original sources.

The use of technology in the classroom can greatly enhance the teaching and learning process. Effective use of technology begins with well-conceived and carefully thought out content and learning objectives. Technologies (computers, video, audio, etc.) are

then used to perform specific tasks within the teaching and learning scheme. Active multi-media environments (the use of one or more aids such as film, overhead projectors, and computers) encourage active student involvement and exploration, self-expression, communication, cooperation and student-instructor collaboration. Multi-media resources and instructional technologies can aid instructors in adapting material for various learning styles.

Some of the advantages technology can bring to the classroom include the following:

- The instructor can accomplish tasks or present information that he/she cannot do by him/herself, such as helping students experience times, events, and people that cannot be incorporated into the class in other ways (e.g., through the use of film, slides, or live broadcasts).
- Multi-media may help students visualize phenomena that are too small or too dynamic to convey with traditional print or gesture (e.g., projection of microscope view, time-lapse photography).
- Technology can aid in the performance of routine tasks, such as repetition and drills to help students master content (e.g., use of language labs, computer-aided self-instruction packages).
- Students are prepared for the world of work. For example: helping students become familiar with computerized/electronic spreadsheets, word processing, computer aided design technologies, information management, and computer assisted communication devices, all can develop potential workplace skills while enhancing the educational process.
- Instructor and student productivity is enhanced, thus reducing time for routine record keeping or communication (e.g., writing or revising using computers).
- The instructor can reach students that choose not to, or cannot, attend class. For example, video recording class sessions and making those tapes available to students in convenient locations (e.g., the non-print media section of the library or in an accessible on-line environment), can be especially useful in large lectures - both for students who miss class or who just want to review the lecture. Remote location and telecommunication of unique classes to other schools or settings can enhance distance education programs.

- Technology can allow for more efficient monitoring, recording, and analyzing data in labs. For example, the use of technology allows the continuous monitoring of an experimental output, such as temperature, pH, or color rather than a student collecting individual data points.
- Instructors can create simulations of experiments or case studies, allowing students “hands on” experiences they might not otherwise have. Technology allows for models and simulations. Technology gives students the opportunity to construct and study models or situations or events that cannot be done in the classroom, or conduct and repeat virtual experiments that would be time or cost prohibitive.

Examples of technology use in the classroom today are becoming more evident. A range of simple to complex uses can be found in all disciplines. All of these applications can be very useful if properly integrated into the teaching and learning plan for the course.

- Electronic mail is being used to enhance communication between students, faculty, and TAs in courses. Some classes have started experimenting with regular e-mail use to post notices and clarify assignments for students, allow students to ask questions of (and receive answers from) TAs and faculty electronically, and promote communication with others studying similar topics in distant locations. The internet allows for easy, fast communication to individuals in educational institutions worldwide.
- Electronic class platforms, such as WebCT or Blackboard are being used by faculty to deliver class materials, exercises, compile and compute grades, communicate with students in a variety of ways, and perform various sorts of assessments on student work and participation.
- Information technology is being used for classroom presentation and display of lecture notes and support of student note-taking. Local area networks and group support software are being used to increase classroom interactivity and create dynamic problem solving environments for students in a variety of disciplines.
- Many teachers are modeling the use of the educational technology they want students to use in their own applications. For example, engineering design classes are being taught using new computer tools that students also utilize in completing project assignments; and science educators are teaching certain concepts using

videodisc based modules that new teachers can use with the elementary school students they may teach when they go into the schools as student teachers.

- Physics students experience more active learning, discovery-based approaches with the aid of innovative computer-based programs, and political science and geography students can participate in a wide variety of computer-based simulations, including interaction with students from other countries, as part of regular class assignments and problem-solving activities.
- Foreign language and other classes regularly use cleverly prepared transparencies for overhead projectors to stimulate conversation, as well as clarify and reinforce particular learning objectives.
- English composition students and others involved in writing assignments use computer based collaborative writing and revising activities to enrich constructive criticism and to enhance writing improvement activities.
- Teachers in many areas regularly assign film viewing or listening to tapes (drawing on the large collection of non-print media resources in the library) to enhance understanding of historical events, anthropological research, science discoveries, etc.

CONSTRUCTING YOUR SYLLABUS AND PREPARING FOR YOUR CLASS

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland

<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

Syllabus Construction

Your syllabus tells your students what your course is about, why the course is taught, and how a student can be successful in your course. A complete and well designed syllabus can help set the climate and tone for a positive teaching and learning environment and acts as a contract that clearly details both student and instructor responsibilities. Too often a syllabus simply includes the instructor's contact information, a list of topics that will be covered in the course, and due dates of various assignments. This is less than desirable, especially as more and more attention is paid to student learning outcomes.

On the first day of class, instructors are expected to distribute a course syllabus. Although there can be variations, it is suggested that your document minimally contain the following information:

- A general description of the course;
- Required textbooks (where used);
- Course outline with topics and assigned readings, by week/class session if possible;
- Detailed assignment descriptions (if tests are not being used);
- Grading procedures;
- Due dates for papers and projects, and exam dates;
- Expectations of students;
- Your office hours and how you can be reached;
- Reminders about academic integrity, arrangements for students with disabilities, and other important information you have for students.

Well Constructed Syllabi Often Include:

- Detailed information about the course instructor including name, title, office location, office hours, phone number(s) and e-mail address;
- Information about your course goals, objectives and structure; a rationale for your course structure; identified student learning outcomes; a detailed description of expectations for completing assignments; and a clear linkage between goals, objectives, course assignments and learning outcomes;
- Specific course policies, such as rules about attendance, lateness, class participation, missed exams or assignments, lab safety, academic honesty, and grading specifications;
- All course policies must comply with University policies;
- A list of additional materials needed in the course: lab materials, art supplies, calculators, software, etc., and where these materials may be obtained; and,
- Available services, such as information about any support services available to the student that might be useful during the course (Learning Assistance, the Writing Center, Library Facilities, Computer Lab Facilities and the Helpdesk, etc.).

THE FIRST CLASS SESSION

First impressions are lasting impressions. On your first day of class it is important to be well-prepared and to establish a comfortable teaching and learning environment. The following is a list of tips designed to ensure that the first meeting with students is a good one.

- **Stage your entrance.** If you want to achieve a more informal tone for the course, arrive a few minutes early and chat with students as they come into the classroom. If you want to achieve a more formal tone for the course, arrive promptly.
- **Introduce yourself.** Include information regarding your office hours and phone number(s). Briefly tell the class something about yourself, such as your general research interests, the focus of your dissertation, what interests you about the course topics, and what you hope to learn as a teacher from teaching this class.
- **Ask students about themselves.** Ask them why they are taking your course, whether they have any prior knowledge or experiences that relate to the topics you will explore, what they hope to learn from your class, what they want to do when they graduate, and what skill they want to acquire in their tenure as undergraduates. If your class is small, you may consider getting this information through a “round-robin” exercise in which each student gives this information to the entire class or through a “pair share” exercise in which each student gives this information to another student who then reports the information to the class. If your class is small, consider doing a “show of hands” exercise in which you ask questions to the entire class and students respond by raising their hands. Questions could include: “How many of you are expecting to be Business majors? Biology majors? How many of you want to use this class to improve your writing? Improve your research skills?”
- **Review the syllabus.** Describe the course’s skill and content objectives, explain the expectations for students and what is required for successful completion of the course, review the course format, and describe any special projects. Instructors should also solicit students’ questions regarding the syllabus or course.
- It is important for instructors to **identify students by name** during the first class meeting. Students appreciate when you take the time to see them as individuals.
- Make note of which students on the class list are present and the names of any students who are present but not on the official.

- Additionally, you can have students make name cards to be used during the first few sessions until both you and the students learn everyone's names.

LEARNING THROUGH CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Discussion is a very important teaching tool. Discussion techniques that encourage active student learning through critical thinking and analysis are particularly appropriate in helping students to...

- Learn to evaluate the logic of and evidence for their own and others' positions;
- Gain opportunities to formulate application of principles;
- Become aware of and formulate problems;
- Use the resources of other class members;
- Develop motivation for further learning;
- Get prompt feedback on how well objectives are being met; and,
- Learn to respond quickly to the ideas of others.

Using discussion techniques requires a great deal of instructor forethought regarding how to get all students to participate actively. It is also important to remember that discussions are not conducive to covering a significant amount of content. However, **discussion techniques encourage students to participate actively in the teaching and learning process in addition to facilitating the development of critical thinking skills.** Getting all students in a class of twelve or more to be actively involved is a difficult task that requires practice and creativity on the part of the facilitator. The following is a summary of several different discussion techniques and strategies for facilitating and improving discussion in the classroom.

Developmental Discussion is a problem solving technique in which problems are broken down into parts/stages so that all members are working on the same stage at the same time. Typical stages include the following: formulating problems, suggesting hypothesis, gathering relevant data, and evaluating alternative solutions. Developmental discussion requires participation from all group members and the participation is directed at a specific goal.

Using **Small Groups** is a way to get all members of a class to participate. Members of a class are divided into smaller clusters of four to six people and the clusters are given one or two questions on a subject. One member of the cluster is chosen to record and report the cluster's ideas to the entire class. This technique is particularly useful in larger classes and also encourages shy students to participate.

Panel Discussion is a technique used to stimulate interest and thinking, provoking better discussion. A selected group acts as a panel, and the remaining members act as an audience. The panel informally discusses selected questions. A panel leader is chosen and he/she summarizes the panel discussion and opens discussion to the audience group.

Debate Discussion is a technique appropriate for discussing a controversial issue. The group is divided into two sides of pro and con. Each speaker should be limited to a predetermined time and the objective should be to convince the audience, not to attack the opponent.

Role Playing is a technique used to develop clearer insights into the feelings of people and the forces that facilitate or block good relations. Selected group members spontaneously act out a chosen situation or incident. The whole group then analyzes and discusses the roles and characteristics of the various players.

Brainstorming is useful in generating new ideas and getting group members to utilize their thinking potential. Suitable problems or questions are selected by the discussion leader or the entire group. The group generates ideas following these suggestions: no critical judgments, strive for quantity of ideas (wild ideas are welcomed), and add to or improve on someone else's idea (if possible). A chosen recorder lists the ideas on the board or flipchart paper. The ideas may be further refined and used for distribution and discussion in a subsequent class.

The instructor's role in discussion is one of facilitating and guiding rather than one of controlling. An instructor should resist dominating or controlling a discussion and limit intervention to guiding and refocusing. Perhaps the hardest thing about using the

discussion method is getting discussions started and getting students to participate actively.

To begin discussions and to get students involved in them, you may want to try some of the following tips and suggestions:

- Place students in small groups (3-5) and have the group initially discuss a chosen topic;
- Allow students time to get prepared for discussions;
- Break larger problems into smaller ones;
- Ask questions at different levels of abstraction;
- Provide encouragement and praise for participation and risk-taking;
- Don't use unnecessary jargon;
- Learn students' names;
- Creatively handle disagreements;
- Draw on students' skills;
- Provide clear instructions for small group work;
- Demonstrate how to critique a theory or hypothesis;
- Start discussions with a common experience or a question, or a controversial issue.

In discussions, the instructor often encounters the “non-participator” or the “discussion monopolizer.” To encourage the non-participator, an instructor can thoroughly explain the purpose of and guidelines for discussion from the outset, get to know students, have students get to know each other, and reward any contribution with at least a smile. In dealing with the discussion monopolizer, an instructor may have the class discuss the role of member participation in the discussion, have one member of a group act as a monitor for a few meetings and then report findings back to the group, or approach the student outside of class.

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

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LECTURING

Lecturing is one of the primary methods of instruction university professors use in their classrooms. The method's greatest benefit is efficiency. It can be particularly useful for helping students get information on current research and theories, summarizing materials that are scattered over a variety of printed resources, and adapting materials to particular students' backgrounds and experiences. Lecturing can also build structures and expectations that will enable students to read more effectively.

In order to make the lecturing method most effective, lectures must be well prepared, maintain student attention, and allow for student note taking. In addition, instructor enthusiasm is a key ingredient in a successful lecture. The following is a list of tips useful in making lectures as effective as possible:

- Make sure the lecture is well planned and organized. Lectures should be organized around a theme and based on both the logical structure of the subject and the cognitive structure of students' minds.
- Be well prepared during lectures. Don't take a verbatim prepared copy to the classroom to lecture from; instead, use an outline or a sequence of cue words or phrases.
- Give students an outline of what you will cover in the lecture. Previews of what you will cover and how you will cover it will help students to stay focused on what you are saying and organize their listening and note taking.

- Start lectures with a provocative question or a paradox that the lecture will work to answer or solve, or provide the keys to answering the question or solving the problem, in order to gain student interest in the beginning and keep that interest until the end.
- Use indicators to let students know what is coming next, when one topic is finished and another is to begin. Words such as consequently, therefore and because are useful in indicating key points.
- Give periodic summaries within the lecture. Summaries allow students time to catch up and aid students in organizing knowledge.
- Allow students ample time for note taking. Research indicates that note taking aids in student retention. You may want to consider stopping after 7-10 minutes of lecture to have students summarize for the group what you have talked about and why it is important. This sort of self-reflective work helps students to absorb what they hear and synthesize information.
- Make eye contact with students and look for lost or confused faces so you will know when students aren't following the lecture and may need further clarification of a point or a summary of what has been covered so far.
- Research on student learning shows that **students' effective attention is generally limited to eight-to-ten minute blocks**. To increase students' retention of information break up the lecture into short segments interspersed with other learning activities.
- Encourage student participation and/or active learning during lectures by both asking questions periodically during the lecture and allowing time for student questions.

TIP!! To keep students interested during lectures and to reach students who process information visually, an instructor may want to use various audiovisual aids. Whiteboards and PowerPoint slides or overhead transparencies are some of the most common aides used during lectures. When using the board, keep writing large and legible. Try not to keep your back to students throughout the entire lecture. When using overhead transparencies, limit the amount of information on each transparency and have the information you wish to put on transparencies organized beforehand. Audio or video tapes can also be used to reach visually-oriented students and keep them interested. Increasingly instructors are using electronic presentation tools such as PowerPoint to

present course materials. If you choose to use PowerPoint or the like it is important to understand the strengths and limitations of these media.

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

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COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning is a set of teaching and learning techniques that allows students to be active participants in their own learning as well as in the construction of knowledge. In cooperative learning, small groups of students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Research has shown that cooperative learning techniques promote student learning and academic achievement, increase student retention, enhance student satisfaction with their learning experience, help students develop skills in oral communication, develop students' social skills, promote student self-esteem, and help to promote positive race relations.

Cooperative learning also meets the principles for good undergraduate teaching practice by [encouraging student-faculty contact](#), [encouraging cooperation among students](#), [promoting active learning](#), [providing prompt feedback](#), [respecting and allowing for diverse talents and ways of learning](#). Cooperative teams can be formed in a variety of ways, including letting students choose, or assigning groups based on student interest or ability. Generally, small, heterogeneous groups of three or four students are most beneficial. There are various cooperative learning structures that may be used according to the content and objective of a lesson. Here are some examples:

- **Think-Pair-Share** is a three step cooperative structure. During the first step, individuals think silently about a question posed by the instructor. Individuals pair up during the second step and exchange their thoughts. In the third step, the pairs share their responses with the other pairs, other teams, or the entire group.

- **The Three Step Interview** requires that each member of a team choose another member to be a partner. During the first step, individuals interview (ask clarifying questions) their partners. During the second step, partners reverse the roles. For the final step, members share their partner's responses with the team.
- **Round Robin Brainstorming** asks students to contemplate the answer to a question during a period of silence. After the "think time," members of the team share their responses with one another round robin style. This method can also be used for smaller sized classes.
- **The Three Minute Review** is when the instructor stops the lecture and gives teams three minutes to answer questions, review what has been said, or ask clarifying questions.

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ASSESSING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Overall Purpose of Assessment

Different classroom assessments serve different purposes. In general, classroom assessments provide instructors with data about students' progress and ability to demonstrate learning. Instructors use the data to make decisions about modifying their instruction if warranted, but they also use the assessments themselves to teach students about their expectations, to illuminate ways that course content needs to be organized or analyzed appropriately, and to communicate what kind of performance is required to be successful. Students use the data to monitor their own progress, gain insight into expectations and requirements, and to make decisions about study habits.

About Objectives

It is important for instructors to define for themselves, and for students, what the goal or “target” is for each assignment. Some targets relate to basic knowledge mastery; others relate to higher order thinking skills (e.g., the ability to analyze problems and to apply knowledge to new situations). Others relate to skill development and demonstration of particular skill mastery; others relate to products (e.g., a research report or a model which must demonstrate particular attributes). Still others relate to effect (i.e., attitudes or academic self-concepts and values that instructors hope students will develop). Clear definitions of targets help students to understand instructional goals and to assess their own progress.

Assessment Tools

Instructors can choose from a variety of assessment tools. However, whatever the choice, it is important to be sure that the tool is consistent with the purpose of the instruction and the intended use of the assessment tool. Some available tools are described below:

- **Preassessments:** Giving a quiz or test at the beginning of a course can tell the instructor something about the range of preparation levels in a class and of areas of students’ strength and weakness. Preassessments should not be administered for grading purposes, and students should understand that preassessments are intended to improve the quality and level of instruction in the course.
- **Objective Tests:** These tests (multiple choice, true/false, etc.) generally are designed to sample knowledge with maximum efficiency and reliability. If constructed carefully, objective tests can assess knowledge both at the factual recall level as well as the higher cognitive levels.
- **Essay Tests:** These tests generally seek to assess thinking skills and the ability to organize and present knowledge effectively in a particular field. In some cases, instructors give take-home exams of the essay type when it is not deemed important to assess students’ knowledge within a timed context or strictly from memory. Each essay question should tell the student what an acceptable response includes, so that answers will not be too long, too short, or off target.

- **In-class Questioning:** Use oral questioning to assess student comprehension during classroom instruction. Even in large lectures, such questioning can prove very helpful to students and instructors to pause periodically, raise a relevant question based on the material covered so far, and sample student ability to respond appropriately. You might ask for a show of hands to check for comprehension.
- **Projects and Papers:** Sometimes the best assessment of student achievement requires students to produce something to show they have mastered the course objectives. These may be individual or group products, presentations, or papers, depending on instructor purposes. For example, in some fields it is very important to learn how to work as part of a team; thus, creation of a group project in that context would be an appropriate choice. A review of architectural and art projects is an example of such methods, often combining knowledge and skill assessments in one process. A variety of assessment tools may be used in any given course. However, consideration in all cases must take into account how much time the assessment will take, how clearly criteria for success are articulated to students, and how well the assessments are constructed. The following are criteria for making effective tests:
 - (1) Decide what the assessment is supposed to measure and communicate that purpose. If instructors emphasize the need for students to be able to analyze and solve problems and to apply their knowledge, they should not use recall-level tests for assessment of such objectives.
 - (2) Make sure that assessments reflect the breadth and depth of the material they cover. For example, a final exam in U.S. History would be inadequate if it only asked about the War of 1812; it would be similarly deficient if it asked only for recall of dates and names and did not ask students to analyze, compare and contrast, draw inferences, and otherwise use their knowledge.
 - (3) Keep out irrelevancies. In part, this means that tests should be free of bias toward any racial, ethnic, cultural, or gender group and should avoid measuring any characteristic not part of the test's content. For example, a history test should not be scored so that students with better handwriting receive credit for more than their knowledge of history warrants.

- (4) Tests must be practical. Make sure that the test can accomplish the purpose in the time available and with the resources at hand. Unless working quickly is a course objective, all students should be able to respond thoughtfully in the allotted time.

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ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Grading is one of the means of communication between instructors and students. Through grades, instructors may be telling students the degree to which they have exhibited their work habits, motivation, skill, knowledge and ability, as well as their achievement of the goals of a particular course. Students may use grades to assist them in decisions about whether or not they can compete successfully in comparison with others. Grades also communicate a student's achievement to others outside the class and the university. Several means of assessment and grading have been questioned by educational researchers. A few of these are included below:

- (1) Failing to recognize and account for assessments such as test scores that are atypical for a student. Such scores may have resulted from unusual circumstances, and therefore should be deemphasized;
- (2) Grading on a curve, which may not fairly measure the actual performance of each student;

- (3) Assigning zeros for missing or incomplete work, which is not necessarily valid as an indicator of progress and has devastating effects on averages;
- (4) Emphasizing higher order thinking during instruction but only recall and other simple knowledge skills on tests used to determine student grades;
- (5) Averaging raw, untransformed test scores, which does not weight them as intended.

At UNCW, grading systems may vary by programs and schools, making it important to understand the particular way your program's grading system operates. Be sure to check with your department and/or faculty course supervisor about grading so you can answer questions that students may have about how they will be graded in your class.

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SELF-EVALUATION AND CLASSROOM RESEARCH

Classroom assessment is a process of involving instructors in the systematic study of teaching and learning. Through close observation, collection of feedback, and design of experiments, instructors can learn more about how students respond to various teaching approaches. Models of classroom research and assessment are based on several underlying assumptions:

- (1) **Quality of student learning is directly related to quality of teaching.**

- (2) To improve teaching, instructors need to make objectives explicit and they need to receive feedback regarding the extent to which these objectives are being met.
- (3) The research that is most likely to improve teaching and learning is conducted by instructors.
- (4) Classroom research can be done by anyone capable of and dedicated to college teaching.
- (5) Classroom research techniques can be particularly appropriate for assessing teaching and learning in three areas: students' academic skills and intellectual development, students' self-awareness as learners, and student reactions to an instructor and/or course.

ACADEMIC SKILLS AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Focused Listing can be used to determine what learners recall as the most important points related to a particular topic. Instructors select a topic recently covered in class and describe it in a word or short phrase. The word or phrase is written on a piece of paper as a heading. Within a determined time limit or limit on the number of items to be written, instructors make a list of important words or phrases that relate to the heading. After rereading the list, if an instructor feels that it is still an important topic, he/she can ask students to make lists. The instructor's list can be used as a master to compare to students' lists. The data collected from this technique can be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Concept Maps provide observable and assessable records of students' conceptual schemata. Instructors choose a concept to use as a stimulus or starting point for the concept map. After brainstorming for a few minutes, instructors write down terms and phrases related to the concept and then draw a concept map based on the brainstorming. Within the maps, primary, secondary, and even tertiary associations should be identified. Once instructors are satisfied with the concept maps they have created, they can explain the process to students and ask them to make their own concept maps. The instructor's map can serve as a master copy for comparison in analyzing the data collected from this technique. Results are best analyzed in terms of content and types of relations identified on the concept maps. These results could be used as a graphic representation that helps students see content in a different way.

STUDENTS' SELF-AWARENESS AS LEARNERS

A **Dual-Viewpoint Skills Portrait** asks students to assess their level of development in course related skills from more than one point of view. For this technique, an instructor identifies skills that the course is designed to strengthen and determines how students can observe themselves demonstrating these skills (videotape, audiotape, notes, etc.). Providing the students with fairly specific guidelines regarding what skills to focus on and what point of view to use, an instructor directs students to write a description of their performance and to assess their performance in the focus skills using the following categories: ineffective, adequate, or very effective. The instructor can compare students' self-assessments with their own assessment of the students. This technique also provides valuable information about the degree to which students can describe and analyze their own skills and how well they can empathize with the viewpoints of people who will be affected by their skilled performance.

The Punctuated Lecture Technique is designed to provide immediate feedback on how students are learning from a particular lecture or demonstration. The instructor chooses a lecture that introduces new material and that can be broken into ten to twenty minute segments. Twice during the lecture the instructor stops and asks students to take a few minutes to reflect on and write about their behavior during the lecture and how that behavior might help or hinder their learning. The instructor collects the feedback and analyzes the comments with the goal of helping students develop skills to effectively monitoring their own listening and comprehension.

STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO TEACHING

Teacher-Designed Mini-Evaluation Forms, containing three to five questions, are useful for collecting student reactions to questions an instructor feels are important regarding his/her teaching. An instructor determines a few questions that closely relate to instructional goals for the class and develops appropriate coded responses such as multiple choice, scale, or short fill-in answers. The evaluation form should be carefully worded to collect constructive responses, and students should be permitted to return the forms anonymously. This technique can be used at regular intervals throughout the semester to allow the instructor time to make any necessary changes.

The One Minute Paper is a technique that is particularly useful in large lecture courses to obtain anonymous student feedback on one or two questions. During the last five to ten minutes of a class session, an instructor asks students to respond frankly and concisely to one or two questions. This technique can provide feedback that will result in more effective teaching and learning. Examples of two questions that might provide relevant feedback are:

- (1) What is the most important thing you learned in today's class?
- (2) What question/s that you have from today's class remain unanswered?

When using any classroom technique, a TA/instructor should choose techniques that will provide assessment information to benefit both the instructor and students in tangible ways.

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>.

Given attribution on the University of Maryland Web site:

Cross, P. & Angelo, T. (1988). Classroom Assessment Techniques, A Handbook for Faculty. Ann Arbor, MI: National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning.

Angelo, T. (Ed.) (1991). Classroom Research Early Lessons From Success. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

SECTION 5: THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Sources for this information are from the University of Maryland Web site, and adapted from C. Solar, (1992). 'Inequity in the classroom: A manual for professors and adult educators.'

Inequality can occur in your classroom on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability and any other characteristic which differentiates one student from another. Detrimental actions include unconscious or deliberate behaviors such as the use of biased language, the use of exclusive and biased curricular materials, or the pervasiveness of stereotypical views about values, abilities, achievements, experiences and perspectives. The chart below will help you identify some of the ways inequality and discrimination can occur in the classroom. Remember that inequality and discrimination can come from either you and/ or from members of your class and can be directed towards specific individual(s) in your class or members of a group with a certain characteristic. Following this chart is a list of concrete strategies that you can use to decrease the likelihood of perpetuating inequality in your classroom.

SEXISM is evident in sex-differentiated feedback, differentiating when giving attention and the opportunity to speak in the classroom, or by asking more complex and difficult questions to one gender than to the other.

- Letting one gender monopolize class time.
- Gravitating towards the area of the classroom where many of one gender are sitting.
- Making disparaging comments about one's gender, experiences or abilities.

ETHNOCULTURAL DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM occur when there is differentiated feedback and attention based on race and/or ethnicity; also when there is ignorance of different ethnocultural contributions to academic fields. When instructors make or tolerate disparaging comments about groups or favor a white, western, male perspective.

- When only white students are recognized for their contributions.
- When ethnocultural or racist jokes are not discouraged.
- Impatience with students whose first language is not English.

HETEROSEXISM can be seen through heterosexual behavior, attitudes and assumptions that are based on heterosexuality, as well as the exclusion of individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation. Derogatory comments about gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people and omission of sexual perspectives and theories are also considered heterosexism.

- Dismissing any concerns or questions related to sexual orientation.
- Remaining silent or changing subjects once a topic related to sexual orientation is raised.
- Letting disparaging comments about lesbians, gays, bisexual or transgender people go without criticism.

HOW CULTURALLY COMPETENT ARE YOU?

Seen and Unseen Diversity: The Problem of Assumptions

No matter how objective we may try to be, we are raised in a racist, sexist, heterosexist and class-based culture, so that many of us never question the stereotypes we have learned about different groups of people. Stereotyping is particularly evident when we meet people whose group affiliation is visually evident, such as with race/ethnicity, sex/gender or physical challenges. As a TA you should consider the potential needs of each of your students and take care not to assume that you can tell what students' needs are by how they speak, look, or act.

As professors, instructors or TAs, we must explore our own values and thinking about people who are different from us. We must identify our biases and prejudices and work to eliminate them in our interaction with others. This is often not an easy task. **Many of us have been raised with the idea that we are “color blind” or that we “just see every one the same way – as a human”. While this may sound nonjudgmental, the truth is we do see differences and often act on those differences unconsciously because our culture has trained us to do so.**

For example, a well-meaning TA may offend a student by offering extra assistance that has not been requested. The media and discourse about Affirmative Action have created

the impression that African American students come to college unprepared and that they need extra help. Any instructor, however well-intentioned, should **never** automatically assume that an African American student might need extra assistance. Such an attitude gives the impression that you do not think the student has the ability or intelligence to do the required work. TAs should always base their interactions with students on the student's performance. If the student exhibits the need for help, then the TA can offer help. Above all, remember that students have **different learning styles** and that a student's apparent difficulty with the material may actually stem from a difficulty with how you are doing something in the classroom.

On the other hand, some students might have issues not evident at first glance that influence their learning. For example, a gay or lesbian student, or a student with strong religious convictions may feel alienated by classroom discussions or projects that make assumptions about their experiences or beliefs. In addition, a student's ethnicity is not always visible. These students' issues are "invisible," but may affect their learning just as strongly as the student whose diversity issues are visible. Try to anticipate issues of sexuality, religion, or other values for students as you give assignments and lead discussions. Look for warning signs of students who feel distress because some aspect or event in the course threatens their personal identity. Students may respond flippantly or sarcastically to an assignment, or voice criticism of comments made by you or other students. Or, they may become uncharacteristically quiet. In such cases, approach the student individually and ask the student to explain his or her objections and concerns.

Many students may not voice their concerns unless you actively solicit them. Give students this opportunity by using a mid-term course evaluation, about a third of the way through the course. A simple questionnaire will allow you to gauge how the class is working and hear about any concerns.

WHAT IS A MINORITY?

Assessing Each Individual Classroom

The students most likely to feel alienated in the university classroom are students from groups who hold less power in society and whose values are frequently maligned by those of us in the privileged "majority" of society. However, students also can feel alienation from the particular makeup of an individual class. In some cases, "majority"

students may feel alienated because of the subject matter and/or student composition of the course. Caucasian and male students may find themselves in the minority for the first time in their lives in Women's Studies or African American Studies classes and may feel intimidated to participate in discussions. Some teachers have made the argument that it is positive for these normally privileged students to feel alienated so they can learn how it feels to be in the minority position. However, if students feel they are under attack and that their opinions do not count because of minority or majority group affiliation, they may not be comfortable enough to open up to learning in the course. It is essential to make any students who are in the minority feel comfortable from the first few days of class. Ultimately, these are the students who can most benefit from the course concepts. Showing an interest in their learning and a respect for their contribution to the classroom will make them feel included in your course.

CREATING A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

There are things that all of us must be aware of and constantly attending to in order to create a classroom environment that is respectful of all people and safe for the expression of ideas and opinions, even when others have differences of opinion, values or ethics. As educators, it is our responsibility to set the tone for calm acceptance of another's right to his/her point of view, and to show respect for all kinds of ideas, even when they differ from our own. This does not mean that we have to agree with those ideas, but that in an environment where critical thinking and respect for diversity is valued, we must be willing to listen, to challenge, to clarify and, most importantly, to "walk our talk". We serve as role models – that is a critical concept to keep in mind.

Here are some specific ways to build an accepting climate in your classroom and in your interactions with students individually and in groups:

- (1) Create an environment of trust and mutual respect so that discussion is not inhibited by fear. Introduce one or more ice-breaking activities that allow students to get to know one another fairly well. Use some class time to mention things that students have in common such as similar interests.
- (2) Review and analyze each classroom session and its interactions in terms of: Who spoke? Who asked questions? Who interrupted? Who received your attention through praise, criticism or remediation?

- (3) In your syllabus, be sure to have readings, bibliographies and research references that are inclusive of a wide array of points of view that include marginalized and underrepresented groups. Encourage students to pursue their own inclusive reading and research and to bring that information back into the classroom.
- (4) Make efforts to reach out and make yourself available to the entire class by moving around all parts of the classroom as much as possible while teaching.
- (5) Make it absolutely clear that no one in the classroom is under attack or seen as the official (i.e., “token”) representative of a particular group. Explain that no one in the class is viewed as responsible for the ethnocentric behavior of anyone else or of any other group, majority or minority, past or present. **Students must be assured that one constant important point of the class is to explore and understand diversity. The strategy must be to celebrate everyone and to denigrate no one.**
- (6) When there is a sharp difference of opinion between two (or more) students, ask them to explain their positions. The listener must explain in his/her own words what was said by the first person. When the first speaker is satisfied that she/he has been understood accurately, then the two can reverse roles. In this way you can build accuracy of communication and encourage mutual respect. Often, positions that seem extraordinarily polarized initially are minimized and even eliminated by calm and respectful listening and discussion.
- (7) Be sure to give students many opportunities to work together in small groups (three to five students) on a variety of problem-solving activities that stress the importance of using personal experience and narratives. Problems of universal significance are particularly useful for small group work. As you process the groups’ work, you will often hear students comment that they had no idea that others had such similar ideas or experiences.
- (8) Enhance the self-respect of individual students by acknowledging valuable ideas and comments they have made in previous classes.
- (9) Use specific examples and ideas from your discipline that serve to exhibit the functions of stereotypes and their destructiveness. Try to introduce exercises that show the extent to which most of us are susceptible to belief in some kinds of stereotypes.

SECTION SIX: THE CLASSROOM AS COMMUNITY

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland

<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

As you know, the atmosphere you establish in your classroom is as important as your rapport with each individual student. You want to provide an environment where students will feel safe voicing their opinions and where they will understand that discussions are meant to foster learning. Students bring into the classroom a complex range of attitudes about free speech. Some students may make statements such as "I have a right to my opinion," while others may insist on the authority of special experience or knowledge, criticizing other students by saying, "You don't have the right to say that, because you're not a woman/black/Christian etc." You must find a way to mediate between the view that anyone can say anything and the view that only certain people have the right to speak about certain issues. While you do want to let students respond freely to each others' statements, you have a responsibility to restrict personal attacks. Many students who complain about the lack of attention to diversity in the classroom explain that they believe their teachers respect issues of diversity, but that they let students make injurious statements. Because you are the one who controls the classroom climate, you must be particularly attentive to the dynamics occurring during any given discussion.

Because issues of race, gender, religion, and class are so charged in our culture, many students bring to class considerable anxiety about speaking about these issues. You can reduce such anxiety by making your classroom a community where all members engage in trying to find out the truth about controversial issues. Diversity does not mean privileging "minority" points of view, but rather taking advantage of the diverse range of opinions and experiences so that all can benefit. Lynn Weber Cannon (1990) argues for informing students explicitly about the goal of shared learning in the classroom. As one of her **ground rules for class discussion**, she asks that **all students "acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and the like is that we are all systematically misinformed about our own group and about members of other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups."** She furthermore asks students to: **"Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the**

[misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise](#)" (Cannon, 1990, 131).

By asking students to acknowledge that misinformation exists, and to accept responsibility for learning about that misinformation and not perpetuating it, you provide guidelines for group discussions. Most students do not simply want to voice their opinions. They want to leave the classroom feeling that they have learned from the discussion. Creating this atmosphere of a community engaged in seeking to uncover misinformation also helps you to move some of the focus away from the personal (potentially injurious or hostile) to the communal value on better information and critical thinking.

Setting Ground Rules

In many cases, you can prevent students from making hurtful statements by setting ground rules early in the course, especially in courses where controversial topics are likely to occur. In the first days of class distribute a list of ground rules for discussion that everyone should follow throughout the course. You might include general statements such those by Lynn Cannon as well as guidelines specific to your course content. Give students time to review the ground rules so that they can contribute to the agreement by clarifying rules or by adding others they feel are important. When problems arise during the semester, you or other students will be able to refer to the ground rules that all students have agreed on. By having students set ground rules early in the course, you have encouraged them to think about what constitutes a fruitful discussion where all students feel safe to participate.

These ground rules for discussion do not just prevent students from making injurious statements about others, but they also ensure productive discussions that focus on critical thinking. Even when discussing topics that are not controversial, following these guidelines, or those that you have established for your class, will help give students a sense that when they are talking, they are learning, and not just expressing their opinions. Additionally, if you establish an electronic mail list for your course, you might wish to have students agree that your classroom discussion guidelines should also apply to any discussions that occur on the list.

Establishing a "Zone"

Establishing a safe classroom atmosphere is the key to increasing everyone's comfort level. As discussed previously you can begin by laying out ground rules for discussion of controversial, emotional and potentially offensive topics either in the syllabus or in a handout on the first day of class. Starting the class with a discussion of these explicit ground rules avoids some of the problems that may arise later in the classroom. Some teachers and students may find, however, that structuring discussion in this way inhibits the free flow of ideas. A handout on ground rules will help only if the course objectives and the individual teacher's personality and teaching style are compatible with such an explicit, "up-front" statement of rules.

Guidelines for Classroom Discussion

- Everyone in class has both a right and an obligation to participate in discussions, and, if called upon, should try to respond.
- Always listen carefully, with an open mind, to the contributions of others.
- Ask for clarification when you don't understand a point someone has made.
- If you challenge others' ideas, do so with factual evidence and appropriate logic.
- If others challenge your ideas, be willing to change your mind if they demonstrate errors in your logic or the use of facts.
- Don't introduce irrelevant issues into the discussion.
- If others have made a point with which you agree, don't bother repeating it unless you have something important to add.
- Be efficient in your communication; make your points and then yield to others.
- Above all, avoid ridicule and try to respect the beliefs of others, even if they differ from yours.

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

Attributed to: The Guided Discussion. (1992, February). *For Your Consideration*, 12, UNC Center for Teaching and Learning.

Some teachers address issues of diversity and the free exchange of ideas by introducing them as topics for discussion on the first day of classes, and by involving the students in

the formulation of the ground rules. This approach requires careful lesson planning but many teachers and students feel that it is worthwhile because it establishes a general atmosphere of open-mindedness and awareness. As part of the opening discussion, the teacher might have students define and illustrate concepts such as "presupposition," "assumption," "prejudgment," "prejudice," "perspective," and "bias." Having introduced these words as part of the permanent classroom vocabulary, the teacher can now lead a discussion about the nature of opinions, how they are formed, and why they differ. At the end of the discussion, when the students realize what is at stake when they utter their opinions, the teacher can introduce the idea of the classroom as a place for the free exchange of ideas, where students should leave their prejudices and presuppositions at the door.

Giving the classroom a name such as "The Zone" highlights the important symbolic function of the room itself. Students may even build on the idea, making their own observations and jokes about the importance of protecting the atmosphere of this special place. The name, if incorporated into the classroom vocabulary, becomes a point of reference in all future discussions and can be reinforced from time to time throughout the semester. With encouragement, students quickly learn to make observations about all assignments, readings and statements (including the teacher's) using the terms they learned on the first day. Once sensitized in this manner, the students are ready to hold mature discussions about issues that might otherwise provoke hot emotions and name-calling.

Ignoring or Singling Out

A guiding principle for including students in the classroom should be to avoid the opposing habits of ignoring or singling out students. For example, in a discussion about African American women's experiences with poverty, a teacher might feel that she does not want to put the one African American woman in the class on the spot and thus avoids eye contact with her and does not call on her. On the other hand, the teacher might see this moment in class as a golden opportunity to make the student (who perhaps has been somewhat quiet until this point in the semester) feel that her opinion counts. By calling on the student in this context, however, the teacher has conveyed the assumption that this student will be able to represent the viewpoint of all African

American women. In reality, this student may be aware that she disagrees with other African American friends on the issue discussed in class, and is reluctant speak for the whole group. She might also perceive the teacher's solicitation of her opinion as an assumption that she herself comes from a poor family. So how can a teacher avoid the extremes of ignoring versus singling out? If the student feels early on that she is treated as an individual in the class and that her opinion counts on all issues, she will be more likely to feel comfortable sharing her views when the class discussion of African American women arises. Particularly in small classes, where discussion takes place more often than in a lecture hall, teachers must develop strategies for encouraging all students to participate from the beginning of the semester. Above all, never put a student in the position of acting as a spokesperson for his or her group.

Calling on Students vs. Taking Volunteers

There are certainly advantages and disadvantages to the various techniques for involving students in classroom discussion. Allowing students to volunteer lets those who most want to talk have the opportunity to do so. It penalizes, however, those students who have a contribution to make, but refrain from volunteering because they are shy, do not have confidence in their opinions, or do not feel it is appropriate for them to speak. In a 1992 survey on students' attitudes towards their education (UNC Center for Teacher and Learning, "Classroom Communication Analysis Project"), almost 30% of students responding to the questionnaire reported having wanted to speak in class but not doing so because they "felt insecure, inadequate, or uncertain." The percentage of female students and African American students responding in this manner was somewhat higher than among other segments of the student population. Clearly, many students want to talk, but need encouragement from their instructors. On the other hand, calling on students ensures that all students make a contribution to the class, but can embarrass shy students and penalize students who really want to speak on a given topic.

Combining both methods leads to more participation in class discussion. You can combine volunteering and calling on students by beginning a discussion topic by asking for volunteers. When a student responds to your question, call on other students to support, add to, or modify that student's comments. Try to encourage all students to

participate early in your course. The more time that goes by, the less likely shy or unconfident students will ever be to volunteer. Make clear in your attitude that you know all students have important contributions to make and that you have confidence in each student. Also make sure that you allow enough time for students to think after you ask a question. Many teachers only wait about one second for an answer. By waiting as much as five seconds, you allow more reserved students the chance to formulate their responses and to get up the courage to answer.

Monitoring Student Comments

It is vital that you, as the TA/instructor, take responsibility to ensure a comfortable environment for all students in the class. When students voice comments that attack or malign a particular group (such as race, religion, or sexual orientation) those comments potentially threaten some students in the classroom. In this situation, do not ignore such remarks, or change the subject. While it is unnecessary to reprimand the student directly, take issue with the statement made and remind the whole class that such statements are hurtful and do not further the pursuit of knowledge. Where relevant, challenge the statement's validity by pointing to statistics or studies that challenge stereotypes. For example, if a student makes a comment about African American women who take advantage of welfare, it would be instructive to point out that the majority of mothers on public assistance are, in fact, Caucasian. To ensure friendly and constructive discussion, try to prevent students from attacking each other personally. Most often, the kinds of attacks students make on each other come from their perceptions of each others' background and experiences. Students accuse each other of not having "the right" to speak on an issue because they do not have the experience needed to speak about the issue. Remind students that while personal experience can be a valuable resource for drawing conclusions, it remains only one resource which other personal experiences may contradict.

Anticipating Problems Before the Lesson

In addition to setting ground rules, try to anticipate specific issues that may arise during a particular lesson. Imagine comments that students might make that could be insensitive. Naturally, the more you have taught the course, the easier it will be to anticipate student comments.

Depersonalizing Controversial Topics

When you introduce a controversial topic, you may make students feel less personally threatened by the discussion by introducing the debate in impersonal terms. Rather than asking a student, for example, "Do you think schools should make contraception available to students?" present the arguments usually made for and against contraception in the schools and ask students to critique or support the arguments. Students will thus be engaged in thinking about where they stand on the issue, but the more impersonal way of presenting the argument leaves the door open to students to decide how much of their personal views they want to divulge.

TEACHING RESOURCES: ANECDOTES AND THE USE OF HUMOR

Anecdotes

In a 1992 study on how the university met students' needs, researchers asked UNC students whether their instructors used examples or analogies that they could not understand. Almost 10% of students indicated that their instructors frequently used analogies they could not relate to, while almost 22% indicated their instructors occasionally used such analogies. What is the problem? Good teachers want to use examples with which students can identify. Good examples can make abstract and unfamiliar concepts more accessible to students. However, teachers who frequently use examples that reflect the experience of only some students risk alienating others. For example, the business school teacher who frequently employs sports metaphors risks not only failing to clarify the concept for students who are not familiar with sports, but also risks making those students feel that they are outside the "club" of students who speak this sports language. Another problem arises when teachers forget that they are already experts and use analogies that make sense to others in their field, but are foreign to the new student. For example, explaining the causes of poverty in a Latin American country by using a classic textbook case study of poverty in an Asian country will not make sense to new students. Even if the study is the standard reference point for scholars in the field, new students will be unaware of such important discoveries and publications in the field.

TAs should also remember that though they naturally draw on their own experiences when they teach, these experiences may differ significantly from those of the students.

For example, comparisons with another country to which the teacher has traveled are often meaningless to the majority of students who have never left the country, or even the state! Furthermore, analogies drawing on activities such as sailing or skiing, often associated with higher socio-economic classes, might make students from a lower-income background feel excluded. Try to use analogies based on information you are fairly sure that students have. Use information already covered earlier in the course, for example. Also consider using examples from popular culture or from issues discussed currently on campus. If you do have an anecdote from your life that seems particularly suited to your material, make sure that you present it in a way that the students feel involved. For example, research on International TAs (Nelson, 1991, 433) suggests that student interest and learning increases when the TA makes reference to the way things happen in their country. However, only when the TA "personalizes" the discussion by comparing his or her life directly to the students' lives, does the comparison gain immediate meaning for the students.

Humor

Undoubtedly, the use of humor can open doors for students to take an interest in a course. However, humor is equally likely to alienate students who find the humor offensive. Humor can serve as a possible means of uniting people from diverse backgrounds, or a chance to lighten the mood of an otherwise heavy and serious class. But humor, far from being universal, is actually very rooted in individual identity. As Regina Barreca (1994) who has studied humor in literature has said, "[Humor] is rigidly mapped and marked by subjectivity. Almost every detail of our lives affects the way we create and respond to humor: age, race, ethnic background, and class are all significant factors in the production and reception of humor" (13). Barreca discusses the example of an male archaeology professor's reaction to her paper on how men and women react differently to humor. The professor was upset because he felt that people like Barreca were ruining everyone's fun: "I used to be able to tell wonderful, hilarious jokes in my introductory course in archaeology. But by the time I retired, I couldn't say anything anymore for fear of offending a female student. We used to be able to laugh at ourselves and to laugh together, and now we have lost that." The professor offered an example of his jokes: "How do you know if a skeleton is a male or a female? If the mouth is open, it's a woman. They never stop talking! Get it?" Barreca reports that no one of the one hundred or so audience members laughed (1994, 13). Clearly, this blatant example of a

sexist joke is insulting to women, (and probably much more blatant than the majority of jokes that offend students). Not realizing the offensive nature of the joke, the professor assumed that it was "just a joke," that values did not count in humor, and that if some of his students laughed, there was no problem with the joke.

Assigning Groups

It is typical in classrooms for students to tend to sit next to students who resemble them (homosocial). Thus, the seating patterns in a classroom will frequently be divided by gender or racial lines. These patterns of self-segregation are not necessarily harmful to learning, but they make it more difficult for students to gain new perspectives from their classmates. One way to encourage more diverse interaction is to assign your students to work in groups. If you let students choose their own groups, you run two risks. First, the students will choose to work with their friends or those who are likely to share their views. Second, students who are perceived as minorities may be marginalized when they are not invited to join groups. When assigning groups, mix different classroom areas, having students from the back work with students in the front, students from the left side working with students on the right side, etc.

Teachers have different philosophies about how to mix groups. Some prefer to have a strong student mixed with several weaker students, while others like to put same-level students in a group. Remember that each scenario has advantages and disadvantages. You might choose to change your group assignments several times during the semester so that each student will have varied group experiences. In terms of diversity, you should try to assign students in a way that they will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with students who are different from them. However, bear in mind that too obvious divisions may appear to students as singling them out. For example, if you have three African American students in your class whom you never assign to the same group, they may feel you are singling them out, or even penalizing them for their race. Thus, if you change groups, make sure minority students work together sometimes and work separately at other times. The random nature of your choice of groups will make them feel that they are being treated as individuals.

Sharing the Load

Some students who are normally shy in front of the class participate more readily when they have the opportunity to work in small groups. However, in some cases, the more reserved or shy students continue to remain silent in group work. Often, students who dominate in the full class discussion are likely to dominate in their groups. Therefore, structure the group activity in a way that ensures that all members will participate equally. One way to do this is in your wording of the group activity. For example, in a group activity you could give the following instruction: "Every person in your group should give one example." In addition, during a follow-up discussion, always have a student in the group present the group's findings. Try to have each group work on a separate question or activity so that they are responsible for presenting information to the rest of the class. If you have a small class, have each student from the group present one aspect of the group's findings. If you have observed that a student in a group was not actively participating, you might have that student speak on the group's findings, thus holding the student responsible for the group work as a whole. You can ask other students in the group if they wish to add to the primary reporter's comments. Be sure to thank the reporter and comment on the good work of the group.

Adapted from and given attribution in the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland <http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

SECTION SEVEN: CURRICULUM ISSUES

YOUR SYLLABUS AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Adapted from the Handbook for Graduate Assistants of the University of Maryland
<http://www.vprgs.umd.edu/fellowship/handbooks/gradasst.html>

You Teach What You Are

The content of a course reflects a TA's knowledge, interests, and beliefs. Identify your assumptions underlying your choice of topics and readings and the way you choose to organize your course. What seems to you like an obvious way to present the course content and concepts may seem either arbitrary or biased to students. For example, in a course on the history of political thought, is the history devoted to European and American models only? If so, why are there no examples from Africa or Asia? A bias is not necessarily negative. In fact, no one can teach a course without revealing his/her own experience with the subject matter. Furthermore, a TA should feel comfortable about what he or she is teaching; the chosen approach reflects not only the instructor's knowledge, but his or her interests. The first step in getting students interested in the course is to share your own interests. However, you should recognize your assumptions and be able to justify the choices you have made in your course.

Broadening Your Perspective

While you teach materials with which you are comfortable, you might also take advantage of opportunities to branch out. Examine the assumptions implicit in your course design. Are there gaps in your course you could fill by adjusting your syllabus? When possible, consult with colleagues who have taught the course or similar courses and compare your syllabus with theirs. Teachers often prefer to teach according to their own expertise and to avoid teaching topics in which they know they are not experts. But teaching the new and unfamiliar can help you to broaden your knowledge of the field, and also to rediscover some of the important course concepts from a different point of view. You might also explore tapping your students' special knowledge. For example, have students majoring in a related field give class presentations. By doing this, you will show students that they have knowledge to share with others and can actively shape the direction of the class.

Teaching the Conflicts

No matter what you choose to include in your curriculum, you should recognize that your choices reflect your own particular ideological perspectives. The great debates over the literary, sociological, psychological or artistic canon and the controversies over "politically correct" agendas are unlikely to be resolved in the academic community as a whole. The battle between the "educational fundamentalists" who argue that it is possible to determine and to teach "universal" values, and the "relativists" who argue that values are never universal, but rather determined by specific cultural communities, has caused conflict within many academic departments. Rather than worrying about constructing the ideal value-free syllabus, which would be impossible to achieve, teach the conflicts about the curriculum in your field. Let students debate some of the most interesting controversial points in the field. These controversies constitute, after all, a central aspect of what your discipline is about and can help to show students some key concepts important to the field. Pairing the sacred "classics" of the field with the "low" canon of popular culture can help students to ask questions about how certain literary works or scientific theories have come to be part of the canon. Teaching students that debate and controversy are natural and even desirable, and using debates among scholars in the field encourages debate between students. Take advantage of the controversies in your field to structure debate within your classroom and within your syllabus.

Your Syllabus: Tokenism vs. Intentional Integration

Because our student population is becoming increasingly diverse, it is important to reflect these trends in your syllabus, particularly in humanities and social science courses where sociocultural issues are fundamental. For example, the results of a 1992 survey at UNC showed that Asian students were more likely than other students to disagree with the statement, "This course covered material from diverse perspectives, such as non-Western European views, women's perspectives, perspectives of non-whites, etc."

Many professors have begun to incorporate viewpoints other than white, middle- to upper-class, male, Western European views into their courses. However, it is possible that your attempts to make your syllabus feel more inclusive can have the opposite

effect by making "the woman's perspective" or "the non-European perspective" feel like an empty tribute to political correctness tacked onto the end of the syllabus. Where possible, try to integrate the diverse perspectives into other concepts you teach. For example, in a French literature course, rather than introducing your one African writer to exemplify the non-European perspective, (a perspective which is itself too diverse to be represented by only one writer), contextualize this writer in terms of other issues you have already developed. In addition, avoid placing topics related to diversity last on your syllabus or last within a unit. This can give the impression that a particular topic is marginal to rather than an integral part of the course content and issues.

APPENDIX A

The UNC-GA Updated Guidelines for the Training and Supervision of Graduate Teaching Assistants

Introduction

The University has an obligation to produce effective, dedicated, well-trained teacher-scholars to fill faculty ranks in the future. Graduate teaching assistants are a major means by which the University introduces young scholars to the professoriate. Graduate teaching assistants are chosen from highly qualified students who have been accepted into the graduate programs of the University. The number and role of these assistants varies from institution to institution depending on the size of the graduate program, the particular culture of the institution, and the resources available to the institution for their training and support.

By supporting graduate students with assistantships, the University is able to compete in the recruitment of the very best applicants to our nationally recognized programs. The presence and service of bright and promising graduate students make our constituent institutions more valuable resources to the state and the nation.

Guided and supported by senior members of the profession, graduate students can grow in understanding and appreciation for the craft of their discipline through supervised practice and application of teaching and research methodologies.

In September 1993 the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina adopted a report entitled **Tenure and Teaching in the University of North Carolina**, which included the following recommendation:

That greater efforts be made to develop and strengthen the teaching skills of graduate students, and that the Board of Governors ask the President to prepare, in consultation with the University-wide Graduate Council, a report with specific guidelines and recommendations for the training, monitoring, and evaluation of graduate students who teach courses in UNC institutions.

In the years since the Board adopted this recommendation, UNC campuses have established or enhanced procedures to develop and strengthen the teaching skills of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) and have reported annually to the President and, through the President, to the Board of Governors on these efforts.

In light of the procedures established by UNC institutions to ensure that GTAs are well-trained, supervised, and evaluated, the President issues the following guidelines.

Guidelines

The use of graduate teaching assistants within the university is subject to the principles and standards of the regional accrediting body, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Institutions employing graduate teaching assistants should consult the current SACS standards, including Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1, Credential Guidelines.

Graduate teaching assistants: master's in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluation. (Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, **The Principles of Accreditation**, 2004.)

In addition, the following University guidelines have been established to ensure that graduate teaching assistants receive the appropriate training, monitoring, and evaluation:

- (1) Graduate teaching assistants must possess a demonstrated competence in the subject matter that they will be teaching as determined by experts in the field. They should have an appreciation for the theory and practice of the subject matter as well as an appreciation for the teaching and learning enterprise by means of required and optional teaching seminars, symposia, workshops, publications, and access to university staff resources. Competency to teach includes an effective command of the language of instruction, usually American English, and an appreciation for the culture of the American university classroom.

- (2) Appropriate procedures to assure competence include the following: GTAs will be offered a Teaching Contract from the hiring department or institution which outlines:
 - (a) Educational requirements;
 - (b) Job requirements;
 - (c) Duties; and,
 - (d) Performance standards.
- (3) A logical and effective match must be established between the level and requirements of the teaching assignment and the experience and knowledge of the prospective GTA.
- (4) In departments where teaching assistantships range from grading and discussion-group leadership to full-course responsibility, GTAs will be assigned to independent classes only after they have performed effectively in a less independent setting.
- (5) Formal training and evaluation programs will be provided for GTAs who are assigned the responsibility for teaching an undergraduate class. At the beginning and during that assignment, the hiring department will provide resources and opportunities for continued growth and development of the GTAs in the theory and practice of teaching. These resources may be school-wide programs, departmentally based programs in discipline centered pedagogy, programs developed by several participating departments, off-campus programs offered by other institutions or professional associations, or individual mentoring with faculty.
- (6) Departments will provide GTAs and their faculty supervisors with appropriate written guidelines on academic procedures and provisions for formal training and evaluation. The information should include a directory of other university resources available for the further development and training of the GTA.
- (7) The hiring department will verify that GTAs whose first language is not English possess adequate English language proficiency and communication skills. This verification will be in the form of a standardized test which includes an evaluation of verbal skills, supplemented by a personal review by the department's supervising faculty mentor. English as a Second Language courses and other activities, or alternative assignments for assistantships, will

be provided to the GTA who does not meet adequate standards of English language proficiency.

- (8) Offices that work with international students will be requested to cooperate with campus and departmental programs for international teaching assistants (ITAs) to facilitate their awareness of the culture of the American university classroom and approaches to communicate effectively to undergraduate students.
- (9) Faculty members who train, supervise, mentor and evaluate graduate teaching assistants do so as a component of their academic assignment. Such faculty will be recognized for their work and accorded opportunities for additional training and professional development.
- (10) Graduate teaching assistants must be graduate students in good standing in their programs, as defined by the employing institution.
- (11) Universities will honor effective graduate teaching assistants by establishing appropriate awards and honors to recognize them for outstanding teaching.
- (12) Universities must establish and maintain effective channels for communication and dialogue between all populations of the university community affected by the work of graduate teaching assistants. This communication may be facilitated in a number of ways, including appropriate representation of GTAs on campus-wide and departmental student-faculty committees and the preparation of a brochure which discusses the role, selection, preparation, and supervision of GTAs, to be distributed to students, their families, and other groups as appropriate.
- (13) The chief academic officer (CAO) will designate the Graduate School or another appropriate administrative unit to oversee and facilitate the training, mentoring, supervision, and evaluation of graduate teaching assistants. At institutions which use graduate teaching assistants to teach undergraduate courses, the graduate dean or other appropriate administrative unit will report annually to the CAO on the effectiveness of GTAs, their utilization on campus, compensation, training, and the impact of their teaching on the overall teaching mission of the school. In addition, the report will document the impact and effectiveness of teaching by graduate students on their learning and

professional development. The report will certify that an evaluation is on record for each GTA by a faculty member to whom the GTA is assigned.

- (14) Each program that utilizes graduate teaching assistants must develop, regularly update, and file with the appropriate administrative unit, as determined by the CAO, a plan for graduate teaching assistants including a definition of teaching tasks and responsibilities, provisions for support, supervision, and training for each type of teaching assignment, and provisions for feedback and evaluation. The plan should specifically address the selection, funding, training, mentoring, supervision, and evaluation of graduate teaching assistants. Programs must provide for a formal training program, classroom observations, explicit procedures for supervision and evaluation of GTAs. Formal evaluations of each GTA by an assigned faculty member must be kept on record.
- (15) Each campus shall report to the President every year on the number of GTAs (including ITAs) appointed and every three years on the implementation of these guidelines. Format requirements for the report will be transmitted directly to the chief academic officers by the Office of the President.