14 Recommendations for Teaching Psychology

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1. Introduction: Becoming a Teacher

Teaching is one of the legs in the academic tripod, along with research and service. As a typical academic psychologist, you will find that teaching will occupy a significant percentage of your time, despite the fact that you may never get any formal training in pedagogy. Today, with increasing numbers of universities offering training in teaching to graduate students, more people are starting their professional careers prepared to teach. Some psychology graduate students receive teaching preparation directly from their departmental mentors and take part in training organized by a campus center for teaching and learning. In either case, the process of becoming a teacher – of learning how to reach students in ways that allow them to grow and flourish – begins and ends with your commitment to develop the skills and habits of mind of an expert teacher.

Graduate students who attend rigorously to this kind of training and mentoring are fortunate; regardless of their innate success with students, they are better able to articulate the elements of their craft, they enter the job market ready to teach well, and they have a much easier time making the transition from student to academic professional. They are also more likely to be in control of the teaching process in a way that allows them to vary the style they use and the amount of time they spend on teaching, while maintaining a very high standard for themselves and their students.

Due to the vagaries of the job market, new assistant professors may find themselves at institutions with vastly different teaching cultures and expectations from where they were trained. Faculty members who never mastered the art of their own teaching are more likely to struggle with the adaptation. What is worse is that this burden can last a long time, creating a career hampered by a hostile relationship with "teaching load" – never giving their full potential to students, and never achieving the rewards of great teaching that so many senior faculty experience (McKeatchie, 1999).

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Teaching well is important throughout your career, but it is particularly important in the early years. The "publish or perish" scenario that once applied only to highly competitive research universities now applies to almost all academics, even those who chose careers in teaching-oriented, liberal arts colleges. Increasingly, new psychology PhDs are seeking short-term, adjunct faculty positions for reasons of preference or necessity. These per/course positions are typically free of pressure to publish. However, in certain markets, good adjunct faculty positions are competitive and the standards for hiring are quite high. Some schools can use active publication as a standard for hiring adjuncts, while others are not simply looking for credentialed scholars – they are looking for scholars with proof of excellent teaching. In either case, the more desirable full-time and part-time teaching opportunities are going to people who have proof of success in the classroom and in the lab. In today's market, schools can overlook the scholar who neglects teaching or who hasn't had time to publish because they are still trying to figure out how to teach.

For starters, you have to choose what kind of teacher you will be. As you take classes and serve as a TA in others, begin to develop your own teaching values and priorities. Look at what students are doing during class, how they approach the subject, and what they are learning. Ask yourself what you want for your students when you are a teacher. To be consistently effective in the classroom, it is helpful to know who you are as a teacher and understand the assumptions and core values you bring to the process of teaching (Brookfield, 1995). This reflective process may seem esoteric, but be assured, it is not. One can easily design a class based on the activities of teaching and learning without giving a lot of thought to the "why." But when unusual things start to happen in your classroom, and they always do, having a deep understanding of your basic assumptions about students, learning, authority, fairness, and purpose, etc. will give a solid foundation for action. As a graduate student, it is a good idea to reflect on the following:

- Why do I teach psychology? What is the essential value to my students of studying psychology with me?
- What is my role as a teacher, and what does that mean for the relationship I will have with my students?
- What sort of behaviors do I expect of students? How do I expect to be treated? How do I expect students to treat each other?
- What is the nature of my authority in the classroom?

The fact remains that the time you devote to teaching will have to come from some other important endeavor, like research. If the price for that trade-off seems terribly high, consider the following:

- Evolving methods of teaching assessment are allowing schools to give greater weight to quality teaching at hiring, promotion, and tenure time.
- Teaching, like any skill, becomes easier as you get better. Skilled teachers can achieve great results with less time and effort than unskilled teachers.

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- As a new professor, a reputation for good teaching allows you to attract graduate students and talented undergraduates to you and your work. This can create enormous professional benefits at a time when you really need them.
- Teaching well is a joy. Teaching poorly is a burden, or worse, a drain on your time and energy.
- The time you devote to teaching this year will pay off in time you can devote to other things next year and in the years to come.

Many of the resources on teaching, including this chapter, are sufficiently general to apply across a variety of subject areas. Nevertheless, as you explore each resource, you may wish to keep in mind some ways in which teaching psychology poses special challenges and opportunities.

- Psychology may attract students who are unusually introspective and seek to use introspection as a source of evidence.
- Psychology students will have strong intuitions or preconceptions about human psychology, and some of those preconceptions may be strongly held and resistant to change. A similar consideration is relevant across most social sciences, and some humanities (where, e.g., students may have strong convictions about historical narratives), but is probably of lesser importance in the natural sciences. (It would be an unusual student that had strong personal commitments to particular concepts in organic chemistry, and it's been centuries since we've seen committed Aristotelians put up a fuss over the laws of motions in classical mechanics.)
- Issues of inference from evidence (statistical and otherwise) are especially challenging because the data in much of psychology are so noisy.

The three special challenges combine to bring epistemology closer to the surface in the study of psychology than in many other disciplines. This presents tremendous opportunities to teachers to address fundamental questions about the nature of knowledge, but also imposes a burden of addressing epistemological issues in introductory courses where many students are not prepared to deal with them.

At some point in your career, you will be faced with the tasks of designing and teaching your own class. In our experience, this is a key moment in the development of a teacher. The remainder of this chapter contains tips and strategies for success in this critical moment. These suggestions point to many different styles of teaching, all of which have proven effective in their own way.

One concept unifies every idea herein, and that is this: That the goal of a great class is not to cover material or get through the book. It is to reach students in ways that will help them learn (Bain, 2004). Your goal, as you gain more teaching experience, is to figure out what learning psychology means for you and how you want your students to be different – smarter, wiser, more reflective, more skilled, more appreciative, more critical – as a result of being in class. Then, you must learn ways to help students achieve those goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

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2. Five Steps to Designing a College Course in Psychology

2.1 Step One: Consider the Institution, the Curriculum, and the Students

It is helpful to take a realistic look at the academic culture of the place where you are teaching. You can build on your own observations by consulting with colleagues, and from students themselves, about habits, practices, and expectations that are most common (Nilson, 2010). If you are new to an institution, you may be surprised at the norms for teaching and even more surprised at how students typically approach their learning. Some norms are part of the formal institutional structure, such as the lecture/section method used at many research institutions, or the types of assignments given within a certain curriculum. Other norms arise informally, and are passed down from student to student, and from teacher to teacher.

The purpose of understanding teaching and learning norms is not to copy what has been done before, but to anticipate how your pedagogical choices will be received. If you are new to a campus, AND you are asking students to learn in a whole new way, you may want to ease them into the change and be prepared for a little resistance. It is not always easy to discern the norms and culture of an institution, and you may want to take some assertive steps to get the information you need. We suggest talking to as many colleagues and students as you can. Here are some questions you might ask:

- How much of the reading will students do?
- What kinds of lectures are students used to? PowerPoint? Stand-up comedy?
- Is there precedent for students working together in groups? Do they do group projects?
- What kinds of assignments are typical? Long, formal, end-of-term papers or shorter, more targeted essays and exercises?
- How much of the teaching is experiential? Formal? Innovative?

Once you have a better sense of the context in which you are teaching, you can consider your goals and determine ways to achieve them.

2.2 Step Two: Think about Who Your Students Are and How You Will Include All of Them

In the previous section, we discussed the importance of designing the course around student learning, focusing on cognitive elements that allow students to understand course goals and engage in activities that facilitate learning. But there is more to learning than cognition, because (a) students are more than mere thinkers – they are individuals with their own feelings and sense of themselves, (b) instructors are more than mere providers of knowledge – we bring our own identities, biases, and practices to the process of teaching, and (c) science is more than facts and theories – the psychological literature reflects the identities, biases and limitations of the scientists and the systems that created it. Unfortunately, teaching is an opportunity

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to recreate and promulgate ideas and practices that, even in their desire to illuminate and explain, allow some students to experience affirmation and growth while others experience disenfranchisement and isolation.

There is a robust literature that explains the process by which schooling includes some students and excludes others, and provides guidance to instructors for making their teaching more inclusive. For example, the literature on Stereotype Threat (Steele, 2011) suggests the process by which the perception of cultural stereotypes results in different levels of performance among students. Building on the work of Maslow (1962), researchers in recent decades have been exploring the concept of students' sense of belonging as a variable that might determine motivation and engagement. This research suggests strategies of creating a more inclusive classroom (Strayhorn, 2012).

This research is ongoing and expanding. Consider becoming more familiar with the literature by reading one of the articles listed below. In the meantime, the following strategies will begin to help you address your students' sense of belonging:

- Get to know your students and give them a chance to be known in class using ice breakers and other activities that allow students to reveal themselves.
- Build one-on-one or small group office hours into your class early in the term.
- Articulate clearly and regularly your desire for everyone to learn. Focus especially on classroom discussions as places of learning and respect. Set standards of respect and fairness for all discourse that takes place in your classroom.

2.3 Step Three: Focus on Student Learning to Define the Overall Purpose of the Course

As implied above, there is enormous benefit in framing or defining your class around core learning goals (Diamond, 2008). Teachers experience renewed motivation in teaching when they move from a content-centered approach (i.e., getting through the material) to a learning-centered approach (i.e., helping students achieve). This renewed sense of purpose typically generates more creative and innovative approaches to classroom teaching, which, if nothing else, makes the process more interesting. In addition, teachers who successfully communicate their purpose to students may find their students have increased motivation and willingness to work and learn. In classes where the purpose seems to be defined around teacher's lectures and interests, students are more likely to feel like and act like spectators. However, when a class and all its activities are defined around student learning, students are more likely to feel engaged and act like interested participants (Nilson, p. 18, 2010).

The process of defining your goals and objectives begins by asking yourself *how you want your students to be different by the end of the course.* This holistic approach to thinking about change in students is the first step in Backward Design of your course, a design strategy that begins with the most important aspect of your course, your goals for your students (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). The difficulty in accomplishing this stems from the challenge of figuring out which goals are most important,

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and how some goals are prerequisite to other goals. In addition, teachers typically have objectives of different types. For example, there may be facts we want students to know, or skills we want them to acquire or feelings and appreciations we hope they develop. We may also have goals around how students experience us, our course, and our field, and all of these might reflect our own values and beliefs about undergraduate education. All of these goals should be part of your inventory, but then, as mentioned above, the challenge is making sense of them, giving certain goals priority, and turning them into a plan of action. One way to do this is to define a large, terminal goal – the main objective you want your students to be able to achieve by the end of the course – and then work backward, identifying as many of the subordinate skills students will need as you can. Here is an example:

Terminal Goal or Objective: I want my students to demonstrate the ability to use data and reasoning to address a major issue in public health, education or social policy.

Subordinate Goals or Abilities: In order to complete the Terminal Objective, my students will need to demonstrate the following:

- The ability to distinguish among different sub-areas of psychology.
- The ability to critically evaluate social science findings reported in journals or the popular press.
- The ability to write at least three paragraphs that demonstrate the distinction between observation and inference.
- The ability to articulate the power and complexity of experimental design.
- The ability to identify 10 threats to validity in a well-respected journal article.
- The ability to apply the scientific method to questions about human behavior, and be able to identify misapplications of the method.

Notice that in the example above, the emphasis in on the demonstration of well-defined abilities. The common trap of many teachers is their tendency to define their goals in terms of what students will "understand" without defining the depth and breadth of the understanding, nor the way that the understanding will be demonstrated. The complexity of the learning process, and the fact that all of our students start out with different skills, prior knowledge, and approaches to learning, make teaching difficult to begin with. However, the more clearly you can define the skills and abilities that students should acquire during a semester, as well as how each and every activity and assignment furthers those goals, the more likely your students are to actually learn something (Mayer et al., 2001). Notice also that, in the example, the Terminal Goal has a real-world application. It is the kind of task that might motivate students because it addresses a practice with which they are familiar. The Subordinate Goals are less real-world, more academic, but if you organize the course around the more engaging applications of the Terminal Goal, students will be more motivated to develop subordinate stills.

To highlight the process of thinking about institutions, curriculum, and students, it is helpful to contrast the differences between introductory and advanced courses and to illustrate how one might design an engaging and successful class for each.

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In psychology, as in other disciplines, there are predictable differences between the approach to introductory and advanced courses in the field. Introductory course enrollments are typically large and therefore courses are taught in a lecture format. The aim of many introductory courses is to expose students to a breadth of content and to introduce students to a large set of basic concepts and foundational facts, and to test their abilities to comprehend them. Assessment often involves some kind of objective tests with a combination of multiple choice and short answer items. This may not be the best way to introduce students to the field of psychology, but as it is a common practice, it is a good place to start.

Recently, instructors and scholars have noticed some failings in this mode of introductory psychology course. First, the pedagogical process is not very interesting or engaging, making it a poor way to attract students to the field, which is an important yet often unrecognized departmental goal for any introductory course. Second, this mode of pedagogy gives students little introduction to the work that psychologists actually do. A student who is wondering what it's like to be a researcher or a psychological practitioner will get no feel for what that work is actually like. Finally, the process of listening to lectures and taking tests is not very engaging for students. Many students in an introductory class will be freshmen who are new to college. These students would benefit from learning to apply theories and critique ideas. They would also benefit from practicing these skills with other students with whom they could make connections. It's true that a fiery, dynamic lecturer can generate interest by sheer force of personality and entertainment value, but a conscientious designer of introductory courses would want to build a course that benefits the institution, the department, and the students. Consider the following approaches:

- Build the course around some big questions or themes that have relevance for students.
- Learn to use small-group or paired-work exercises in your large lecture course. Break up the lecture and get students working on interesting questions together. This is especially crucial if your class meets for more than 50 minutes at a shot.
- If you have to use objective tests as your primary mode of assessment, try to create on assignment during the semester that allows students to explore their own interests. Even in the big class, find a way to see or acknowledge every student.
- If you are going to lecture, lecture really well. If you don't know how well you lecture, have a colleague or consultant observe you. Once you've mastered the art of delivery, design lectures around the most interesting feature of any chapter. Tell stories. Find a way to demonstrate a concept or give students a chance to experience it.
- Use end-of-class assessment activities and ungraded writing, e.g., one-minute paper assignments, to help students realize what they have learned in every class.

Advanced courses, in contrast, are more likely to be well designed for the interests of students and the institution. They are typically small, sometimes very

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small. The aim is to explore one area of psychology in detail through reading, lecture, discussion, and sometimes active experimentation. Students are often asked to design experiments or engage in psychological practices, and write longer, journal-length papers – in other words, to start doing some of the real activities that psychologists do. Another goal may be to test for advanced analytical abilities and to assess students' capacity to integrate and synthesize theories and methodological approaches. Many advanced or capstone courses may also be designed to socialize students into the values and norms of the field.

2.4 Step Four: Develop a Course Plan that Pulls Everything Together

Every course has multiple elements: purposes and goals, motivation and incentives, content, activities, and assessments and grading are just a sampling. The end product of a course plan is a course syllabus in which you and your students should be able to identify all of these elements. As a course designer, you should consider how each element of the course fits together or aligns, and how subsequent elements of the course build on previous elements (Wulff, 2005). The degree to which your pedagogical plan is transparent to students is an issue we will discuss in a later section. For now, consider using the questions below to develop your plan for how you will teach each aspect of the course.

- What is the purpose of this section or chapter (develop a skill, practice a technique, master an area of knowledge)?
- How will I motivate students to learn this? Is the material or skill innately interesting or valuable? What does it teach students to do? Will students benefit from a demonstration or model? Will I use a graded test or assignment to increase motivation?
- What new information will students need (theories, studies, examples, etc.) and how will they get it (lecture, reading, video, observation, etc.)?
- What action will students perform on that new information (write about it, discuss it with peers, experiment on it, reflect on it, etc.)?
- How will I assess what students are learning (graded paper, ungraded written assignment, observation)?

2.5 Step Five: Write a Course Syllabus that Establishes a Contract between You and Your Students

The final step in designing a course is the presentation of the syllabus. The syllabus accomplishes one essential goal: it supplies students with all the information they need in order to understand and complete the course in a way that helps them set their expectations and guide their behavior. It can be useful to think of the syllabus as an informal contract between you and your students.

There are many styles of syllabi. Some faculty members choose to put everything in writing, including the purpose of the course and the rationale for its design, while

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others include just bare-bones logistical information about due dates, grade requirements, and texts. To help you decide how much detail to include, think about what is important to you and to your students. Also, use the syllabus as a reference or teaching tool throughout the semester. Tone and style are both personal choices; however, be aware that the tone of the syllabus does communicate something to your students. You've seen hundreds of syllabi in your lifetime, so we don't have to describe one. Still, you might want to consider these suggestions for writing a good one.

- Do not take for granted that your students know more about your institution than you do. Remember, many students in any classroom are just as new as you are. Avoid abbreviations and lingo. Remember, first-year students and part-time students may not be familiar with nicknames and other local jargon. Stick to the facts and include as many as you can.
- Highlight the most important ideas or processes of the course. Don't be afraid to include some big ideas in the syllabus, especially if they provide a context or purpose for the course.
- Build your weekly calendar around questions rather than topics.
- Edit carefully the calendar information you include. Be aware of holidays and other campus activities. Remember, students will use this syllabus to plan their semester.
- Make the document as useful as possible, so that students will keep it and look to it often. Whether on paper or on the web, the syllabus should be a useful document that you and your students refer to because it has good, reliable information.
- Build the weekly items in your syllabus around questions to be answered rather than topics to be covered.

3. Some Practical Considerations in Creating a Course

Once a faculty member establishes goals and rationales for a course, the pragmatic steps and choices become much easier. In the alternative, the structure of the text or the vagaries of semester calendar end up driving the purpose of the class, which is not ideal. In this section, we discuss four choices that every faculty member has to make: textbooks and readings; use of class time; assignments and other out-of-class work; and grading.

3.1 Choose a Textbook, Readings, and Resources that Help You Teach

The trick here is to resist the temptation to let the tail wag the dog by allowing the content and structure of the text to structure the goals of your course. Few faculty members ever find the perfect textbook until they break down and author their own, and even then, there always seems to be something out of place, missing, or

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overemphasized. Most instructors use supplemental readings and digital resources to add emphasis and to provide students with more varied ways of learning material.

Some easy ways to find a respectable pool of good textbooks to consider are: ask your colleagues to make recommendations (they will know the level and type of textbook students at your institution are used to, and they may even have direct experience teaching with that book); the core collection or reserve room of the library will have copies of all the textbooks currently in use; write to publishers for review copies of books you have heard of or seen advertised; consult an online resource, e.g., A Compendium of Introductory Psychology Texts at http://teachpsych.org/otrp/resources.

Your first consideration is the content. You cannot teach effectively from a book that you neither respect nor agree with, unless you design the entire course around debunking the text, which many students find confusing. This does not mean that you have to agree with everything the authors present. Allowing students to see you display a little healthy disagreement with authority of the text is probably good for most students, but it should not be a daily ritual. Find a book that provides intelligent and scholarly treatment of most topics, and that does so in language that you and your students can understand and appreciate. If the book organizes material in a way that advances your understanding of things, then you have an additional advantage. Quality of content is the most important consideration, but textbooks contain many other qualities that can help you teach more effectively. Some of these include: illustrative examples that explain concepts in various ways; exercises and activities that you can use during class or as out-of-class assignments; side bars and special inserts that discuss related topics like teaching students about the field, real-life or policy applications, personal biographies of researchers or historically important research. Most books these days also include student study aids, such as review questions or self-test. A textbook today may include an online supplement that can help you develop lectures or add vibrant visual material to the class. Where cost is an important consideration, consider using one of the increasing number of "open-source" or royalty-free textbooks available in electronic form. Textbooks come with myriad bells and whistles, not all of which will be helpful. Remember, the book is just a tool to help you teach better. It is not the entire class, nor is it a script that you have to follow. On the other hand, students are used to focusing on "the book" and looking to it for answers and guidance, so you are smart to get one that really complements your approach.

3.2 Be Smart and Creative in Your Use of Class Time

There are many things you can do with class time other than lecture. Class time is your most valuable teaching commodity, but to make the most of it, we need to design it in the context of what students will do in other settings such as read, do homework, or work with other students. With this in mind, class time is probably not the best time for students to encounter new material for the first time. Research in science education, for example, suggests that class time is a good opportunity to let

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students work together, and for you to observe students at work and give them timely appropriate feedback (Deslauriers et al., 2011). If you are a stimulating lecturer who can motivate, stimulate, and inspire students to greater heights of academic achievement, then some amount of lecture will likely serve you and your students well. But uninspired lectures that simply cover material, particularly material that can be learned by reading or watching a video, are a poor use of valuable time with students. If you need to introduce or review material, do it quickly – within 15 or 20 minutes. Use the remainder of the time to:

- organize small-group tasks that allow students to engage or question material; or
- all-class discussions about interesting controversial topics. These can be organized as debates, or extended role-play exercises that ask students to take the perspective of a point of view or theoretical orientation; or
- demonstrations with discussion and analysis.

The design of class time is even more important if your class is longer than 50 minutes or only meets once a week. In these cases, it is important to break the class into clear segments with clear goals.

Class time with students is a valuable resource that you must steward with advanced planning. Design your class so that students arrive with questions or insights they have gleaned on their own. Use class time to give students a chance to practice analyzing theories, applying concepts, building models, or simply answering questions. Some good examples appear below.

3.3 Design Assignments that Allow Students to Make Better Use of Class Time

Students spend more time completing assignments than any other aspect of school, so it is vital that assignments require students to do significant, targeted, academic work. Students' performance on assignments can be improved by connecting some aspect of the assignment to the work students will do in class the next day. For example, if students are writing reports on research articles, have them use some aspect of those reports to do an in-class analysis. Motivation can be further increased by setting up in-class peer groups that require individuals to come to class prepared. As you begin to develop your first assignments, look back on some of the assignments you were given, and ask colleagues for their ideas. Consider the assignments that are typically used in psychology classes – the research report, the case analysis, compare and contrast, journal article review, lab report – because these are forms that may be familiar to students. Then focus on the specific goals and objectives you have created for that section of that course, and modify the assignment in the following ways.

- Consider designing a series of assignments that build students' skills over the course of term.
- Align what students are doing in their assignments with what they are doing in class. Students can practice modes of analysis in class that they can apply to

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assignments. Conversely, students build expertise in assignments that they use to participate in class. Make these connections clear to students.

- Match the length, difficulty, and scope of the task to the skills you want students to demonstrate. Shorter, focused assignments typically offer more stimulating educational experiences than longer, more complex works. At some point, it may become necessary for undergraduates to demonstrate their ability to sustain an analysis or project for over 40 pages, but such work is often done as an undergraduate thesis or capstone project.
- Communicate the purpose of the assignment in clear terms of high academic standards. Focus on what students are accomplishing for themselves.
- Effective assignments are clearly defined and have well-established standards. It does no good to wait until you grade a paper to tell students what you were looking for.
- Effective assignments are no larger than the skills they are designed to teach. Don't ask students to produce huge products and long papers to demonstrate small skills over and over again.
- Effective assignments produce real products, with form and structure. Rather than asking students to write a 5-page paper on X, ask them to write up a case analysis or grant proposal, mock legal brief, committee report, letter to the editor, or a publishable book review.
- Effective assignments may make use of imagination and perspective, ask students to take on a role and write from that perspective, e.g., take the role of a patient, or speculate on a hypothetical situation.
- Effective assignments combine the demonstration of well-defined skills and abilities with opportunities for creativity, uniqueness and personal expression.
- Effective assignments ask students to demonstrate skills that are directly related to the core goals of the course. That is, students should have to rely on what they learned in class to successfully complete an assignment.
- Effective assignments often include students working in pairs or teams, although students should be individually accountable for their own work and their own grades.

3.4 Use Assessment and Grading to Review Students' Work and Give them Necessary Feedback

Grading students' work effectively is a critically important part of teaching, and not easily done. First of all, let's define our practice. Assessment is the practice of critically reviewing students' performance. It can be formal or informal. It can result in constructive feedback, or simply a shift in our perception. Assessments, such as ungraded quizzes or "clicker" questions, can also be used to help students assess their own understanding. Assessments are powerful teaching tools. They keep teachers and students connected to learning and they provide both with valuable guidelines for how to succeed.

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Sometimes, as with formal tests, quizzes, and papers, our assessments result in grades. Grades are fraught because they are typically associated with formal, institutional records. In other words, they have lasting consequences. All assessments should be accurate, fair, constructive, and timely, but grades need to be especially so. Like it not, they are a big part of what motivates students to work. Because of that, the achievement of grades should be based on your central values and objectives for whatever course you teach. Here are some suggestions.

- Grading begins with your very first thoughts about the course. Once you identify the skills and abilities you want students to demonstrate, you must assign value to the achievement of those skills and to the partial achievement of those skills, and then translate that value into what every grading scheme your institution requires. Listed below are a set of considerations that you can apply to every assignment or test you grade, as well as to the overall grade.
- Establish and communicate specific standards for everything you grade. Inform students upfront what will be graded and how. Reaffirm those standards in the comments that accompany your grades. Remember, the primary purpose of grades is to give students useful feedback about their progress.
- Begin grading short assignments and in-class work early in the term. This will help students become familiar with your standards and their level of preparation.
- Establish ground rules to achieve fairness in grading. Inconsistency in rules and procedures will communicate favoritism and capriciousness. It is not necessary to establish rigid practices to achieve a sense of fairness; however, your rules must apply to all your students and in the same way.
- Grade a variety of student work. Make sure your grading structure reflects all of the objectives you have identified for the course. Naturally, you will want to give greater weight to the core objectives. However, you can keep students working and learning at a steady pace throughout the term if your grading scheme gives them continuous feedback about how well they are doing along the way.
- The grading of participation in class should, like all other grades, include clearly defined standards.

Remember that, under the best of circumstances, grading is difficult. Grading brings to the forefront a fundamental conflict inherent in our work as teachers. We are helpful guides, mentors, and coaches who work compassionately and tirelessly to help students master a new terrain; but we are also gatekeepers, charged with setting and enforcing standards for participating in a profession (Elbow, 1986). The tension between those two roles is enough to give all of us a knot in our gut when faced with a difficult grading task. The best way to mediate this conflict, fortunately, is relatively straightforward: set out clear standards that students must meet at the outset; then enjoy your role as helpful guide.

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4. Teaching Psychology in an Age of Remote Instruction

The recent COVID epidemic has changed the landscape of teaching and learning. At the time of this writing, we are still in the midst of the pandemic, and remote teaching and learning are the norm. Once considered an option, technological teaching tools like Learning Management Systems, Zoom, Panopto, asynchronous learning, break-out rooms, and testing software, etc. are currently essential. In all likelihood, the technological tools of remote instruction will continue to be widely used post COVID. Some schools will increase their remote learning options and instructors who are once again in the classroom will enhance aspects of their teaching using the tools they learned out of necessity.

In this section, we provide some observations about our new, technology-enhanced learning environment and suggest some steps for successful teaching in the years ahead.

- Just as instructors used to articulate their facility with teaching large lecture courses or small seminars, instructors in the days ahead will, at the very least, discuss teaching with Zoom (or some similar platform), and using a Learning Management System such as Canvas. This is the new minimum.
- The pedagogical conversation among instructors has shifted dramatically toward what experts would call, "student-centered learning." The move to remote learning has focused attention and conversation to key issues in learning, including: engaging students, sustaining motivation, building community, inclusivity and equity, and thinking about students' learning environments.
- Attention to students' access is higher, and instructors are thinking carefully about synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning.

The shift to remote teaching and learning has made online instruction ubiquitous. However, not all instructors were successful in their remote teaching efforts, which is fully understandable. Technology, online or otherwise, is like any other tool for enhancing student achievement (Manning & Johnson, 2011) – it is only as powerful as the thoughtfulness of the person using it. Consider the following as you engage in remote teaching or any other technology enhanced pedagogy.

1. Define your goals. In student-centered terms: what changes (learning or abilities) do I want to see in my students? What teaching/learning problem am I trying to solve with application of a technology?
2. Consider what tools are easily available (e.g., Zoom, and LMS, email, web, newsgroups, chat, multimedia software, discussion boards, etc.). What are the institutional resources you can draw upon? What tools are other psychology instructors using?
3. Define a strategy for integrating technology into the core learning of the class. Think about incentive structures to motivate student engagement within and across platforms and assignments.
4. Have a back-up plan. Issues of access and functionality can quickly undermine instructional plans that rely on technology. A great example is the use of

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classroom discussions on Zoom. What if time zones or bandwidth limit student access? What are the asynchronous, limited-technology options for learning and completing assignments?

5. Assess how well your strategy has met your goals. Was the effort worth it? Did using this technology increase student learning or motivation?

When you consider the framework above, the answer to the question "When should I use technology in my teaching?" becomes straightforward: whenever it helps you achieve a clear pedagogical goal in a cost-effective way.

4.1 How Do I Get Started Using Instructional Technology in my Teaching?

Psychology researchers are often proud of being Jills-of-all trades. Many of our research projects call on a broad spectrum of skills, and we may often have to switch hats from manager, to programmer, to carpenter in a space of an afternoon. It's tempting to bring some of those skills to bear on developing technological solutions to teaching problems. However, the costs of developing teaching technologies from scratch are often prohibitive (in terms of your time). Activities like website design may be fun for some of us, but they compete for scarce time with syllabus design, lesson planning, and student contact. Keeping it simple should be a paramount consideration for implementing any technological innovation.

At most universities, the shift to remote teaching has necessitated a vast expansion of technology services to instructors. It is likely that your psychology department will have its own staff of technologists and instructional designers who can assist you as needed. Get to know these people. In the meantime, consider that modern information technology has enabled some discipline-agnostic approaches for engaging students and facilitating reaching learning goals. For example:

- Novel approaches and tools for collaborative knowledge construction, like shared virtual whiteboards, allow small groups to engage in real-time interactions around a shared artifact to create collaborative mind-maps and other diagrammatic or narrative representations. Two widely available examples of such tools are gSlides and LucidChart.
- The availability of volunteer-driven knowledge creation and curation communities provides students an unprecedented chance to engage with the content as contributors. Consider, for example, class assignments that ask student teams to create or improve Wikipedia articles, create and manage new Reddit threads, or ask and answer Quora questions.

Both the discipline-specific and the discipline-agnostic tools have evolved at a phenomenal rate in the last decade, and make today an especially exciting time to use technology to accelerate the teaching of psychology.

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5. Managing and Mentoring Teaching Assistants

In many ways, the Teaching Assistant (or Teaching Fellow or Graduate Student Instructor) is a strange creature whose role is rarely well defined. The TA walks the shadow world between colleague, student, and servant, as all apprentices must. It's the supervising professor who determines, often implicitly, which role a TA will play. The TA experience is likely to feel servile when their roles are unclear, their tasks menial, or when the TAs do not participate in setting goals of courses and sections they help teach. For example, TAs commonly feel least satisfied when they grade exams they've had no part in creating and papers they've had no part in assigning. On the other hand, a great relationship between faculty member and TA can be a graduate student's most rewarding experience. Supervising faculty can, and often do, have a profound impact on the lives and careers of their students by introducing them to teaching and the life of an academic.

Just as you may not have received training in undergraduate teaching, you almost certainly had no training in management or mentorship. Here are some strategies to help you become a better manager and mentor for your TAs.

- Meet with the TAs prior to the beginning of class. Explain your pedagogical goals and ask for their input. If the TAs will teach sections, ask them to articulate, preferably in writing, what their section will do for the students. Engage them in a conversation about their overall goals, as well as their emerging understandings about teaching and learning.
- If possible, involve your TAs in planning the course, the lessons, and the assignments. This will not only help you come up with better material, but will also be an invaluable learning experience for the future faculty members under your wing. The more invested each TA feels in the course the more rewarding the work will be. For example, you can have each TA give a guest lecture, then generate exam questions about the guest lecture, and grade the specific questions they've generated.
- Give your TAs more autonomy to run their section as they see fit. Once you have agreed on what the goals of the section are, let the TA experiment with means.
- Clarify expectations at the outset. What will the TAs do? What will they be trying to accomplish? How will they be evaluated?
- Give your TAs the support they need to function effectively. Usually this means meeting early and often, especially in the very beginning of the course. It also means keeping track of your end of the course paperwork, and clearly delegating various assignments to different TAs. For example, who will be responsible for compiling all the section grades at the end of the course?
- Offer to observe your TA's section to help them become better teachers.
- If your institution offers TA training and development, require your TAs to avail themselves of the training before teaching your course. Make it your business to let your TAs know about the resources available to them.
- If your TAs are responsible for grading, effectively delegate to them that authority. One of the most frequent and bitter complaints heard from TAs is

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that course instructors summarily overrule their grading decisions without consultation. If you feel you have a question about a grading decision, meet with the TA about it. The TA will often have directly relevant information about the grade and the student in question. Remember, TAs probably know more about the students in their sections than you do.

- Once you have effectively delegated authority to your TAs, you must also hold them accountable for whatever tasks you have assigned. Lack of accountability leads to complaints from students. Some of those complaints will come to you, but others will go straight to your chair or dean. Rest assured, if these complaints become vociferous or numerous, you will be hear about it. Save yourself the headaches; have clear, fair standards and stick to them. Consider that effective delegation implies you have given the members of your team the freedom to fail, as well as to succeed.

Although successful delegation is difficult, the rewards are large. By investing energy in effective delegation, you will save time in the long run, develop better mentoring relationships with your TAs, and have a better class.

6. Conclusion

We hope this short introduction to teaching will help you navigate the uncertain waterways towards the land of confident and competent teaching. The first years are important, but don't be discouraged if they don't go well. Keep trying new things and asking for help. We've seen great teachers emerge after years of average performance. As a faculty member, teaching will be a big part of your life, so it's important to figure out how to do it well and also how to enjoy it. We've only scratched the surface in this chapter. Here are some additional resources:

- Your Campus Teaching Center. Chances are your campus has a teaching center with consultants who can help you define goals, think of strategies for meeting those goals, and observe your teaching. There, you are also likely to find a library of books on teaching, and access to a network of people on campus who can give you advice.
- The American Psychological Association, www.apa.org/. Type "teaching" into the search box for the latest articles on teaching in psychology.
- APS Resources for Teachers of Psychology, www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/members/teaching
- The Society for the Teaching of Psychology, http://teachpsych.org/

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