

U G A C e n t e r f o r T e a c h i n g a n d L e a r n i n g

GRAD *Teach*

M A G A Z I N E



FALL 2019

VOLUME 23



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
Center for Teaching
and Learning

Table of CONTENTS

2. Welcome

Center for Teaching and Learning and Graduate School leadership welcome you to teaching at UGA.

3. How to Survive Your First Year as a TA

By John Banister

5. Learning by Doing: Activities to (Re)Engage Students

By K. Anne Watson

7. TA Events Calendar

9. CTL Support Services for TAs

Determine Your Route to Teaching Excellence

11. Teaching Portfolio 101

By Jennifer DeMoss

13. Recognizing our Best: Graduate Teaching at UGA 2018-2019

14. New Faces at the CTL

EDITORS' NOTE

While this annual publication has a long history, this year we have a new name! GradTeach Magazine recognizes the diversity of teaching experiences at UGA and the central role in instruction that graduate students play at our university. As a teaching assistant (TA), you not only assist or even lead students in learning experiences, you often bridge the gap between students and professors or university resources and are frequently students' first or closest point of contact with the wider University community. Here at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), our primary goal is to support you in successfully fulfilling this role. From discovering your teaching passion to becoming the definition of teaching excellence at UGA, we are here to help you develop and document your teaching skills. We hope this publication is just the beginning of our connection to you and your teaching journey. Go dawgs!



Cheering all of you on,

Dr. Zoe Hensley Morris,

Assistant Director for TA Development and Recognition

Mary Helen Hoque,

Editor and Graduate Assistant for TA Development and Recognition

ABOUT

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a support unit of the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. It is devoted to the advancement of instruction and instructor development at the University of Georgia. CTL sponsors a range of services and enrichment activities designed to assist faculty and graduate assistants with instructional matters.

GradTeach Magazine is a publication of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Teaching assistants are encouraged to submit articles to be considered for publication to gradteach@uga.edu.

2019 Editorial Committee

John Banister
Jennier DeMoss
Jessica Parks

Vanessa Swenson
Annie Watson

WELCOME

From the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning



Welcome to the latest issue of GradTeach Magazine. This publication is one of many resources provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Graduate School to support your professional development and your preparation for a career beyond your current program of study.

Throughout the year, the CTL offers a wide variety of instructional consulting, workshops, mentoring opportunities, courses on college teaching, and will even assist you as you engage in the collection and analysis of data to improve teaching practices and student learning in your courses. As your interests grow, you may also wish to apply for the prestigious Future Faculty Fellows Program. For more information about the programs and events available from the CTL, please visit our website: ctl.uga.edu.

I warmly invite you to explore this newsletter and to take advantage of the multitude of opportunities the CTL and the Graduate School provide in support of evidence-based teaching practices.

Megan L. Mittelstadt, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Teaching and Learning

From the Dean of the Graduate School



On behalf of the University of Georgia (UGA), thank you for your willingness to serve as teaching assistants. As graduate teaching assistants you contribute significantly to the core instruction mission at UGA by teaching the next generation of global citizens. While serving as teaching assistants, you will acquire invaluable pedagogical, communication, and leadership experience and skills that are applicable in many career paths beyond academia. I hope you find that the ability to effectively engage people in learning is a valuable asset regardless of your eventual career path.

While at UGA, I encourage you to take full advantage of the many resources to support your pedagogical development. These include programs co-developed and co-delivered by the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Graduate School. For example, you can attend workshops and programs offered by CTL and the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL). Additionally, the Graduate School Teaching Portfolio program and the Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching are opportunities to document your commitment to teaching. Please feel free to let us know if additional resources are needed to assist you with your teaching responsibilities or enhance the development of your pedagogical skills.

With deepest gratitude,

Ron Walcott, PhD

Interim Dean, Graduate School & Professor of Plant Pathology

HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR FIRST YEAR as a Teaching Assistant

By John Banister

Becoming a new teacher would present many challenges even if that were your only responsibility. These challenges are magnified by the need to balance your teaching responsibilities with other obligations.

Mastering your new role will take time. You will struggle and learn from your mistakes. But equipped with some simple tips, you can manage this adjustment with ease. If integrated into your work as a TA, the following practices will substantially minimize your stress level and maximize your well-being.

TIP #1: Find a Mentor

The challenges you will face as a TA are not unique. Your colleagues have likely dealt with the very same issues you will confront. Finding a more experienced graduate student (or faculty member) in your department to be your teaching mentor will make a world of difference. Ideally, this person will have taught the classes you are assigned. A mentor can reassure you when things get tough, advise you in difficult situations, and help you avoid the mistakes he or she has made. This relationship can be informal and still highly effective. Once you progress as a teacher, you can, and should, take on that role for others.

TIP #2: Compartmentalize Your Roles

Your role as a teacher is important and ought to be taken seriously. However, if you let teaching responsibilities interfere with your graduate coursework and research, you are liable to get behind. Set aside specific blocks of time in your schedule to plan lessons, grade, and communicate with students (often by email—see Tip #4). You are required to hold office hours, but most students won't show up to meet with you in person, so use this time to complete some of the aforementioned tasks. Still, you'll likely need to schedule additional time to complete all your teaching preparation

and grading. Choose this time judiciously: if you do your best thinking in the morning, block it off to do research and writing—teaching tasks can often be completed with less cognitive energy. However you set your schedule, stick to it!

TIP #3: Coordinate with Your Teaching Supervisor

As a TA, you represent your department and those in charge of the course(s) you teach. Make sure you are on the same page with the instructor of record or teaching supervisor. As a TA, you burden yourself and the department if your class is radically different than other sections of the course, so make sure you are following any course-wide procedures for grading, attendance, and behavior. Provided you do this, your teaching supervisor will be your advocate should problems arise. If you teach in a lab, you will also want to get to know the lab manager for the location where your class meets. This person will know how to locate materials, use equipment, or clarify procedures within the physical space. Above all, remember that proactively asking for clarification or assistance is easier than asking for help to fix a problem that has gotten out of hand.

TIP #4: Don't Let Email Run Your Life

Teachers spend much of their time dealing with email messages from students. Receiving a message from a student posing a host of questions, asking for special treatment, or complaining about a grade is frustrating. Responding to email is part of your job, but that does not mean you have to respond immediately or deal with all matters via email. I recommend setting aside specific times during business hours to check email—two or three times per day should suffice. Only check email during the designated times you set for yourself. Make it clear to students when they can expect to hear back from you (i.e., not during your writing time or the middle of the night!). Set expectations early that email will be used professionally.

Additionally, some matters are better addressed face-to-face. It is perfectly reasonable to ask a student to schedule an in-person meeting to discuss sensitive issues (e.g., grades). If the issue is important to them, students will find time to meet. Finally, if you do not know how to respond to a message, consult the instructor of record or your mentor. Don't reply to messages when you are angry; cool your head first so you can respond appropriately.

TIP #5: Crowdsource Teaching Materials

Teaching ideas are rarely original. Most good lesson plans, assignments, and assessments come from adapting others' ideas. Get to know colleagues who teach or have taught the course you're assigned and ask them to recommend materials. Most people will happily share the materials they use and let you adapt them for your own course! This will save valuable time and allow you to discover what sorts of lessons, assignments, or assessments suit your teaching style.

TIP #6: Grade Efficiently

Like email (see Tip #4) and lesson planning (see Tip #5), grading can suck up much of your time if not managed prudently. Know that most students are inclined to pay more attention to the nominal score or letter grade than written feedback you provide. Practice grading a few copies of major assignments with your teaching supervisor to calibrate how to score more subjective elements and give useful feedback. In general, only comment on issues that are most important and limit the overall number of comments you write.

To use your time most efficiently, set up a system that can streamline scoring and feedback. I recommend building a detailed electronic rubric into the learning management system (e.g., eLC). Regardless of your grading system, allot a specific amount of time for grading each essay, exam, or lab report. Adhering to a time limit will prevent you from dwelling too much on any one student's work and standardize assessment for fairness across submissions.

TIP #7: Write Policies that Preempt Problems

Well-written course policies prevent many problems and make those that do emerge easier to handle. Specify how issues such as attendance, cheating, late or make-up work, and extra credit will be dealt with in your syllabus. Detail how assignments will be graded before students complete them. It is easy to deal with a student complaint or question when you can point to a written policy.

Talk to your mentor (see Tip #1) and teaching supervisor (see Tip #3) before implementing new policies.

TIP #8: Remember Nobody is Perfect

Some days you will leave your classroom feeling elated because you really made a difference in students' lives. That's great when it happens—and it will! But sometimes the opposite will happen: you'll leave class feeling like your lesson totally flopped, that students aren't learning, or worse—that they don't care. This, too, is normal. Even award-winning teachers experience this feeling occasionally.

One failed lesson does not make you a bad teacher. If you put forward a good-faith effort every class, students will be understanding when one class meeting doesn't go well—so will your teaching supervisor. If something doesn't go well, learn from it. Try to diagnose why it didn't work and what changes might improve the lesson, assignment, assessment, or policy in the future.



John Banister is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication Studies and a 2018-2019 Future Faculty Fellow. He has taught public speaking and several other university-level courses since 2013.



Dr. Daniel McNabney,
Senior Lecturer, Department of Cellular Biology

“You’re doing fine.

The fact that you care enough to try and worry about your approach to instruction means that you’re putting in more effort than most.

Keep exploring and trying out different instructional approaches, make adjustments as necessary, and you will give your students a high-quality experience.”

Learning by Doing: ACTIVITIES TO (RE)ENGAGE STUDENTS

By K. Anne Watson

One of the hardest things about teaching is keeping our students engaged for a whole class period. There is nothing more disheartening than delivering a lecture that seemed interesting in the planning stages and seeing a roomful of undergraduate eyes immediately glaze over. It's time to face the facts. It is unlikely that any lecture, no matter how masterfully given, will be able to hold students' attention for an entire class period. And who has the time and energy to prepare the kind of performance that would keep their students listening raptly for fifty to seventy-five minutes multiple times per week? The good news is that no one needs to. There is increasing evidence that active learning is the best approach for keeping students engaged in the classroom, as well as helping them to understand and remember the course content.

There are an infinite number of activities that count as active learning, but they all have one thing in common: Active learning activities pull the students back into the teaching and learning process. Students participate, too—by teaching one another, by applying concepts and theories to real-world events, by developing and expressing opinions, and even by “living” the content through games and simulations. They learn by *doing*.

These activities do come with some special considerations. You can't always predict exactly how students will respond, for example—they can really surprise you! Active learning activities are also associated with more visible issues related to accessibility, like making sure that the instructions are clear to students who might have a language barrier or learning disability and ensuring equal participation for students with mobility issues or social anxiety. Leading these activities still takes preparation (a great deal of it, on the front end), and it doesn't always go well the first time. And presenting these activities unenthusiastically or uncomfortably can produce significantly worse results for engagement and retention than enthusiastic, comfortable lecturing.

I am not arguing that we should never lecture. Most of us are addressing broad fields with a vast amount of content. Our

students need us to guide them through this maze of information and to provide a framework for understanding it. Lecturing, then, is here to stay. But we can (and should) bring our students back into the teaching and learning process and create opportunities for our students to make course content meaningful for their lives. Active learning is a key means to this end.

Below are a few ideas for active learning activities to use in the classroom. Feel free to use them, tweak them, or change them completely. Make them your own!

THINK | PAIR | SHARE

Give students a question or topic to think about for a minute or two—first alone (making sure they write something down on paper), then in pairs, then as a group. The time alone gives them a chance to collect their thoughts, and the time in pairs gives them momentum in clarifying their thoughts before sharing them out loud. The preparation time usually helps a larger number of students participate in the group discussion, but you can also ask each group to share a thought or conclusion with the room. This activity is great for a large lecture hall or to get students used to in-class discussion.

CROWD CRUMPLE

Ask an opinion question and give students one minute to write down an answer. Then have them crumple up their paper, toss it across the class, find someone else's paper ball, read it, and add their thoughts to it. Repeat, and have students discuss what they find written on the final ball of paper they grab. An important note (learned the hard way): Always make sure to ask them to pick up the room afterward and dispose of all of the balls of paper!

4 CORNERS

Pose a question and give four potential answers. Assign each answer to a corner of the room, and ask students to move to the corner representing their chosen answer. Then ask them to discuss why they chose that answer. This can also be done with Agree/Disagree statements. Instead of asking a question and giving them the possible answers, pose a statement (“Cats are the very best pets in the whole world,” for example) and identify one side of the room as “Strongly Agree” and the other side as “Strongly Disagree.” Have your students arrange themselves across the room in an order that reflects the strength of their agreement and then discuss why they have chosen the spot that they did. Sometimes the simple act of getting up and moving around can make students more inclined to participate.

DEBATES

Debates can be a great way to get students to look at all sides of a topic. These can be formally constructed, with required reading and writing preparation, official sides, and a formal structure for speaking. However, one of my favorite (and quick) strategies for getting all of my students engaged and on the same page at the beginning of a class is to show a quick video touching on a controversial topic. Then, even students who didn't do the reading have something to talk about, and the resulting discussion can lead into

more structured lecture material. Students tend to naturally take sides in this setting. Just be sure to establish rules for respectful discussions, whichever style you choose. (And have no fear—in my experience, students generally follow these rules once they’ve been established.)

VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

With the advent of the satellite view in Google Maps came our ability to show students (or let them explore on their own) places to which we cannot physically transport them. This means that students in our history classes can view and explore ancient ruins, students of architecture can check out all of the works of a specific style or specific architect, and students in geology can dig into actual examples of fault lines and the formations around them.

GAMES AND SIMULATIONS

Gamification is an increasingly popular approach to teaching, and one common way to incorporate it is through the use of simulations. These range in complexity and duration. If your time is limited, consider giving students five or ten minutes to develop in groups a content-based solution to some problem, real or hypothetical. For example, here is a prompt used in a class on international relations: “You have been elected to the inaugural governing council of the Galactic Empire. Which rights will you include in your Universal Bill of Rights?”

If you have more time, consider checking out full-immersion approaches to simulations from Reacting to the Past or similar organizations. These kinds of simulations cover topics from History, English, Political Science, and more. If you can’t find a simulation directly geared toward the content you’re covering, don’t lose heart! There are also handbooks for game creators to guide you through the process of making your own.

You might also consider having students play board or card games that you can link back to content or theories in your field—or even have them create games that explicitly contain this content.

References:

1. Barnett, Pamela E. 2014. “Let’s Scramble, Not Flip, the Classroom.” *Inside Higher Ed* (February 14). <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/02/14/flipping-classroom-isnt-answer-lets-scramble-it-essay>
2. Bernstein, Douglas A. 2018. “Does Active Learning Work? A Good Question, But Not the Right One.” *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology* 4(4): 290-307.
3. Davidson, Cathy N. 2018. “10 Key Points About Active Learning.” *Insider Higher Ed* (January 25). <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/01/25/how-think-about-active-learning-and-its-benefits-opinion>
4. Demers, Sarah. 2014. “Let Them Play the Game.” *Inside Higher Ed* (April 23). <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2014/04/23/when-lectures-fall-short-teaching-tool-essay>
5. Proctor, Nicholas W. 2011. *Reacting to the Past Game Designer’s Handbook*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.



K. Anne Watson is a doctoral candidate in the Department of International Affairs and a 2018-2019 Future Faculty Fellow. Her research looks at the ratification of international law, its incorporation in national policies, and the effects of each on human rights, particularly women’s rights.

Active Learning Techniques Companion

 <http://bit.ly/ALcompanion>

This interactive resource can help you identify and implement active learning activities for your own classroom.



(1) Show students that you love what you do. If you are enthusiastic about the material, they will be too.

(2) Everything will always take 2 to 3 times longer than you expect. Plan accordingly.

(3) Don’t shy away from difficult, controversial, or ghastly topics. Just make sure that everyone in your classroom feels respected, safe, and free to speak.



Dr. Chad Clay, Associate Professor, Department of International Affairs

2019-2020

GRADTEACH WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

August

8.13 **TA Orientation**
8:30-1:00 MLC

8.19 **Workshop:**
Welcome to Teaching
2:30-3:45 MLC 372

8.20 **Workshop:**
Welcome to Teaching
12:30-1:45 MLC 372

September

9.4 **TA Café: Effective Teaching Presentation**
12:20-1:10 Boyd Graduate Research Center 204

9.24 **Workshop: Current and Emerging Legal Issues in Teaching**
12:30-1:45 MLC 372

October

10.1 **TA Café: Surviving Midterm Grading**
12:30-1:20 MLC 372

10.7 **Spring Teaching Symposium Call for Proposals Deadline**
visit bit.ly/ugaSTS for more info

10.15 **Workshop: Crafting a Teaching Statement**
12:30-1:45 CTL
North Instructional Plaza

November

11.6 **TA Café: Developing Your Teaching Portfolio**
12:20-1:10 Boyd Graduate Research Center 204

11.19 **Workshop: Facilitating Learning in STEM**
12:30-1:45 CTL North Instructional Plaza

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

January

- 1.15 **Workshop: Lesson Planning**
12:20-1:35 CTL North
Instructional Plaza
- 1.24 **Nomination Deadline for
TA Awards**

February

- 2.1 **Spring Teaching Symposium**
9:30-3:00 On Campus
Location TBA
- 2.4 **TA Café: Diversity Statements**
12:30-1:20 MLC 372
- 2.19 **Workshop: Crafting a
Teaching Statement**
12:20-1:35 CTL
North Instructional Plaza
- 2.28 **Future Faculty Fellows
Application Deadline**

March

- 3.3 **TA Café: Topic TBA**
12:30-1:20 Boyd Graduate
Research Center 204
- 3.18 **Workshop:
Facilitating Discussion**
12:20-1:35 CTL North
Instructional Plaza

April

- 4.7 **TA Café: Discussion of
Small Teaching**
12:30-1:20 MLC 372
- 4.15 **Workshop: Topic TBA**
12:20-1:35 CTL North
Instructional Plaza

Determine Your Route to **TEACHING EXCELLENCE**

DISCOVER TEACHING

Teaching and Laboratory Assistant Orientation

This interdisciplinary orientation provides general preparation for graduate students with instructional responsibilities, including an overview of policies and procedures pertinent to the TA role, an introduction to effective teaching strategies and practices, and exposure to services and resources available across campus that offer support for individuals engaged in teaching and learning endeavors at UGA.

GRSC 7770

University and Regents' policies require that all new graduate teaching and laboratory assistants receive support for their instructional roles. GRSC 7770 is a mandatory 1 to 3 credit course which provides TAs with knowledge of pedagogical approaches, relevant UGA policies, and available support systems

LLED 7768 & 7769

UGA offers two courses to help international TAs adjust to and succeed in the U.S. classroom. These courses are open to all ITAs but are required for ITAs with speaking scores lower than 26 on the TOFEL iBT or 8.0 on the IELTS.

GradTeach Magazine

This annual publication is written by and for UGA's graduate teaching and lab assistants and features articles on teaching that highlight innovative strategies, challenges, and advice.

GradTeach Online

GradTeach is the CTL's community for TAs. Monthly postings on the GradTeach listserv keep TAs up-to-date on TA workshops, events, and services sponsored by the CTL. The associated eLC site hosts resources created by and for UGA TAs, including teaching resources, survival guides, and resources for professional development. Request access at bit.ly/gradteachonline

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

GradTeach Workshops

While all CTL workshops are open to graduate students, the GradTeach Workshop Series focuses on topics of particular interest to the developing teacher. Topics may include effective teaching presentation, facilitating discussion, lesson planning, and intercultural communication.

Spring Teaching Symposium

This annual symposium is a full-day event for all graduate students and postdoctoral scholars and provides information related to UGA teaching policies and helpful techniques to improve teaching, including keynotes from award-winning faculty and peer-led workshops and panels on practical skills and resources. Visit bit.ly/ugaSTS for more information.

CTL Courses on University Teaching

CTL is proud to offer courses for graduate students who are interested in university teaching, including GRSC 7800: College Teaching and Student Learning, GRSC 7900: Course Design, and GRSC 7850: Strategies for Inclusive Teaching.

Masterclass Experience

This program pairs master instructors with graduate students for a unique opportunity to observe a classroom and converse with the instructor about their teaching strategies and techniques. Upcoming events are announced via GradTeach Online.

Mid-Semester Formative Evaluations (MSFE)

The CTL offers MSFEs to those who teach courses at the University of Georgia. The purpose of a MSFE is to provide structured feedback to instructors from their students regarding the functioning of the class and the quality of student learning at the mid-point of the semester. These evaluations are highly recommended to help maintain a trajectory of growth throughout your teaching career at UGA. Visit bit.ly/TAMSFEE to request an MSFE in your class this semester.

Course and Activity Design Consultations

Designing a new course or making an old course your own? CTL staff are available to consult with TAs on course and activity (re)design. Contact Dr. Zoe Hensley Morris (zoe.morris@uga.edu) to schedule an appointment.



DOCUMENT YOUR EXPERIENCE

Teaching Statements (Philosophy and Diversity)

Teaching Statements, including Teaching Philosophy Statements and Academic Diversity Statements, are living documents that allow instructors to reflect on their teaching and share with others their values, beliefs, and goals. Teaching statements may be a required component of a job application for teaching positions, whether as a stand-alone document or as part of a teaching portfolio. The CTL offers interactive group workshops and individual consultations on writing teaching statements every semester.

Teaching Portfolio

The CTL supports graduate students in creating Teaching Portfolios that document their teaching experiences. Portfolios provide and contextualize evidence of teaching experience, effectiveness, and development. Visit our website for examples and more information to get you started.

Observations

Classroom observations provide direct evidence of one's teaching effectiveness within the context of a single class period and provide additional information for instructors, beyond student evaluations, as they consider ways to improve their courses. Observations conducted by CTL staff are personalized and confidential. Visit our website to request an observation.

GradTeach Transcript

Have your participation in CTL events and services tracked and recognized! This program provides you with both documentation of your teaching development experiences at the CTL and the opportunity to reflect on those experiences. Visit our website for more information.



The CTL has exposed me to a variety of techniques for active learning. I now make think-pair-share a regular part of my classes. I also often prime my lectures with a discussion question that will frame the students' thinking during the class. At the end of the class we'll return to the question and discuss responses in small groups. I now try to "flip" the classroom like this frequently.



Laura Matthews,
Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy

**Congratulations to our 2018-2019
GradTeach Transcript recipients!**

Alaina Brown, Chemistry
Laura Matthews, Philosophy

TEACHING PORTFOLIO 101

By Jennifer DeMoss

Graphic designers have portfolios. Photographers have portfolios. Teachers should also have portfolios! My own teaching portfolio is a living document, an amalgamation of text and images that displays my teaching career at the University of Georgia and beyond. In this piece, I will share a few tips on getting a head start on your own portfolio. Though my portfolio follows the Graduate School guidelines (see the links below), the following advice is a set of general guidelines for collecting useful components.

How helpful is a teaching portfolio? I've already used parts of mine for job applications. However, I came to understand the genius of the portfolio a little late in my grad career. I took the GRSC 7950 Teaching Portfolio course at UGA *after* finishing my fieldwork, which means I passed up opportunities to document my teaching. I can't let that happen to you, friends, so here is my first tip:

TIP #1: Start Collecting Evidence of Effective Teaching ASAP

What does it mean to document your teaching? Like any other project, you need to describe and interpret data on your teaching experience. But first, you have to have the opportunity to collect that data.

TIP #2: Create or Take Advantage of Teaching Opportunities

While some departments allow TAs to be an instructor of record, that opportunity is not guaranteed so you need to make the most of every experience, no matter how small. If you are not offered significant teaching responsibilities, ask for them. Volunteer to guest lecture, and take advantage of those opportunities to try innovative teaching strategies (hint: see Annie Watson's article on active learning strategies in this issue). Volunteer to lead workshops at conferences. Try out your teaching at the UGA Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

TIP #3: Have Someone Observe Your Teaching

Make sure to have at least one mentor observe your teaching. Also, ask someone to take pictures of you teaching for your portfolio or other websites. This way, you can receive feedback on your skills, and ensure that your letter writers can describe specific aspects of your teaching in their letters.

TIP #4: Make Sure to Include Teaching Evaluations in Your Schedule

All instructors can receive Mid-Semester Formative Evaluations (MSFE) from the CTL which are great for making course adjustments before the end of the semester. You can also create your own assessments. There are numerous survey banks online (see resources below) that can be modified to suit your needs. Keep evaluations for use in your portfolio, and to keep track of your progress over time.

TIP #5: Record Evaluations of Student Work

Record the ways that you evaluate students (for instance, pictures of feedback you've given on assignments and exams), and use those images in your portfolio. You can also use rubrics and images of feedback to track communications with students, and potentially ask the professor or other mentors about your feedback style. Always make sure to get permission from your students before using their work in your portfolio!

TIP #6: Record Evidence of Student Work and Progress in Your Classes

At some point, you will likely be asked how your teaching methods facilitate learning. You can answer that in a number of ways, like saving students' assignments from the beginning to the end of class to measure skill development (again, with permission), or comparing the progress of a class that uses your materials to one that doesn't.

TIP #7: Document Innovation

The CTL provides so many opportunities for developing innovative teaching tools. For example, at Spring Teaching Symposium I co-taught a workshop on using video in classrooms and learned a lot about gamification. Don't be afraid to use innovative tools in your classroom, even if you just insert an active learning strategy into a few classes to get students talking. And if you create worksheets, games, or any other materials, document them and ask students for feedback.

TIP #8: Record Everything

If your students feel as though you have contributed to a quality learning experience, they might spontaneously let you know with an email or a card. Save those acts of kindness for your portfolio. I have numerous little cards and notes I would use for my portfolio... if I could find them. When you receive a token of appreciation, enjoy it and then take a photograph of it for the portfolio.



Jennifer DeMoss is a doctoral candidate in the Anthropology and Integrative Conservation Programs and a 2018-2019 Future Faculty Fellow. She studies people's relationships with nature in wilderness education programs and she would rather be outside right now.

Show & Tell

Want to see other TAs' portfolios and hear about how they put them together? Join us for a portfolio-focused TA Café in November (see page 7) and check out sample teaching portfolios online (<https://ctl.uga.edu/grad-student/resources-and-ta-handbook/teaching-portfolios/>).

Resources:

Course Evaluation Question Banks:

Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/student-feedback/>

Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning

<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/course-evaluations-question-bank>

Graduate School's Teaching Portfolio Program:

<https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/professional-development/teaching-portfolio/>

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute:

<http://olli.uga.edu/>



Build your teaching portfolio now by borrowing liberally from your experiences as a TA. Write up your own versions of assignments or activities that worked well. Keep examples or take pictures of students' work to include in the portfolio.



Dr. Montgomery Wolf,
Senior Lecturer,
Department of History



Dr. Ingie Hovland,
Lecturer,
Department of Religion



Nyasha Junior has written a poem-blog-post to new faculty that concludes: "The old folks used to say, 'You can't sing my song or pray my prayer.' You can't teach my class either." It's taken me a while to let this insight sink in. Just like nobody else can write my research, nobody else can teach my class with the particular personal mix that I bring to it. And that's a good thing.



RECOGNIZING OUR BEST:

Graduate Teaching at UGA 2018-2019

The University recognizes the significant contribution graduate students make to the instructional mission of the University with several teaching awards and with the Future Faculty Fellows Program.

★ OUTSTANDING TEACHING ASSISTANT AWARD

This award, sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Instruction, annually recognizes the top 10% of teaching assistants demonstrating superior teaching skills while serving as instructors in the classroom or laboratory.

★ EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

This highly competitive award, sponsored by the Graduate School, annually recognizes five teaching assistants who contribute to teaching at UGA beyond their own assigned classroom responsibilities.

★ FUTURE FACULTY FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Future Faculty Fellows Program, sponsored jointly by the Graduate School and the Center for Teaching and Learning, is a yearlong professional development program that brings together 15 innovative and dedicated teaching assistants from across campus to talk about, reflect upon, and improve their teaching, while preparing them for the academic job market and the rigors of their first faculty positions.

Visit ctl.uga.edu for criteria, deadlines, and previous winners.



2019 Excellence in Teaching Award Winners

Michael G. Thomas Jr. (*Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics*), Kasey Leigh Yearty (*Chemistry*), Sammantha Holder (*Anthropology*), Dean Suzanne Barbour, Julie Grainy (*Microbiology*), K. Anne Watson (*International Affairs*)



The Future Faculty Fellows Program helped me determine who I am as an educator. Because of this experience, I have grown as a teacher, a mentor, and a life-long learner. I look forward to continuing to put into practice the active learning skills that I have gained. I also am excited to continue to develop my teaching portfolio that I created while in the program. I feel prepared for my upcoming job search and encouraged by my dialogues with my 3FP colleagues."



Kasey Leigh Yearty,
Chemistry, 2017-2018 Future Faculty Fellow



2018-2019 Future Faculty Fellows

Back Row (L-R): Diogo Cosme (Romance Languages), K. Anne Watson (International Affairs), Heidi Hadley (Language and Literacy Education), Aaron DeLeo (Cellular Biology), Wen-hao Winston Chou (Kinesiology), Angela Burrow (Wildlife Ecology). Front Row (L-R): Jennifer DeMoss (Anthropology), John Banister (Communication Studies), Jessica Parks (Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics), Yachao Li (Communication Studies), Rhia Moreno (Language and Literacy Education), Pedro Monarrez (Geology), Katherine Jones (Anthropology), Vanessa Swenson (Linguistics), Jeffrey Robert (Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics).

NEW FACES

at the CTL



Dr. Ruth Poproski

Associate Director for Teaching and Learning

Ruth Poproski leads CTL's team focused on educational development for all instructors. She has previously supported instructor development at Georgia Tech and Carnegie Mellon University, and she holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Logic, Computation, and Methodology, and an M.A. in Philosophy. She has taught courses in Philosophy, Logic, and Game Theory, and is passionate about supporting good course design, teaching, and mentoring practices in higher education.

Dr. Alice Hunt

Assistant Director for Instructional Development

Alice Hunt works with faculty, departments, and academic units to increase student learning through curricular and programmatic (re)design, evaluate programmatic impact, and develop "Essential Learning Outcomes" across the curriculum. Alice believes exceptional learning is located at the intersection of an instructor's passion for a subject, the art of crafting engaging learning experiences, and the science of how the brain works. Alice holds a Ph.D. in Archaeological Materials Science from the UCL Institute of Archaeology in London, England.



Philip Bishop

Senior Coordinator for Learning Technologies

Philip Bishop serves as the primary administrator for eLC to assist instructors and departments across campus in implementing learning technologies in their classrooms. Philip's primary focus involves incorporating technologies that facilitate learning in flexible and robust learning environments for faculty and students across campus. Philip holds a B.F.A. in Mass Media and a Master of Business Administration from Valdosta State University.

Ameya S. Sawadkar

Graduate Assistant for Learning Technologies

Ameya is a Graduate Assistant at CTL with a focus on learning technologies to support the use of eLC and other enterprise-wide learning technologies. He is interested in mechanisms of enhancing learning for doctoral students in his research and through his work at the CTL, hopes to help students and teachers at UGA design optimal learning experiences using instructional tools. Ameya is a Ph.D. Candidate in Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methodologies.



Dr. Lisa LaCross

Teaching and Learning Specialist

Lisa LaCross provides support for the design, development, and delivery of institutionally relevant programs and events for faculty, with a particular focus on the Active Learning Summer Institute and program alumni. Lisa's teaching philosophy incorporates inclusive instructional strategies with frequent interaction (with the content and peers) to engage students in meaningful learning experiences. Lisa holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Georgia, where she has led courses in French and Linguistics.

LOOKING FOR TEACHING-MINDED PEERS AND MENTORS?

THE 2019-2020 FUTURE FACULTY FELLOWS REPRESENT DISCIPLINES ALL ACROSS CAMPUS!

EARTH AND LIFE SCIENCES

Kelly Cronin
Geology

Lauren Essler
Microbiology

Harshani N. Rathnaweera
Chemistry

Aarya Venkat
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Andrew G. Wiggins
Microbiology

Josephine Bou Dagher
Biomedical and Health Sciences Institute

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Christina Crespo
Anthropology

Anastacia Janovec
Communication Studies

Jenn LaRue
Hugh Hodgson School of Music

Jeff Scott Shelton
Sociology

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Jamie Lynn Byram
Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics

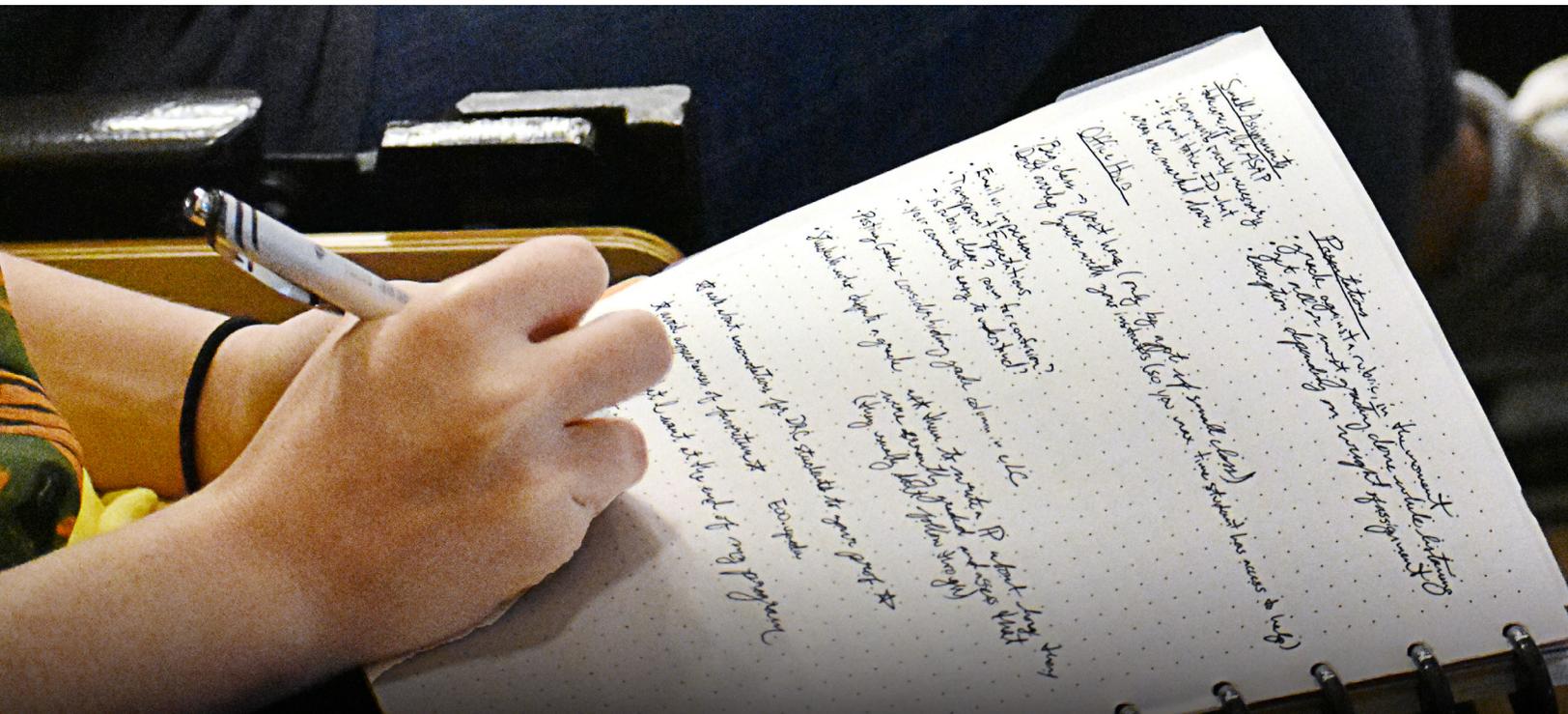
Jaleesa Reed
Textiles, Merchandising, and Interiors

EDUCATION

Khanh Bui
Language and Literacy Education

Eric D. Magrum
Kinesiology

Rachel Ranschaert
Educational Theory and Practice



Center for Teaching
and Learning
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

706.542.1355 | ctl.uga.edu | Office of Instruction
Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost