



Computer And Information Science  
Penn Engineering

## Teaching Assistant Guidelines





# TEACHING ASSISTANT GUIDELINES

## FOR ALL TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

- If you are a non-native speakers of English, and haven't done so already, you need to have your English fluency certified by Penn's English Language Program - see Mike Felker if you have a question.
- To obtain a copy of the textbook being used in the class your assisting with, please obtain a *Bookstore Requisition Form* from the CIS/EE Business Office, Towne 293.
- Please read the following articles in this booklet:  
*44 Things to do in Class*  
*Learning a New Art: Suggestions for Beginning Teachers*  
*Emotional Preparation/Creating Dramatic Suspense*  
*Sexual Harassment/Consensual Sexual Relations Policies*
- If you run into a problem, talk to the course instructor, your advisor, other students.
- For more info:  
Graduate Student Teaching Resource Network: [www.upenn.edu/pennteach/](http://www.upenn.edu/pennteach/)  
Resources, Policies, & Procedures: [www.upenn.edu/osl/pennbook.html](http://www.upenn.edu/osl/pennbook.html)

## FOR PAID TEACHING ASSISTANTS & GRADERS:

- You must complete, sign, have approved, and submit the "Approval for Paid Teaching Assistant Position" or the "Approval for Paid Grader Position" form. Available on the web at <http://www.cis.upenn.edu/cisgrad/ta.html>
- Submit authorized/signed timesheets weekly.

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## Graduate Student Teaching Resource Network

### 44 THINGS TO DO IN CLASS

This abbreviated version of J. Povlacs's 1986 article "101 things you can do the first three weeks of class." appeared in the book *Now What? Readings on Surviving (and Even Enjoying) Your First Experience at College Teaching*, Published by the Graduate School Center for Instructional Development, Syracuse University. This excellent collection of readings is on reserve at Rosengarten.

The original article appeared in *Teaching at UNL*, 8 (1), published at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln .

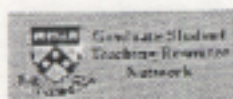
- 1. Hand out an informative, artistic, and user-friendly syllabus.
- 2. Direct students to a support unit for help on basic skills.
- 3. Tell students how much time they will need to study for this course.
- 4. Explain how to study for the kind of tests you give.
- 5. Put in writing a limited number of ground rules regarding absence, late work, testing procedures, grading, and general decorum, and maintain these.
- 6. Announce office hours frequently and hold them without fail.
- 7. Give sample test questions.
- 8. Give sample test question answers.



- 9. Explain the difference between legitimate collaboration and academic dishonesty; be clear when collaboration is wanted and when it is forbidden.
- 10. Give a pre-test of the day's topic.
- 11. Start the lecture with a puzzle, question, paradox, picture, or cartoon on slide or transparency to focus on the day's topic.
- 12. Use variety in methods of presentation every class meeting.
- 13. Stage a figurative "coffee break" about twenty minutes into the hour: tell an anecdote, invite students to put down pens and pencils, refer to a current event, shift media.
- 14. Incorporate community resources: plays, concerts, the State Fair, government agencies, businesses, the outdoors.
- 15. Show a film in a novel way; stop it for discussion, show a few frames only, anticipate ending, hand out a viewing or critique sheet, play and replay parts.
- 16. Share your philosophy of teaching with your students.
- 17. Form a student panel to present alternative views of the same concept.
- 18. Tell about your current research interests and how you got there from your own beginnings in the discipline.
- 19. Conduct idea-generating or brainstorming sessions to expand horizons.
- 20. Give students two passages of material containing alternative views to compare and contrast.
- 21. Distribute a list of the unsolved problems, dilemmas, or great questions in your discipline and invite students to claim one as their own to investigate.
- 22. Let your students see the enthusiasm you have for your subject and your love of learning.
- 23. Take students with you to hear guest speakers or special programs on campus.
- 24. Diagnose the students' prerequisite learning by a questionnaire or pre-test and give them feedback as soon as possible.
- 25. Hand out study questions or study guides.
- 26. Be redundant. Students should hear, read, or see key material at least three times.
- 27. Allow students to demonstrate progress in learning: summary quiz over the day's work, a written reaction to the day's material.



- 28. Use non-graded feedback to let students know how they are doing: post answers to ungraded quizzes and problem sets, exercises in class, oral feedback.
- 29. Use a light touch: smile, tell a good joke, break test anxiety with a sympathetic comment.
- 30. Organize. Give visible structure by posting the day's "menu" on chalkboard or overhead.
- 31. Use multiple media: overhead, slides, film, videotape, audiotape, models, sample material .
- 32. Use multiple examples, in multiple media, to illustrate key points and important concepts.
- 33. Make appointments with all students (individually or in small groups).
- 34. Tell students what they need to do to receive an "A" in your course.
- 35. Invite students to ask questions and wait for the response.
- 36. Probe student responses to questions and their comments.
- 37. Give students an opportunity to voice opinions about the subject matter.
- 38. Have students apply subject matter to solve real problems.
- 39. Grade quizzes and exercises in class as a learning tool.
- 40. Give students plenty of opportunity for practice before a major test.
- 41. Have students write questions on index cards to be collected and answered the next class period.
- 42. Learn names. Everyone makes an effort to learn at least a few names.
- 43. Find out about your students via questions on an index card.
- 44. Gather student feedback in the first three weeks of the semester to improve teaching and learning.



[Graduate Student Teaching Resource Network Homepage]









## Graduate Student Teaching Resource Network

### Learning a New Art: Suggestions for Beginning Teachers

by Richard Fraher

**RICHARD FRAHER** is a medievalist whose scholarly interest is the influence of law upon the development of European society. He holds degrees from Wright State University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Cornell University and has held research fellowships at the University of California and Cambridge University. Since 1977 he has been at Harvard as Assistant Professor of History; he is also a Fellow in Law and History at Harvard Law School.

This Article first appeared in the book *The Art and Craft of Teaching*, edited by Margaret Morganroth Gullette, pp116-127. This book is available on reserve at Rosengarten and in the Van Pelt Library stacks.

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Holding forth in a public forum frightens almost everyone who has to face the experience. Veteran actors endure butter flies on opening night, and hardened lawyers find their palms moist before offering summations in big cases. But nobody has better reason to fret than the average college teacher. Actors and lawyers, after all, are trained to perform before large and sometimes hostile audiences. Professors are trained only as scholars and then thrust in front of the classroom to play the role of teacher. To say that this transition in roles can be a learning experience is to indulge in understatement.[1]

Only a few lack the flexibility to play both roles. Generally, though, the individual must adapt to the new role of teacher without very much institutional support. The assumption that knowledge of a subject implies the ability to teach in that field permeates American higher education, and one result is that our colleagues generally believe that the problems associated with teaching should disappear as the competent scholar eases past the initial nervousness. The point of this chapter is that the college teacher faces a much more broad task than merely conquering the self-consciousness of the public speaker. The first exposure in front of a class is the initiation to an entirely new set of mysteries, involving the



communication, in contrast to the possession, of that knowledge.

Beginning to learn how to be a good teacher requires some mental preparation. It is probably important for most of us to concede that we were not well trained as teachers while we were being prepared as scholars. And the next major step toward learning to teach may involve the realization that the behavior which made one a good student will not necessarily make one an effective teacher. Good graduate students are like Indianapolis 500 racing cars, which speed through assigned tasks with impressive velocity and control in response to stringent, specialized demands: Good teachers are more like driver's education vehicles, which perform over a broader range in response to varying and less expert demands. It is less important in most cases for a teacher to perform impressively as a scholar than it is to facilitate the learning of students. There is both a comfort and a challenge implied here. The comfort is that one need not feel overwhelmed by a compulsion to "know everything" about one's subject and to teach it all. The challenge is to look beyond the secure boundaries of one's scholarly expertise, an area of proven competence, and to develop an entirely new set of skills as a teacher.

This task is left largely to each individual, but every teacher is surrounded by potential resources: to begin with, one's colleagues. There is a fallacy which retains perpetual appeal among younger teachers, to the effect that senior colleagues do not care as much about teaching as junior faculty do, and that students are more comfortable with younger teachers because they maintain a great dedication to teaching. It is certainly true that college students frequently relate more easily to younger teachers than to older ones, but this may result every bit as much from the lesser stature and "compatible" age of the younger teacher as from any superiority as a teacher. Undergraduates often find senior professors gracious, profound, and accessible. With a bit of courage, a young teacher can learn from these people.. Senior colleagues who are known as effective teachers, despite their lack of the common interests which help to bind younger teachers together with their students, must have made adjustments in their behavior in order to maintain an open process of teaching and learning. Indeed, virtually any professor, lecturer, or experienced teaching assistant will be happy to debate the merits of lecture versus discussion in a given course, the handling of difficult classroom situations, or the best way to deal with an administrative question. Most of the challenges of teaching, however unique they may appear to the new teacher, turn out to be common enough that a colleague has faced a similar bind. One of the best ways to develop one's teaching skills is to discuss problems before they come up and as they occur.

Learning the ropes on an institutional level can be as frustrating as trying to fashion new skills in the classroom. Colleagues and department secretaries can be remarkably helpful with details, but ultimately every teacher is responsible, especially in the students' eyes, for a myriad of course-related minutiae.

The following items make up at least a beginning check-list.

● **Availability of books.** Whether you are sectioning, tutoring or lecturing, your students will expect you to be able to inform them about the availability of the assigned readings. And you too will be handicapped if the books are not there when you are ready to discuss them. Keep tabs on what has been ordered and what has come in. You should personally check the bookstore shelves and the reserve desk at the appropriate library before the beginning of the term, just to make sure that all is in order.

● **Scheduling and classrooms.** The hour makes a lot of difference. An early morning discussion requires more caffeine and more energy from the teacher, because a large proportion of college students prefer to remain nonverbal until mid-morning. Professors enjoy considerably more freedom in scheduling than section people do, but the teacher in either case should be aware of the effect of the time upon the



students. Tutors and those who direct independent study should offer their students as much flexibility as possible in working out schedules for meetings.[2] The relationship between student and teacher is established on a more positive basis if the first official business is handled in a way that takes account of the students' wishes.

Getting an appropriate classroom may strike the new teacher as an unproblematic aspect of teaching, since some administrative officer generally handles assignments based upon room capacities and projected enrollments. Whether their courses are large or small, sooner or later teachers realize that the administrator was concerned primarily with fitting together the pieces of a demographic puzzle, and not with the niceties of environmental design. Check out your classroom before you have to teach in it. If the room will not be suitable, ask for a change. Small factors can be very important in considering a classroom. Is the room much larger than necessary? Students will spread out, with a majority seated toward the back of the room, and the prospects for class discussion will taper in proportion to the density of the seating pattern. Are the seats all fixed facing forward? How will the seating pattern affect discussion classes? Some buildings are famous for the cacophony of heating pipes coming to life on Monday mornings in winter. In general, it is not easy to alter classroom assignments after the beginning of the term, and the most popular hours present an almost insurmountable hurdle for the teacher unhappy with a leaky ceiling. The moral here is to investigate early and strike fast.

● **Syllabi.** The ideal course syllabus tells the student every thing he or she wants to know about the course. Every syllabus tells a good deal about the teacher. The bare minimum for a syllabus includes identification of the course and of the teacher, an outline of the material to be presented in class, a list of required readings, and a schedule of the assignments required in the course. Optional materials, which some teachers omit, include the location of the teacher's office, the phone number, a schedule of office hours, a list of recommended supplementary readings, and any material relevant to course assignments: i.e. problem sets, case materials, suggestions for term papers, etc. The material contained in the syllabus forms the basis for an explicit contract between teacher and students.[3] The manner in which the syllabus is presented to the class creates an implicit contract and also establishes the students' first impression of the teacher. Generally, it is a worthwhile exercise to go over the syllabus at the first class meeting, if only to lend emphasis to the points which are most important to the teacher and to clarify anything which seems unclear to any of the students.

● **Office hours.** Some teachers swear by office hours as the key to success in the profession; some swear that office hours waste their time because nobody comes. The difference between "success" and "waste" here is directly related to the students' perceptions of the teacher's attitude. If the teacher's classroom demeanor is affable and approachable, students will believe that they are genuinely welcome to talk to that instructor. Students will frequently rate such a teacher as "accessible" even if the time allowed for office hours is limited by other commitments. If the teacher's behavior conveys the impression that she or he is really too busy or too preoccupied to be bothered, students will perceive that this teacher is "inaccessible" regardless of how lengthy the scheduled office hours may be. Being a good listener is a crucial part of teaching. While it is important to keep one's office hours scrupulously, it is critical to address one's full attention to each question or problem raised by a student, in or out of the office. On a purely mechanical level, it may be worthwhile to keep some light work at hand for office hours, the kind of task which can be dropped when a student appears.

● **Libraries.** Learning to use a new library system can be wilder faculty and students alike. It is often helpful to schedule your class for a library orientation.



● **Orientation programs.** Many colleges and universities offer a range of meetings aimed at easing the teacher into the process. Most of these offerings are particularly useful for the new instructor. Sometimes departments host orientation meetings which convey to their staffs the nuts and bolts of their particular programs or offer a course in teaching methods. [4]

Assuming that everyone will survive the first hectic weeks of organizing a course and getting the administrative side worked out, let us return to the subject of developing teaching skills. The most useful tools which one can employ in learning about teaching are professional literature, reflective self-evaluation, and of course, experience.

Reading about teaching can be the most excruciatingly boring experience, or it can be exciting and illuminating. Many professional associations regularly publish articles dealing with innovative teaching methods. The majority of the suggestions reflect a desire for increased enrollments as much as any desire for pedagogical excellence, but the occasional gem makes it worthwhile to keep up on this genre of professional literature. Professionals in the field of education crank out dozens of detailed studies, totally incomprehensible to those of us not versed in statistical analysis, developmental psychology, and the subtleties of lesson plans. But mere teachers manage to publish humane and occasionally profound pieces which can be tremendously useful to a reflective teacher. Beginning teachers will find much with which they can identify in Michael Mandelbaum's "Notes of a First Year Teacher" (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 6, 1975). A classic case of a conversion from classroom scholar to classroom teacher is chronicled in Robert G. Kraft's "Bike Riding and the Art of Learning" (*Change*, vol. X, no. 6). Finally, a book brimming with wit, common sense, and professional insights into the student's learning process in the college years is William G. Perry's *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (New York, 1970). [5]

Beyond all the external influences which play upon one's development as a teacher, the most significant factors remain the personalities involved in the teaching process: those of the teacher and of the student. Most of the teacher's learning will take place through reflection and observation of actual experiences. Some of the teacher's reflection will result in decisions being taken before she or he walks into the classroom for the first time. Consciously or unconsciously, the instructor chooses a persona to present to the class. The more consciously the teacher chooses the character of this persona, the more likely he or she is to create the desired response on the part of the students. A new teaching assistant, only a few years older than her or his students, might consider whether very formal appearance and behavior on the young instructor's part creates a proper distance between teacher and student, or whether such cues suggest that the instructor is running scared. At the other extreme, the teacher who decides that informality is the ticket to an easier classroom dynamic should consider whether the casual approach sacrifices any of the teacher's options by creating an implicit agreement that the instructor will not be "too hard" on the students. Obviously, there are no universal laws regarding the proper persona for a classroom teacher; some prefer to play the part of the detached scholar, some that of the enthusiastic proselytizer for their disciplines, some that of the martinet. One possible guideline, though, is that each teacher should develop a classroom style which is comfortable for the teacher and consciously directed toward the kind of classroom dynamic most suitable for teaching the particular group of students, the subject matter, and the particular mode of presentation: i.e. lecture, section, seminar, or tutorial. [6]

All the reading and reflection in the world cannot teach the instructor as much about teaching as experience can. Students, especially, provide their teachers with ongoing lessons in the dynamics of the learning process, and the shrewd teacher pays as much attention to the unconscious feedback embodied in the students' everyday behavior as to the conscious feedback embodied in evaluations. Unconscious



feedback is particularly useful because it is nonjudgmental.

Almost every teacher who has spent much time in the classroom knows how to "read" a class. Not much thought is required to comprehend that a lecture is not going over very well if the lecturer looks up from the lecture notes and faces half a dozen copies of the New York Times propped up in front of the students. Similarly, a discussion leader learns to recognize that the student who responds to a question by looking at the lights, at the floor, or in the direction of his or her shoes is generally not the best person on whom to call. But the meaning of some typical forms of student behavior is not so unequivocal. Does the reticence of the archetypal "quiet student" convey disinterest in the subject, lack of confidence about speaking out, cynicism about the value of the discussion process, personal distaste for the teacher and peers, or simply disinclination to speak out? The teacher may perceive a problem in such a case where the student sees none, or may see the problem in altogether different terms, as when the instructor desires class members to discuss the relative merits of alternative interpretations of some problem in statistical analysis, theoretical physics, literary interpretation, or historical causality, while the student may be waiting for "the truth" to be enunciated. There is no pat answer to the problems posed by the fact that the teacher and each of the students are following individual and sometimes conflicting agendas. The teacher can avoid some of the difficulty by helping the students to define their purposes in taking a course or in being at the university, but reaching the student on such a level may lie beyond the depth of the individual's involvement in a single course. Every teacher, nevertheless, should be careful not to send out one set of conscious, explicit signals and another set of unconscious, implicit ones. Bright students will respond to agendas which the teacher may never realize she or he had set.

In general, the students mirror the involvement of their teacher in the teaching process. If the students approach the learning process with enthusiasm, they usually do so in partnership with an instructor who conveys to them a sense of personal involvement in and commitment to the classroom dynamics. Beyond this, the reflective teacher seeks to facilitate the learning that suits each student's agenda—a challenge more complex and to my mind more rewarding than the most intricate problem in scholarly research.

Interpreting student feedback can be a very tricky business, even when the students are explicitly making evaluative remarks. One young assistant professor took pleasure from an encounter with a smiling student who informed the instructor that, "You certainly did include a lot of material in your lectures!" It was only later, in a more reflective context, that the professor understood the mixed message—the lectures profited from his enthusiastic delivery but suffered from his anxiety to cover all the material.

Formal evaluations contain all sorts of hidden traps for the unwary. The quantified "overall evaluation" given by students almost invariably reflects a higher opinion than an instructor might receive from his or her colleagues, or even from a self evaluation. Students can be unforgiving in their attitudes toward teachers, but their formal, written evaluations tend to be generous. For example, the mean "overall evaluation" of all courses taught at Harvard in 1978-79 was 4.90 on a scale running from 1 to 7, while the mean for "instructor overall" was 5.36. The instructor who received an overall rating of 4.5 might feel self-congratulatory at having scored above the middle of the seven-point scale, when in fact her or his rating fell far below the mean for all instructors. Students expect their teachers to be excellent; to rate a professor or tutor as "good" may not be as complimentary as the teacher would like to think. Section leaders regularly score lower than full-course instructors in student evaluations, a statistic which may be a comment upon the quality of instruction in sections or upon student attitudes toward discussion sections. One final example of the dangers of statistical evaluations. A few years ago in a western



civilization course at a major eastern university, the lectures were delivered during the first semester by Professors A and B. Professor A stole the show and received superior evaluations. The same evaluations gave Professor B a rating far below the mean for the college. During the second semester, the composition of the class remained substantially the same, but Professor B shared the lecturing with Professor C. Professor C took a drubbing from the students; Professor B had not spent the semester break in an intensive teaching workshop, but his second-semester evaluations soared. Clearly the students had evaluated Professor B relative to his colleagues rather than according to objective criteria. If you feel that the official evaluation form is misleading or incomplete, you can write your own. Many teachers in any case like to ask for evaluations no later than mid-semester, and they prepare their own questionnaires based on their own objectives and their sense of potential problems in the particular class.

What is useful in terms of conscious feedback, and what is misleading? There is no hard and fast answer. Superior statistics over a long period undoubtedly indicate that the teacher is doing something right. And from each batch of evaluations, you can wring lots of useful data by reading the "additional comments" or "suggestions for improvement." In general, a teacher should read each student's comments with the understanding that they reflect the individual's stage of intellectual development: a very well-read student will react more favorably to learned and allusive lectures than a student with little background in the field. One need not follow all advice. One new section leader found on his first-ever student evaluation a very faintly pencilled-in "suggestion for improving the course": "Kill T.A." The free-form comments provide the students with an opportunity to offer remarks which are not bound up with the teacher's or the administration's ideas of what should be going on, or of what should be evaluated. A perceptive teacher can glean from such comments a good deal of insight into the students' unspoken values and needs.

Thus far, we have dealt only with feedback elicited from the class as a whole. A teacher who is feeling particularly secure might also seek evaluative comments from a more specific and less judgmental group. Once the interactions within the class have been established well enough so that a visitor's presence would not be too disruptive, the teacher might invite a colleague to sit through a class and then discuss its strengths and weaknesses. In a smaller group, where an "outsider" might hamper the normal workings of the class, the teacher might announce the visitor in advance and have the visitor participate in the class as a part of the group rather than merely as an observer. The college teacher who desires an evaluation of his or her class performance without the intrusion of a visitor might seek the counsel of a member of the class whose opinion the teacher values. In any of the above cases, the teacher and the observer should ideally work on the basis of mutual support and reciprocal helpfulness, as opposed to operating in an overtly critical fashion.

There are moments, though, when it becomes almost impossible to avoid being disappointed by one's performance. Every teacher who ever faced a class has committed a gaffe or two at some point, and every good teacher turns mistakes into learning experiences. Errors of fact or interpretation are embarrassing but easy to resolve, simply by admitting the mistake, explaining the error and the correct alternative, and moving ahead. Errors of human dynamics-like belittling a student-can be infinitely more difficult. In general, an action or a statement which offends an individual in front of the class calls for apology in the same forum, since the entire class is involved in a contract which should preclude offense being given. The teacher who has aggrieved an individual student in class should also see the student outside the class and make amends, to restore insofar as possible a relationship which can help the student to learn.



Many classroom crises arise out of situations which may not be exactly the teacher's fault, but for which the teacher should be mentally prepared. Any discussion of material which might strike a sensitive nerve provides a great learning opportunity, in which students can involve themselves intellectually and emotionally. Ethics, politics, religion, race, and sexism are all subjects which can spark either a tremendously worthwhile discussion or a shattering explosion. Even at a critical moment (for example, in that dreadful silence just after a student has blundered into a comment which offends everyone in the room through evident sexism or racism), a nimble teacher can turn the crisis into an opportunity, because the instructor should know that at such a moment the students are completely immersed in the dynamics of the classroom. However the teacher handles the crisis, the students will remember it.

It seems evident that in such a situation, the sensitive, reflective teacher, who has invested time in getting to know the students, enjoys an advantage over the less skillful teacher. Good teaching does not come naturally or easily to anyone, even to those who seem to have a gift for it. The professor who attracts a following of talented students is generally the teacher who took time to reflect upon the means to reach the students on their own terms. A good teacher can offer firm discipline to her or his classes and still attract students, so long as the demand for non-complacent students is matched by the perception that the instructor lacks complacency, as well. The students of a talented instructor learn from his or her example to set aside ego investment and thus to criticize themselves with a firm and balanced judgment.

Many colleges and universities now offer institutional aids to assist teachers in self-appraisal and improvement, and a few have set up teaching and learning centers.[7] Take advantage of what there is, and especially of the opportunity to be video taped while teaching, if it is available. The most useful procedure is to watch the tape with an objective counselor, during which session you can establish your goals. Videotaping can be an effective aid in developing speaking skills, in preparing special lectures, or in solving problems in discussion classes. When counselors are available, they are likely to have seen many similar problems, and they may be able to read the class better than you can: they are likely to notice your virtues as a teacher, where you may see only your faults; and they may be able to tell you what motivates your quiet student, or what to do if your lectures are brimming with information but dull. Having decided what you want to work on, ideally you should be taped and watch yourself again. Whether the aim is simply to rehearse and build confidence, or to work out some difficulty with delivery, most teachers find they achieve noticeable results this way. Even experienced teachers find the process helpful.

To obtain a teaching position means to take on an enormous challenge and a sacred trust. The tradition of our masters has handed down to us a knowledge of our subject, and the capacity of our students to learn demands our consummate effort to facilitate the transmission of learning. Every teacher owes it to her or his students to cultivate an openness on a human level; to sharpen the technical skills that facilitate communication, to enhance one's awareness of the complexities of knowledge and of the learning process, and to offer the flexible, balanced judgment of a worthy master. Every teacher exhorts students to learn; it is the master teacher who can convey to a pupil the message that one must reach beyond the knowledge of things that is merely knowledge, to the knowledge of others that is wisdom, and thence to the knowledge of self that is enlightenment.

## Notes

[1] Attacks of nerves are not in fact limited to beginning teachers. Even old stagers in the academic profession have been known to confess that their hearts still pound painfully before each lecture: Some



have nightmares that the clock hands are moving backwards while they speak, or that they look up to find an empty hall.

[2] In one case some years ago the students assigned to a particularly demanding section leader discovered that the easiest way to escape to a different class was to create a schedule conflict between meetings and other activities. The teacher played into the students' ploy by offering no meeting times alternative to the hour most convenient for himself.

[3] A more detailed discussion of the contracts between students and teachers can be found in Chapter Two, "The First Day of Class," by Jeffrey Wolcowitz, pp. 10-24.

[4] At Harvard the Faculty of Arts and Sciences organizes an introductory program for new faculty members. The Harvard-Danforth Center, along with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, sponsors an autumn orientation for teaching fellows, lecturers, preceptors, instructors, teaching associates, graduate students who will be teaching in the future and other interested parties.

[5] See especially Chapters Three and Five.

[6] An expanded treatment of the persona can be found in Chapter Six "The Rhythms of the Semester," by Laura L. Nash, especially the section entitled "Participants: Evolving Roles," pp. 76-82.

[7] The Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning offers video taping and consultation for teachers (all taping is free and confidential) panel discussion on pedagogical issues, a course on discussion-leading skills, an Orientation and Welcome for all new instructors, workshops to develop a wide variety of teaching skills, and special presentations geared to the needs of a particular course, department, or program. The Center has also published *Experiments in History Teaching*, edited by Stephen Botein, Warren Leon, Michael Novak, Roy Rosenzweig, and C. B. Warden. A brochure describing all the Center's services is available upon request.



[Graduate Student Teaching Resource Network Homepage]









## Graduate Student Teaching Resource Network

### Emotional Preparation/Creating Dramatic Suspense

An excerpt [pp 90-93] from the book *Mastering The Techniques of Teaching* by Joseph Lowman. The book is available in Rosengarten Reserve Room and in the Van Pelt stacks.

#### Emotional Preparation.

College teachers must give exciting and moving performances day after day (though at least, unlike actors, they are not required to give the same lecture every day-with two presentations on Wednesdays and Saturdays). Like other performers, college teachers will find it difficult at times to "get up" for teaching. Being excited and fully motivated to teach is much easier at the beginning of a term than after the novelty has worn off and other demands on one's time increase. Luckily, college teachers can benefit from some of the techniques that professional actors use to give their best performances time and again.

The single most useful technique is to recognize that you must prepare yourself emotionally as well as intellectually before your "performance." No instructor is likely to go into a class with out some idea or specific plan of what he or she wants to do and the necessary materials (books, props, maps, slides) to carry it out. Many college teachers, though, walk directly from parking lot or committee meeting into a classroom with only a short pause to collect their thoughts. The outstanding professors I interviewed typically set aside from five to thirty minutes beforehand to think about the class they are going to teach. Some close their office doors and hold telephone calls; others walk a longer route to their classroom building than necessary. However you can manage to find a few minutes of solitude before class (in the lavatory, if necessary!), recognizing the importance of emotional preparation, especially if you are tired or depressed, is essential to ensure a high-quality performance.

If you are emotionally prepared, you will have the energy to model the intellectual attitude you want your students to have. If you want them to be excited about the ideas you are presenting, you should be excited by those ideas as well--no small task when presenting fundamental concepts you first learned years ago and may have taught numerous times. If you wish your students to think, to push aside their emotional reactions and prior views to consider a problem objectively and rationally, you must wrestle



through your own reactions again as well. If you wish your students to respond with emotional sensitivity to art, then you must be able to portray this response for them. Students will learn more about the emotional attitude they should (or could) have about a content area from what their instructor models than from anything else.

Several years ago I inadvertently learned the importance of preparation time when growing enrollments in psychology courses forced one of my classes, which met at a popular hour, to be moved to a building some ten minutes' walk across campus. As the semester progressed, I noticed that I was able to begin teaching this class with the energy and concentration I had come to expect only five to ten minutes after a class period had started. In effect, I had been warming up at the students' expense in the past. When I mentioned this to one of my students, a drama major, she said that no actor or musical performer would ever fail to prepare emotionally before going on stage, and she wondered where I had gotten the idea that college teachers were exempt from this rule!

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## Creating Dramatic Suspense

How can college teachers infuse their presentations with suspense, with a sense of dramatic tension and the excitement that comes from expecting something important or unusual? Instructors can create this sense of anticipation in their students by giving presentations as if they are telling a story, ordering and presenting their topics in ways that stimulate in their listeners a sense of unfolding and discovery.

To tell any story well, the narrator must become almost as caught up in the plot as the listeners. Even if they have told a story countless times, masters of the ancient storyteller's art grow excited at hearing the tale once again. They save the big surprises until the end, laying the groundwork early by posing questions from the opening moments and dropping clues along the way. The storyteller must approach the well-known plot as if telling it for the first time so that listeners will experience it afresh, even when they too have heard it before.

Superb lecturers share many qualities with storytellers. They, too, save the conclusions or most crucial points until the end, having teased the students along the way with key questions and preliminary findings or interpretations. Such instructors seem genuinely moved by the story they are presenting, the excitement of scientific discovery or historical events or the pathos and beauty of literature or art. These teachers have a well developed empathic sense, the ability to imagine accurately the thoughts and experiences students are having as they listen to the story.

Some college teachers are natural storytellers who add a sense of drama to anything they talk about. But almost any instructor can learn to be a good storyteller if he or she relaxes inhibitions and reacts to the suspense inherent in most content. Practice in telling traditional tales to children can help college teachers add a sense of immediacy, spontaneity, and dramatic suspense to their teaching. Teachers who have tried this have reported good results. As noted psychology teacher James McConnell quotes an influential professor as saying, "If you want to capture the imaginations of young people, you have to tell them stories!" (1978, p. 4). Lecturing to college students is certainly a more intellectually demanding and complex business than telling stories around a campfire, but accomplished teachers are frequently skilled storytellers.





# Policy Manual

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POLICY NO.: 703  
SUPERSEDES POLICY NO.: 703 (12/06/88)  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/07/95

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

### I. CONDUCT

Our community depends on trust and civility. A willingness to recognize the dignity and worth of each person at the University is essential to our mission.

It is the responsibility of each person on campus to respect the personal dignity of others. We expect members of our University community to demonstrate a basic generosity of spirit that precludes expressions of bigotry.

Penn properly celebrates the diversity of its community. We come to Penn from many different backgrounds and include different races, religions, sexual orientations, and ethnic ancestries. Learning to understand the differences among us, as well as the similarities, is an important dimension of education, one that continues for a lifetime. Tolerance alone, however, is not enough. Respect and understanding also are needed. We should delight in our differences, and should seek to appreciate the richness and personal growth which our diversity provides to us as members of this community.

The University is committed to freedom of thought, discourse and speech, and the attainment of the highest quality of academic and educational pursuits and daily work. Policies and regulations

implementing this commitment include the Statement on Academic Freedom and Responsibility, the Guidelines on Open Expression, and the Code of Academic Integrity.

The University also has established policies on behaviors that interfere with these freedoms. Foremost among these policies is the University's Statement on Non-Discrimination, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual preference, religion, national or ethnic origin, handicap or disability.

The University also has adopted the following policy concerning sexual harassment. The terms "harassment" and "sexual harassment" as used throughout, are defined as a matter of University policy, and are not necessarily identical or limited to the uses of that term in external



sources, including governmental guidelines or regulations.

## II. PURPOSES AND DEFINITIONS

### A. Purpose

For many years the University has stressed that sexual harassment is not tolerated at Penn. As an employer and as an educational institution, the University is committed to eradicating sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in any context is reprehensible and is a matter of particular concern to an academic community in which students, faculty, and staff must rely on strong bonds of intellectual trust and dependence.

### B. Definition

For the purposes of University policy, the term "sexual harassment" refers to any unwanted sexual attention that:

1. Involves a stated or implicit threat to the victim's academic or employment status;
2. Has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance; and/or,
3. Creates an intimidating or offensive academic, living, or work environment.

The University regards such behavior, whether verbal or physical, as a violation of the standards of conduct required of all persons associated with the institution. Accordingly, those inflicting such behavior on others are subject to the full range of internal institutional disciplinary actions, including separation from the University. Likewise, acts of retaliation will be subject to the same range of disciplinary actions.

As noted in the Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators, Policies and Procedures, the Academic Bulletin, and other University publications, persons engaged in such harassment within the University setting are subject to the full range of internal institutional disciplinary actions, including separation from the institution.

Not every act that might be offensive to an individual or a group necessarily will be considered as harassment and/or a violation of the University's standard of conduct. In determining whether an act constitutes harassment, the totality of the circumstances that pertain to any given incident in its context must be carefully reviewed and due consideration must be given to the protection of individual rights, freedom of speech, academic freedom and advocacy.

## III. RESOURCES

School and administrative units should make known to all of their



members the available resources and the informal and formal procedures for resolving complaints of sexual harassment within the unit or at the University Level.

These resources include the following:

#### A. Information, Counseling, and Support

The following University resources are available to members of the University community who seek information and counseling about University policies on sexual harassment, standards of behavior, informal and formal mechanisms for resolving complaints and resources for complainants and respondents.

Deans and directors may also make referrals to these resource offices:

Office of Affirmative Action  
African American Resource Center  
Faculty/Staff Assistance Program  
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Center  
Office of Labor Relations  
Office of the Ombudsman  
Office of Staff Relations  
Victim Support Services  
Penn Women's Center  
Student Health Services  
Counseling and Psychological Services  
Office of the Vice Provost for University Life

#### B. Informal Mechanisms for Mediation and Resolution

The Ombudsman, the Office of Affirmative Action, the Penn Women's Center, all other offices named as resource offices in this policy, the Judicial Inquiry Officer, the Office of Residential Living, department chairs, deans and administrative directors, the provost, and the senior vice president are available to assist in the informal resolution of complaints.

#### C. Formal Mechanisms for Resolution and Adjudication

When informal resolution is not chosen or is unsatisfactory, complainants are urged to use appropriate formal mechanisms described below:

1. Complaints of sexual harassment against a faculty member, instructor, or teaching assistant may be brought by a student, staff, or faculty member to the department chair or dean of the faculty member. The department chair or dean who receives a complaint is then charged with pursuing the matter. While the process depends on the particulars of the complaint, normally the department chair or dean interviews the faculty member. If the matter is not resolved informally, the department chair or dean either conducts an investigation or requests that the Ombudsman, the Office of Affirmative Action, the Office of Staff Relations, or the Office of Labor Relations do so. If the results of the investigation persuade the dean or department chair that sanctions are warranted, he/she consults with faculty members--without disclosing the identity of the individuals involved--to aid in determining an appropriate sanction, including whether there is substantial reason to believe that just cause exists for suspension or



termination. If it is determined that action should be taken to suspend or terminate, the dean should refer the matter to the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility of the school in accordance with the procedures set out in section II. E.10 of the Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators (1989).

2. Complaints of sexual harassment against a staff member may be brought by a student, staff member or faculty member to the supervisor of the person complained against. The supervisor who receives the complaint is then charged with pursuing the matter. While the process will depend on the particulars of the complaint, normally the supervisor interviews the staff member. If the matter is not resolved informally, the supervisor either conducts an investigation or requests that the Ombudsman, the Office of Affirmative Action, the Office of Staff Relations, or the Office of Labor Relations do so. If the result of the investigation persuades the supervisor that sanctions are warranted, he or she consults with his or her colleagues or supervisor-- without disclosing the identity of the individual(s) involved to aid in determining an appropriate sanction. A staff member who believes that his or her rights have been violated directly by another staff member or administrator may file a grievance by contacting the Office of Staff Relations within the Office of Human Resources under the University of Pennsylvania Staff Grievance Procedure.

3. Complaints by students of sexual harassment may be made to the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life. Grievances associated with sexual harassment in student employment may also fall within the purview of the Vice Provost for University Life.

4. A complaint of sexual harassment may be brought against a student by filing a complaint under the Charter of the University Student Judicial System, or, if the respondent is a graduate or professional student enrolled in a school which has established a hearing board or other decision-making body, with that body.

5. A tenured or untenured faculty member, whether full or part time, who believes she or he has been subjected to sexual harassment by a faculty member or by an academic administrator may file a grievance under the Faculty Grievance Procedure, Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators (1989), part II E. 15, provided the complaint constitutes a grievance as defined in Section I of the Procedure. This procedure is administered by the Faculty Grievance Commission. The panel makes its recommendations to the provost. In cases that involve reappointment, promotion or tenure, and in which the provost has declined or failed to



implement the recommendations of the panel to the satisfaction of the grievant, the grievant may obtain a hearing before the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility on the actions of the provost.

6. If the matter has not previously been referred to a different panel or committee, a student or staff member who believes that she or he has been subjected to sexual harassment by a faculty member, and whose complaint has not been resolved through the mechanisms listed above, may bring the matter to the Faculty Senate Committee on Conduct. This committee is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. At meetings with the Committee, the student or staff member may be accompanied by an advisor who is a member of the University community (student, faculty, or staff). The findings and recommendations of the Committee shall be advisory and shall be submitted to the provost for her or his decision and implementation.

#### D. Central Reporting of Sexual Harassment

1. A decentralized system of resources encourages the reporting and resolution of complaints of sexual harassment. To that end, and with the consent of the system of resources encourages the reporting and resolution of complaints of sexual harassment. To that end, and with the consent of the complainant, those offices described in Sections III. A and III.B of this policy that have handled through mediation or counseling a complaint that was not submitted to a formal hearing board should forward to the Ombudsman a report of the matter as soon as it is received. Such reports should not include the names of the persons involved. They should include, however, a description of the complaint, the schools or administrative units with which the complainant and respondent are affiliated, and the disposition of the complaint. In the case of a large department in a large school, the department also should be identified. Reports from decentralized areas will enable the Ombudsman to identify patterns in a particular location and the frequency of such incidents in a given area. Such information can then be transmitted to the appropriate dean or administrative supervisor. The reports will also enable the Ombudsman to act on behalf of the community and to conduct whatever investigation he or she deems necessary to determine whether University regulations are being violated.

2. Summary reports of formal charges of sexual harassment that have been adjudicated and records of their disposition should be forwarded to the Ombudsman's Office as a matter of information by the resource offices named in this policy.

3. Based on the information forwarded to her or him during



the previous year, the Ombudsman shall submit to the president on an annual basis a summary report of the number and type of formal and informal charges of sexual harassment and their resolution by September 15 of the academic year. This report will be shared with the University community early in the semester.

#### E. Education and Prevention

The prevention of sexual harassment and the establishment of effective procedures with due concern for all parties require a thoughtful educational program.

1. University resource offices will provide to the community information on: a. available mediation and resolution resources; and b. sources of support and information for victims and respondents.
2. Deans and heads of major administrative units are encouraged to discuss this policy and issues of sexual harassment at meetings of faculty and staff.
3. Training programs for residential advisors, senior administrative fellows, those who meet students in crisis situations and others serving in an advisory capacity to students will include training about referrals, resources, and methods for handling instances of sexual harassment.
4. An overall educational program for students that addresses issues of peer sexual harassment and also provides information, definition, support, and the identification of sexual harassment resources has been developed by the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life, the Office of Affirmative Action, and the Penn Women's Center in conjunction with the Office of Residential Living, the Council of College House Masters, and the Council of Senior Faculty Residents involved with the Freshman Year Program. Such an educational program is directed toward new undergraduate and graduate and professional students.
5. The University will publish annually the operative portions of this policy statement, including information about the resources available to advise, counsel, and assist in the mediation of sexual harassment allegations. Information will explain how and where to contact University-wide and school-specific resources and will be posted in conspicuous locations. All members of the University should feel a responsibility to try to prevent sexual harassment whenever they observe it. Community members should report sexual harassment to appropriate University resources promptly for appropriate action.



#### F. Exit Interviews

Deans and administrative directors will periodically survey departing students, faculty and staff to measure the existence and frequency of reports of sexual harassment. Based on the data yielded by these surveys and the annual reports of the Ombudsman, the University administration will determine, in consultation with the University Council, whether there is a need for further efforts to be taken on the issue of sexual harassment.

#### G. Implementation

Deans and administrative directors will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The provost and senior vice president will oversee the performance of deans and directors in the implementation of this policy.

Applicability: All University Employees & Students  
Xref:...001,004



# HANDBOOK

## Faculty & Academic Administrators

a selection of policies and procedures of the  
University of Pennsylvania

### VI.E. Consensual Sexual Relations Between Faculty and Students

*(Source: Offices of the President and Provost, Almanac, November 7, 1995)*

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The relationship between teacher and student is central to the academic mission of the University. No non-academic or personal ties should be allowed to interfere with the integrity of the teacher-student relationship. Consensual sexual relations between teacher and student can adversely affect the academic enterprise, distorting judgments or appearing to do so in the minds of others, and providing incentives or disincentives for student-faculty contact that are equally inappropriate.

For these reasons, any sexual relations between a teacher and a student during the period of the teacher/student relationship are prohibited. The prohibition extends to sexual relations between a graduate or professional student and an undergraduate, when the graduate or professional student has some supervisory academic responsibility for the undergraduate to sexual relations between department chairs and students in that department and to sexual relations between graduate group chairs and students in that graduate group. In addition, it includes sexual relations between academic advisors, program directors, and all others who have supervisory academic responsibility for a student, and that student. Teachers and academic supervisors who are sexually involved with students must decline to participate in any evaluative or supervisory academic activity with respect to those students.

The Provost, Deans, department chairs, and other administrators should respond to reports of prohibited sexual relations that are brought to them by inquiring further, and if such reports appear to be accurate, initiating appropriate disciplinary action or remedial measures against the teacher or supervisor involved.

This policy supplements the University's policy on Sexual Harassment. In addition, although this policy prohibits consensual sexual relations only between a teacher/supervisor and that individual's student, the University strongly discourages any sexual relations between members of the faculty (or administration) and undergraduates.

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## TEN COMMANDMENTS RE: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. There is nothing positive about an office relationship.
2. Do not flirt at the office.
3. Do not touch, ever! If it involves more than shaking hands, do not do it.
4. Do not refer to body parts.
5. Do not joke around with sexual humor.
6. There is no such thing as a minor complaint.
7. Follow the golden rule. If you were in the other's shoes, how would you feel?
8. If you would not do it or say it in front of your spouse, do not do it.
9. If you would object to it being done to your daughter or son, do not do it.
10. If you do not want to read about it in the local newspaper, do not do it.