Cleveland State University
Teaching Assistant Handbook

On behalf of the Graduate Faculty of Cleveland State University, I extend a warm welcome to you. The opportunity you have been given as a Teaching Assistant is a vital one to your graduate program, college, and the university. Therefore, I know that you will take it seriously. It is an apprenticeship not only in teaching, but is also an opportunity to be a role model for younger students in your field and to display your leadership abilities.

If you are not familiar with Policies and Procedures for Teaching Assistants, then I encourage you to read through the first section of the Handbook. The other three sections of the Handbook provide advice, ideas, and models for teaching and learning. If you wish to incorporate online technology, put course materials on Electronic Course Reserve, or require tutoring assistance for your students, all the information you need is just a click away.

Please remember that as a Teaching Assistant at CSU, you have a rich array of resources to help you become a better teacher and for your students to achieve their course goals.

Good luck with your teaching assignment and with your own graduate studies.

Donna Schultheiss, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of Graduate Studies

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Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) are a valued resource at CSU. TAs may be involved in course instruction, small group discussions, tutoring, assisting in laboratories or other tasks. This handbook provides you with valuable information to assist you with all aspects of your assistantship. You will find this information especially useful as you begin your teaching assistantship. Review your TA roles and responsibilities carefully with your supervisor(s). Ask questions to clarify your roles and responsibilities at the beginning of your assistantship and throughout the semester.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR SUPERVISOR

It is important to carefully review the content of the TA handbook and ask questions about your role throughout the year. Consider asking the following questions for clarification of your responsibilities before your assistantship begins:

1. What are my specific responsibilities as a TA?

2. Will I be responsible for planning and implementing instruction for entire classes?

3. Will I be using Blackboard for this class?

4. Should I establish the attendance policy for the class or follow an instructor's or department policy?

5. Will I lead discussions? Will I be lecturing? How often?

6. Am I responsible for tutoring and/or giving individual assistance? Should I organize group review sessions throughout the semester?

7. Will I be conducting/supervising laboratories? What are my responsibilities for equipment and supplies in the laboratory?

8. What are the emergency procedures in the laboratories and throughout the university?

9. What are the procedures for getting and returning AV material? What are the procedures for reserving equipment?

10. How much responsibility do I have for assessments of the course? Will I be responsible for creating assessments for the class? Will I evaluate and grade papers, projects, reports, quizzes, examinations or student participation on my own or with the assistance of the instructor?

11. Should I review my lesson plans and strategies with the instructor? How much autonomy will I have to plan and implement new learning activities? Should I share perspectives different from the instructor's?

12. How many office hours are required per week? Should I coordinate my office hours with the instructor's hours?

13. Who will supervise me in my classes and in my assistantship? What procedures are used to supervise and

assess my performance?

14. What procedures should I follow and whom should I contact if I will be absent from a lab, discussion section, or class?

15. What other responsibilities will I have?

TEACHING ASSISTANTS WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS OTHER THAN ENGLISH

An Ohio law mandates that all state-supported colleges and universities shall establish a program to assess the oral English language proficiency of all Teaching Assistants providing classroom instruction to students and shall ensure that Teaching Assistants who are not orally proficient in the English language attain such proficiency prior to providing classroom instruction to students. In order to meet this mandate, CSU has developed the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, under the direction of Continuing Education, is designed for nonnative speakers of English who are enrolled at or plan to attend Cleveland State University at the graduate or undergraduate level. The goal of the ESL Program is to provide language instruction that enables these students to succeed in their academic studies. Both international and resident students are served.

International Graduate Teaching Assistants who will be providing instructional activities must be certified as possessing sufficient oral proficiency. Assessment for certification is done through an oral test called Test of Spoken English (TSE). The TSE can be taken in a student's country by computer. Information can be found at www.ets.org. Students can also take the SPEAK test once they have arrived at Cleveland State University. Students not passing these tests must complete a program of study and then pass a retest in order to be certified.

The ESL program consists of two courses at different proficiency levels. They provide integrated language skills, cross-cultural communication and teaching strategies instruction. While the courses are designed for International Teaching Assistants, all graduate students are welcome to register. The ESL Office is located in Julka Hall, Room 314. The program administrator can be reached at (216) 687-5379. Additional resources for ESL students at CSU can be found at http://www.csuohio.edu/ce/esl.

ROLE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS WITH GRADING PROCEDURES

Check with your primary course instructor or your supervisor to determine any departmental policies used in determining final grades. Only the teacher or instructor of record may assign final grades. *Once those grades have been submitted to the registrar, only grades of "I" and "X" may be changed by the faculty member without obtaining the permission of the appropriate Dean.*

STUDENT RIGHTS TO PRIVACY

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the policies followed at Cleveland State University in order to comply with the requirements of the Act, are described in the current CSU BULLETIN: GRADUATE CATALOG ISSUE. As a part of the teaching staff of the University, you

are required to abide by the provisions of the law and by University policy. The main areas in which these rules and policies affect your actions are in the positing of grades and in the returning of graded materials. In essence, both of these functions must be carried out in such a fashion that the students' scores and grades are available only to the students who have earned them (in addition to the faculty and staff members who need to have access to these records as part of their University functions). The posting of grades and scores by student number, or the return of graded materials by simply leaving the materials in a public place, does not satisfy the confidentiality requirement of the Family Privacy Act. Various mechanisms have been developed to allow the posting of scores and the return of graded materials that satisfy the legal requirements, including the use of Blackboard. You should consult with the faculty member(s) in charge of the course(s) to determine the methods used.

Guidelines for maintaining student rights to privacy:

- A student's academic standing should not be discussed with anyone other than the faculty member in charge of the course and the student in question.
- Do not give students' grades to another TA or another student.
- Be sure that you do not discuss students' grades in public or online.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

All Teaching Assistants are expected to follow professional guidelines and a professional code of ethics. These are parameters for what is considered "professional practice" at CSU. Teaching assistants must be prepared to practice these guidelines upon first contact with students. Bring any questions that you have about the meaning or interpretation of these guidelines to your supervisor at appropriate times.

The professional guidelines include but are not limited to:

- Being professionally dressed.
- Using language and acting in ways that are appropriate to the context.
- Arriving and leaving at times that are expected of you.
- Notifying appropriate people of your inability to be where you are expected.
- Not being complacent about the learning of your students: accepting your teaching role as one that is important and necessary.
- Limiting your interactions and relations with students to a professional nature.

COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator:

- Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
- Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.
- Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
- Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.

- Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
- Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly-
  - Exclude any student from participation in any program.
  - Deny benefits to any student.
  - Grant any advantage to any student.
- Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
- Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

(Excerpt from the CSU Master of Urban Secondary Teaching Handbook, 2008-2009, adopted the National Education Association 1975 Representative Assembly.)

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

All Cleveland State University students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity in their academic work. In your role as a teacher you can help elicit honest behavior in three ways:

1. At the beginning of the course make sure that your students understand that cheating is unacceptable and that you will not tolerate it. In certain circumstances it may be important to specify what is, and what is not, considered honest behavior (for example, laboratory partners may share data, but they should individually prepare their own written reports).

2. You should try your best to arrange testing procedures and grading so that cheating is discouraged. Students taking examinations may be seated in alternate rows and different forms of quizzes should be used for sections meeting at different times.

3. When a dishonest act is discovered, the student and the appropriate faculty member should be informed and the appropriate penalty administered. The nature of the punishment and how the student is informed will vary with the seriousness of the act and the circumstances. Consult the faculty member in charge of the course in all cases and be sure to keep him or her apprised.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES IN THE CLASSROOM

On rare occasions, an emergency situation will occur in the classroom or laboratory. You should be prepared to handle these situations. Check with your supervisor or department chairperson for any specific emergency plans that are in effect.

In cases where students become injured or ill during your class, you should remain with the student and ask another student to call the University Police Department at **(216) 687-2020**. The Police Dispatcher will need to know the exact room location, type of problem, and the severity of the emergency. The Police Department will send an officer and will make additional arrangements, as needed (i.e., transportation to hospital).

You should be aware of the fire evacuation instructions for all buildings in which you work. Ask your supervisor for details. If an evacuation alarm does sound you should immediately leave the building. If you have a class, be sure that all of the students leave the building with you and stand completely clear of the building. Do not return to the building until instructed to do so by the police.

LABORATORY SAFETY

Your preparation for teaching in laboratories should include being acquainted with the materials and supplies as well as being familiar with the procedures for getting emergency assistance and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment. Check with the course instructor to learn the proper techniques and procedures for using materials and equipment and handling emergencies.

The following suggestions will help ensure laboratory safety:

- Identify the emergency exit and evacuation route(s).
- Know basic first aid procedures.
- Wear rubber gloves when assisting with flesh injuries.
- Know where the phone is located in the classroom. Call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency or call campus police at 216-687-2020.
- Report any equipment that is not functioning properly.
- Review laboratory safety rules and procedures with your students.
- Be sure students know the location of fire extinguishers, safety showers and eye wash stations and know how to use them.
- Be alert for unsafe practices and techniques used by students.

Additional information regarding specific procedures for safety in the laboratories and throughout the university is available from the CSU Department of Environmental Health & Safety at http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/ehs/programs.

HELPING YOURSELF BECOME A BETTER TEACHER

There are many materials and resources available to help you become a better teacher. Many resources and suggestions are listed in this handbook. Be sure to seek assistance from your supervisor and outstanding teachers in your department. You can ask other faculty members if you can visit and observe their classes. You can also invite another faculty member to observe you teach and provide feedback on your teaching. Share and discuss your teaching strategies and materials with other teaching assistants and seek their input. Also, be sure to seek feedback on your teaching regularly from your students.

DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TEACHING

Be aware of your initial observations and impressions of the students. Note any difficulties they may have understanding your verbal communication. On the first day of class, discuss any specific language challenges you have with your students.

The following strategies will be helpful:

- Write your name on the board and pronounce it for the students
- Speak at a moderate rate of speech
- Pronounce your words clearly
- Ask students if they need clarification of any words or terms you use
- Ask students if you are speaking too quickly
- Use the pitch and volume of your voice to emphasize specific words or concepts
- Invite students to ask you to repeat or use other words to clarify a topic or statement that may be confusing to them
- Be confident

PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST CLASS PRESENTATION

Prior to the first day of class, there are several tasks that should be accomplished. These include:

- Check the time of the class and visit the assigned classroom to determine the size, furniture arrangement, lighting, electrical outlets, etc.

- Check with the department secretary, or your supervisor, for the policies relating to obtaining needed audio-visual equipment, supplies, etc.

- Determine policies on taking attendance, constructing and administering tests, grading, and reporting of grades.

- Prepare and practice what you are planning to say to students, especially if you are nervous about beginning this class.

- Plan to arrive early on the first day of class and begin to get to know your students as they arrive.

How you spend the first day of class will set the tone for the entire course. There are many important things you can do on the first day that will help establish rapport with the students, prepare them for the course's work, and generate excitement about the subject matter.

Research shows students want to know two kinds of information on the first day of class. First, they want to learn as much as possible about the class so they can decide whether to stay in the course and estimate the work requirements for the entire course. Second, they are curious about the teacher as a person. They want to know if you will be reasonable and fair, if you care about them as individuals, and if you care about the course itself.

A well written syllabus, distributed during the first class, promotes a positive attitude in students, because it shows the teacher cares about the course and has made an effort to plan it carefully. A syllabus should contain course goals, topics, texts, grading and examination procedures, reading assignments, attendance policy, and your office location and appointment hours. Comments you give in class about the textbook are important since students are judging if they need to buy it and how closely they will have to read it. Stressing your availability during office hours and staying after class to answer questions and deal with problems both suggest your accessibility.

The first day of class affords a variety of opportunities to establish rapport with your students and to provide the kinds of information you and they want in that initial class. By meeting these needs, you can increase their motivation and achievement and enhance your own effectiveness.

(Excerpt from: The First day of Class-Setting the Right Tone, CSU Center for Teaching Excellence. Additional information is available at http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/teachingexcellence/)

Information and procedures for the first day of class include:

- State the course title, course number, and the location of the course.

- Pronounce your name; how you expect to be addressed (Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.); office information, including phone number and office hours; and a brief overview of your background.

- If class size permits, take attendance and begin to associate names with faces. Make eye contact with students.

- Invite students to introduce themselves to the class or, in the case of very large classes, to the students to their right/left. If time permits, students can tell why they are in the course, their academic program and their year in their academic program.

- Review course prerequisites, description, goals, content, evaluation procedures, attendance policies, and academic policies. Use the course syllabus as the source of this information and refer students to specific information in the syllabus.

- Review required textbooks, laboratory manuals, web resources and library reserve readings.

- Discuss any additional course fees for equipment, materials, field trips, etc.

- Preview the style and activities that you will be using in your teaching. For example, will lectures, small group discussions, projects, or recitation sessions be used?

- Discuss policies affecting student grades, including attendance, assignments or late assignments, exams and make-up exams, group projects, class participation, plagiarism and cheating.

- Plan on covering content-related material the first day. Do not simply dismiss the students after introductions and the discussion of the syllabus have been completed.

- Tell students why you are excited about this class or subject. Enthusiasm is contagious.

- Plan on learning students' names as quickly as possible. This can be done by using seating charts, returning papers to each individual by name, or taking attendance each day. In reasonably-sized classes you should set a goal to know students' names by the end of the second or third week of class. To assist you with learning students' names, you can get your class rosters with student photos included. Directions for "Class Rosters with Photos" are available on the website for the Center for Teaching Excellence at http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/teachingexcellence/.

USING ACTIVE LEARNING TO ENHANCE YOUR CLASS

Lecturing is a common teaching method in college classrooms. Lectures can convey large amounts of factual content to large numbers of students in a set amount of time. However, lectures do not address the diverse learning styles of students or the amount of information accessible via technology and the media. Research shows that active learning is the equal of lectures in helping students master content and is superior in developing students' thinking and writing skills. It also finds students prefer active-learning strategies. Active learning responds to the well-known philosophy of learning, "Tell me and I'll listen. Show me and I'll understand. Involve me and I'll learn." Active Learning changes the student from a passive recipient of information to a full participant in learning the material you think most important.

To increase active learning in your class, you can implement alternative styles of lecturing, such as:

1. Feedback Lecture- two mini lectures separated by a small-group study session.

2. Guided Lecture- a half-class lecture with no note-taking, followed by a short period of individual student recall, in turn followed by small-group activity (such as reconstruction of the lecture with instructor assistance).

3. Responsive Lecture- one class each week devoted to answering open-ended, student-generated questions. Questions may or may not be submitted in advance.

Additional modifications to lectures include:

- Pausing to enhance retention and comprehension because it focuses on clarifying and assimilating the information
- Using frequent tests and quizzes, including some that are ungraded. They help students retain almost twice as much information.
- Using demonstrations to stimulate curiosity and improve understanding of difficult material

  Teaching strategies that can be used instead of or in addition to lecturing:

1. Think-Pair-Share - A problem is posed. Students think about it alone for five minutes or less, and then pair up to discuss their views. The pairs share their conclusions with the rest of the class.

2. Minute Paper- Pause after 15 minutes of class and ask students to take a minute to write a two-sentence summary of what he or she has learned so far. Depending on how much time you want to devote to this, the students could pair up and help each other better understand the material for a few minutes or a few could report to the class.

3. Jigsaw - Choose learning material that can be divided into parts, such as an experiment, a list, or several articles on a similar topic. Divide students into groups equaling the number of parts. Ask each group to read, discuss, and learn the material. Next, form jigsaw learning groups composed of one member from each of the initial groups. Each new group will contain an expert on each part of the material, so that together the group will learn all of the material. Reconvene the class to go over the material. You may also ask the jigsaw groups to answer questions based on their accumulated knowledge.

4. Roundtable - Students divide into groups to answer a query. Each group is given only one pen and one piece of paper. Each group member in turn writes down his or her response on the paper. The results are examined and placed on an overhead for class discussion. There is more accountability for each student if he or she has to explain the written remarks.

5. Voting - A show of hands to keep students involved and to determine what the class believes as a group. This exercise works well in large classes. It refocuses the students' attention. It can clarify larger issues into smaller subsets. It requires students to engage the material. Start off with a general query, i.e., "Who thinks the British caused the Revolutionary War? Who thinks the colonies did?" and then explore the subject further.

6. End of Class Query - In the last three minutes of class ask the students to report anonymously two things they learned and what questions remain.

7. Trade a Problem - Divide the class into teams and have each team construct review questions. Each question is written on an index card (each team can have a different color). The answer to each question is written on the back of the card. The teams then trade cards. Without looking at the answers, one member of the team reads each question. The team decides by consensus on an answer. If the team's answer does not agree with the original answer, they should add their answer on the back of the card as an alternative. Cards continue to be traded. The teacher may then want to conduct a whole-class discussion on the questions with more than one answer.

8. Concept Map - Divide the class into groups and give each group a pen and a large piece of paper or a transparency. Each group should write down the topic being studied in the center of the paper inside a circle or rectangle, then place key examples or related concepts inside smaller shapes and connect them to the main topic. There are many possible models of the relationship among concepts, i.e., chains, spiders, or more complicated ones.

9. Diagnostic Learning Logs - Tell students you will be asking them to keep records of what they learned from class, readings, tests, etc. Ask students to keep a Class Log with main points they learned, points that were unclear, and what need to know to make them clear, or a Homework or Test Log in which they are to describe assignments, give examples of errors, and tell how they would do it differently.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Successful classroom management is essential to successful classroom teaching. Classroom management induces order in the classroom and encourages students to comply with the expectations of the instructor and other students.

Successful Classroom Management

Consider the following steps toward successful classroom management:

1. Establish expectations and routines

- o Prepare a clear and comprehensive syllabus
- o Prepare a clear beginning and ending of your class
- o Invite and monitor class participation
- o Follow established procedures for turning in assignments
- o Get to know your students

2. Plan for instruction

- o Organize course content
- o Connect the students' prior knowledge to the objectives for the course
- o Design meaningful learning experiences

3. Manage class time effectively

- o Start classes on time
- o Write the agenda for the class on the board so students know what to expect
- o Vary the learning activities during each class session (20-30 minutes per activity)
- o Allow breaks during long classes, or let students know whether you will allow them to leave the room

(Adapted from Teaching: Classroom Management and Strategies by Dr. Susan Rakow, CSU)

GUIDELINES FOR DE-ESCALATING CONFLICT

Successful classroom management and teaching can prevent conflicts in your classroom. It is important to build goodwill in your classroom by taking time to develop rapport and trust with your students. It is important to demonstrate interest, reliability and reason in the classroom. Be aware of your own emotions and how to manage them so they don't interfere with your judgment or behavior. Consider the following suggestions to prevent conflicts in your classroom:

Professional Demeanor

1. Model professional behavior for your students. Be calm and reasonable.

2. Speak in a normal tone of voice. Don't raise your voice or shout.

3. Minimize unnecessary conversation and movement.

4. Demonstrate interest in your students' comments and concerns.

Professional Verbal Communication

1. Speak in clear, precise sentences.

2. Avoid choosing words that sound challenging or demeaning.

3. Don't minimize or exaggerate a problem. Be "matter of fact," but concerned.

4. If you're not sure how to respond to a student, it is permissible to say that you need to "think about the situation for a minute." Silence may be appropriate.

(Excerpt from Conflict Resolution Education in Teacher Education (CRETE) Program at CSU, Dr. William Newby, 2009, from the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution.)

ASSESSING YOUR TEACHING PERFORMANCE

It is important to assess your teaching performance throughout the course rather than waiting until the end of the semester to receive feedback from students. It is equally important to use the feedback you receive to improve your teaching and document your effectiveness as a teacher. Use information from the evaluation of your teaching to make adjustments to your strategies, materials and learning activities with the ultimate goal of improving your students' learning. Consider the following sources for feedback on your performance:

1. Other TAs

2. The Professor in charge of the course

3. Informal written feedback from students (via questions at the end of tests or comments on index cards distributed at the end of class)

4. Course evaluations

5. Video or audio tapes of your teaching

Consider inviting feedback from students on the following aspects of your teaching and interaction in the classroom at the midpoint of the semester:

- Giving clear directions
- Including a variety of learning activities
- Assigning the right amount of work outside of class
- Allowing enough time to complete assignments or tests
- Providing extra help if needed
- Inviting students' opinions

- Treating students equally and fairly
- Determining grades fairly
- Respecting students
- Establishing reasonable expectations
- Making the class interesting

(Excerpt from FRIENDLY FEEDBACK by Jim Harmon, CSU Office of Field Services, 2004)

TECHNOLOGY AND YOUR CLASS

You will need to consistently use technology in your class to enhance your teaching and keep your students actively engaged.

Remember the following suggestions when selecting technology for your class:

1. Your students are technologically diverse.

2. Technology can add effectiveness and efficiency to your teaching.

3. You will need to choose technology to match your goals.

4. be sure to plan thoroughly.

5. Check and recheck the working order of your technology.

6. Provide resources for student assistance.

You will need to check out the equipment from the Integrated Media Systems and Services Department (IMSS). Equipment can be reserved by calling X3855 on campus. Media Services maintains a wide variety of audiovisual equipment to meet the multimedia and presentation needs of the instructors.

Televisions with DVD and VCR capability, overhead projectors, combo units (laptops and LCD projector on a rolling cart), film projectors, public address systems, and more can be scheduled for classroom use. Some classrooms are equipped with LCD projectors and computers, but you will need to check that the equipment is in working order. Note that IMSS does not provide laptops.

The following suggestions will help you to reserve equipment through IMS:

1. For your first visit, you will need to provide your name, CSU ID#, department and office extension.

2. You will need to claim the equipment before class and return it afterward.

3. You can reserve specific equipment for a regular time slot all semester if needed.

4. IMS will be the primary source of most of your instructional equipment needs - with the exception of a laptop. (If a laptop is needed, you can check one out from the Student Center, check the possibility of borrowing one from your department or college, or check to see if one is available from the Center for Teaching Excellence.)

Some helpful suggestions for preparing to use computer projection are:

1. Check your time and route between IMS and your classroom.

2. Review your knowledge of connectivity and controls.

3. Check the projection surface.

4. Check lines of sight for students.

5. Note the type size for content of the presentation.

Additional information and listing of services is available from IMS at (216) 687-3855 or http://library.csuohio.edu/ims/equipment.html.

USING THE ELECTRONIC COURSE RESERVE (ECR)

With CSU Library's Electronic Course Reserve (ECR) system, course reading materials are available to CSU students and faculty at all hours and anywhere there is Internet access.

You can submit ECR items to the Library's Digital Production Unit. The materials are prepared in several different ways. Files already in electronic format are easily put into the system. Printed documents are scanned and processed before being placed on ECR. Most materials on the ECR system are PDF (portable document format) files, which require using the free Adobe Acrobat ™ Reader.

Your students may choose to search for the reserved item by your name, by course number, or by subject. Then the item may be read from the monitor, printed, or saved to a disk. Printing is available within the Library for a nominal charge.

All items published on this site are for use by Cleveland State University faculty and students only. With the right hardware, software and proper configuration, users can access ECR from any computer on or off campus which has access to the Michael Schwartz Library's Web Page.

Be sure to allow sufficient time for your documents to be prepared on the ECR system. You will need to help your students through the process of accessing these materials the first time.

For assistance, contact Joanne Cornelius, Course Reserve Supervisor at j.cornelius@csuohio.edu or 216-687-6954.

Additional information about ECR and instructional support for Teaching Assistants provided through the Michael Schwartz Library is available at http://library.csuohio.edu/services/grad-services.html

USING BLACKBOARD/WEBCT CE6

Blackboard is a course management system that offers you and your students an interactive instructional environment. You will need to set up your class on Blackboard through the Center for eLearning at 216-687-3960 or http://www.csuohio.edu/elearning.

The following options are available for courses using blackboard:

- Posting the course syllabus
- Posting materials
- Online quizzes and self-tests
- Hyperlink "hotlists"
- Online discussions
- Online assignment submission

For assistance with Blackboard and eLearning, contact Janet M. Raycher at 216-802-3140 or j.raycher@csuohio.edu.

Suggestions for using Email with your class:

1. List your CSU email address at the top of your syllabus.

2. Use your CSU address as your main Email for your students.

3. Respond within 2 working days to any student Email.

4. Insist that your students monitor their CSU Email address.

5. Contact students through CSU Email.

Additional information and resources are also available at the Center for ELearning at http://www.csuohio.edu/elearning.

(Excerpt from Technology and Your Class by Dr. William Beasley, CSU Center for Teaching Excellence)

THE CSU WRITING CENTER

You should discuss the importance of writing skills in evaluating student work with your supervisor or the instructor. It is important to apply your standards consistently. You can help students improve their writing skills by commenting on their writing errors even if you don't include writing quality in your evaluations. It is helpful to provide students with a handout which explains grammatical correction marks. You may have the time to comment on the word-by-word, line-by-line, or sentence-by-sentence level of your students' writing, or you may choose to comment on the overall structure, organization and style of their papers is desirable. A handout of grammatical correction marks is available from the CSU Writing Center (RT Library 124).

Students should be encouraged to use the CSU Writing Center. Assistance and tutoring in composition are provided to all students. If it is clear that a student is having difficulties with writing, be sure to refer the student to the Writing Center for assistance. Appointments at the Writing Center can be made by students by calling 216-687-6981.

The Writing Center also has many valuable resources to support instructors' and students' writing across the curriculum including tutorials, handouts, workshops and personal assistance. Their on-line resources are available at http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter/.

THE COURSE SYLLABUS*

The syllabus is a formal statement of what the course is about, what students are being asked to do, and how their performance will be evaluated. Unlike verbal comments an instructor makes in class, it is a document to which students can refer throughout the semester. Careful construction of a syllabus limits confusion and is the first step toward producing a successful learning environment. The course syllabus is a contract with the students. The instructor and students are required to abide by the syllabus throughout the semester.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SYLLABUS

Having a well-developed course syllabus requires the instructor to organize early and think precisely about teaching. It will help students know what is expected from them from the start of the course, and the syllabus will allow them to plan their semester efficiently. A well-prepared syllabus is evidence that the instructor takes teaching seriously. A syllabus also provides the departmental office, faculty, supervisor and others with pertinent information about the course.

The University Ombudsman reported that a large number of student complaints have at their root a lack of understanding of the requirements and expectations for a course. A well-prepared syllabus consolidates into a single document all of the routine matters that surround teaching: a course-reading schedule, grading procedures, due dates, class topics, etc., that would otherwise have to be communicated only verbally to the class.

PREPARING AN EFFECTIVE SYLLABUS

Instructors can review syllabi from other classes or those that have been used previously in the course being taught. Instructors might also check with their department for specific guidelines about the syllabus format. Some departments have created syllabi for introductory courses that meet already established goals and objectives for these courses. Check with your supervisor or the instructor of the course to determine if you should be using one of these syllabi.

The following should normally be included in a syllabus:

> **1.** Relevant information about the course - The information should include the current year, semester, course number, title, and the time and location of the class. It should also include the instructor's name, office phone number, office location and office hours. This information is normally placed at the beginning of the syllabus.

> **2.** A clear statement of course objectives - The course objectives should be stated clearly and should describe what the students are expected to know and the level of competency that is expected of the student by the end of the semester. Use specific, measurable objectives. Avoid the use of vague terminology such as "students will develop a clear understanding," which can result in arguments over degrees of understanding.

> **3.** A description of the activities by which the course objectives will be met - Possible items include field trips, guest lecturers, discussions with active student participation, problem-solving groups, assignments, use of audiovisual materials, assessments, etc. It is often helpful to estimate the amount of time required for each activity.

4. A list of texts and materials for the course- Identify the required and optional texts for the course. It is important to check that the bookstore or library has the texts on the shelves before students are sent to find them. Explain any other materials that are required of students. Any supplemental materials, such as lecture tapes, films, or sample projects that are available for examination can be mentioned.

5. A statement of grading criteria - Explain the CSU grading system, the components of the final course grade, the weighting of various grades, the relationship of class participation and attendance to the final grade, and other relevant items and information about your grading system. The number of tests each semester should be included, along with a description of each test. The numerical equivalent of letter grades, or the "ranges" of each grade, should be provided.

6. A statement of course policy - This is best expressed in a clear, non-threatening form. Policies should be set for events such as missing an exam, turning in a late assignment, missing class, requesting an extension for an assignment, and reporting an illness. It is a good idea to go on record with a fairly stringent policy about these matters that can be tempered at a later date on an individual basis, when warranted. The Ombudsman recommends avoiding absolutes on the grounds that they are often more trouble than they are worth. There also can be a short statement defining academic misconduct.

7. A schedule - The syllabus should, at a minimum, contain dates with the corresponding sequence of lecture or lab topics, the preparations that are required or suggested, and the assignments that are due. Note holidays and the date and time of any tests, the midterm, as well as the final examination.

8. Disability Statement - An important part of the syllabus is a statement that informs students with disabilities that materials are available in alternate form and that accommodations will be made. The statement provided by the Office for Disability Services is available at http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/disability/faculty/index.html.

9. A List of references - A list of books, journals and electronic sources used by the instructor to prepare for the class or to be used by students for additional information should be included in the syllabus. Be sure your references are current.

USING THE SYLLABUS IN CLASS

The syllabus for your class can be posted on Blackboard and/or you can distribute hard copies to your students. Prior to distributing the syllabus to your students, check over the final typed copy for mistakes and typos. If the instructor does not spot them, it is certain that the students will. It is a good policy to hand out the syllabus on the first day of class. This lets the students know that their teacher is well prepared and the syllabus provides an easy way to begin the interaction with students and to reduce some of the uncertainty and anxiety of the first class meeting.

The instructor should review and discuss the syllabus with the students, answer any questions that they may have, and provide more details where necessary. The instructor will probably find that most student feedback will concern the section on grading.

It is vital to have enough copies of the syllabus. One should allow for the need to replace lost copies and to accommodate students who have registered for the class but do not appear on the initial roster. If changes are made in the syllabus, distribute the changes to the students in writing. Needless ambiguity and confusion can result from misunderstood verbal instructions.

One copy of each course syllabus must be filed with the Department Chairperson.

(*Excerpt from: University Center for the Advancement of Teaching. (2009). Handbook on Teaching @Ohio State, Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.)

SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

The following syllabus format was developed by the College of Education and Human Services (CEHS) at CSU. The template is helpful when preparing the syllabus for your course(s).

Cleveland State University Course Syllabus

College of Education and Human Services
Course Title: *Title of Course*
Semester Credits: *Number of contact hours*
Course Description: *Description of the course*

Required Text(s): *This information must be very specific. Include textbooks, websites, or even articles that will be used during the course of study.*

Course Objectives: *What is expected from the student?*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Course Outline/Schedule of Activities: *All assignments need to be explained in detail.*

Day/Session	Topics/Activities

Evaluation: *How will the student be evaluated and by what percentage?*

Item	Description	Percentage of Grade
1		%
2		%
3		%
4		%
5		%

Grading Scale: *To be stated by the instructor according to the policies of the Undergraduate and Graduate Colleges.*

A

B

C

D

F

Course or Instructor Policies: *State policies and procedures related to absences, tardiness, missing assignments, cell phone use, and any other events relevant to your class.*

Disability Statement: *You may use the statement provided by the CSU Office of Disability services.*

Selected References: *Any additional materials that would be helpful for the student.*

1.

2.

3.

4.

Add any other information relevant to the course that you would like to provide that is not mentioned above.

COURSE GOALS

Clear goals for the course will assist the instructor and students in the following ways:

1. Provide direction for determining relevant content, materials, teaching strategies, learning activities and assessments.

2. Clarify the topics and direction for each class as well as assessments.

3. Identify opportunities for using a variety of teaching styles to meet the variety of learning styles in the class.

4. Help students recognize the relevance of the course and its content to their personal educational goals.

5. Help students to organize content and make connections to prior learning or personal experiences.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The objectives for your course or an individual lesson identify the outcomes, in terms of student learning, that should result from the learning experiences in the course. Broad definitions of instructional objectives state that objectives identify the learning to be achieved by the student at the end of the lesson. More specifically, instructional objectives should identify the following information for your students:

> **1.** What do you want students to learn?
>
> **2.** How will the students achieve the learning objectives?
>
> **3.** How will you evaluate students' learning?

PLAGIARISM

The CSU Student Handbook describes plagiarism as stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as your own. This includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment.

Minor infractions comprise those instances of cheating, plagiarism, and/or tampering which affect the grade of an individual class assignment or project of lesser (<25% of grade) importance. Multiple instances of minor infractions within a course or across courses constitute a major infraction.

Major infractions comprise those instances of cheating, plagiarism, and/or tampering which affect the overall course grade, such as a major/comprehensive exam, term paper or project, final grade evaluation, or academic standing and status. Major infractions automatically result in an entry on the student's permanent record that the student has engaged in academic misconduct.

Procedures of reporting plagiarism are described in the Student Handbook, available at http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/.

Additional information on plagiarism is available at the CSU Writing Center, RT Library 124; (216) 687-6981 or http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Office of Disability Services is charged with determining who is an eligible person with a disability and coordinating the accommodation needs of individuals with disabilities who participate in our programs. As an instructor, it helps all students, including students with disabilities, to have the content of the course presented in multiple ways, such as visually, orally and kinesthetically.

You may have one or more students in your class with a variety of disabilities, including learning disabilities, chronic health issues, attention deficit disorders, psychological conditions, visual impairments, mobility impairments, and hearing impairments. Any student who requests

accommodations due to a disability is required to make that request through the Office of Disability Services.

Additional information is available at the Office of Disability Services, located in Main Classroom, Room 147; telephone 216.687.2015 or http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/disability.

STRATEGIES TO ASSIST STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

1. You are required to include in your course syllabus a statement regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. The sample below can be copied/pasted into your syllabus. It is available online at http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/disability/faculty/index.html):

> EDUCATIONAL ACCESS IS THE PROVISION OF CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS, AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES TO ENSURE EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF THEIR DISABILITY. ANY STUDENT WHO FEELS HE OR SHE MAY NEED AN ACCOMMODATION BASED ON THE IMPACT OF A DISABILITY SHOULD CONTACT THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES AT (216)687-2015. THE OFFICE IS LOCATED IN MC 147. ACCOMMODATIONS NEED TO BE REQUESTED IN ADVANCE AND WILL NOT BE GRANTED RETROACTIVELY.

This statement on the course syllabus affirms the commitment of CSU to uphold our responsibilities under the law. It also welcomes students to feel comfortable in disclosing their needs so that they can meet their educational goals.

2. Choose your textbooks early. Choose by the end of spring semester for fall texts; choose by mid-October for spring texts. Students with disabilities sometimes need to make special arrangements for texts (e.g., audio or Braille versions).

3. Students with physical or learning disabilities may require accommodations such as extra time to take a test, a reader to read a test to them, or special equipment to complete written assignments. If a student requests accommodations from you and does not have an "accommodations memo" from Disability Services at CSU, refer them directly to Disability Services, MC 147, 216-687-2015.

(Excerpt from Center for Teaching Excellence: Teaching Resources. Additional information is available at http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/teachingexcellence).

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES*

Assessment is an area in which many new instructors struggle. Teachers must be able to rely on collected data, usually through assessment, to guide their future lessons. Formative assessments, those conducted as a part of each lesson plan, should be implemented on a daily basis. Summative assessments, those conducted at the end of a unit to indicate student mastery, should be implemented when students have successfully navigated the summative assessments. Instructors use formative assessments as an indicator of students' learning the material as well as the effectiveness of the teaching before moving on to the summative assessment. Although some instructors assume the word "assessment" refers to a test or quiz, there are many other methods for collecting relevant data that indicate mastery.

Assessments should always be tied to your desired learning outcomes for students. It is important to always clearly state these outcomes on the course syllabus and verbally to your students. It is difficult for the instructor to judge performance or mastery without clear goals for success, and it is also difficult for students to achieve success if they do not know the goal.

Once the desired outcomes are clear, effective assessment tools can be developed to determine student achievement. A variety of assessments should be used in the course, including papers, tests, assignments, quizzes and exams. Examinations can come in many formats including essay, multiple choice, paper and pencil, online, take-home and in-class.

CREATING LESSON PLANS

In addition to creating a syllabus for your course you will need to prepare lesson plans for the lessons you will teach throughout the semester. The components of the lesson plan are very similar to the components of the course syllabus. In fact, the objectives, learning activities, assignments and assessments identified on the syllabus provide the foundation for your lesson plans. Preparing a lesson plan gives you the opportunity to consider a variety of teaching strategies and innovative learning experiences that can be used throughout the semester. The first step in developing a lesson is considering your goals and objectives for the lesson. The time devoted to preparing a lesson plan will make your teaching much easier and more effective. Successful lesson planning results in classes that run more smoothly and are more productive for the instructor and students.

The following lesson plan format was developed by the Office of Field Services in the CEHS at CSU. A template that can be used to prepare your lesson plans is available at http://www.csuohio.edu/cehs/fieldservices/supervisor.html

Standard Lesson Plan Format

Title of Lesson:

Subject Area: **Grade Level:**

Date: **Period:**

Note: If you need more space, please use the back or attach an additional sheet and label accordingly.

I. **Goal/s**: Make one or more broad, general, visionary statement/s (not specific behavioral objectives) that describes your learning goal/s for this lesson. What is it you want students to learn and remember about this lesson – weeks, months and years from now? This is the essence of your lesson. (Discuss the goal of the lesson with the students)

II. **Relevant Standards/Benchmarks/Indicators:** Reference specific standards, benchmarks, indicators from state, district, and professional association documents. Reference your own specific, personal, professional goals for this lesson.

III. **Behavioral Objectives**: Write these in bullet point form, using Bloom's Taxonomy.

Indicate cognitive, affective and/or psychomotor behavioral objectives. Be sure the objectives are observable and measurable. Start your objectives with statements like, "Students will be able to…" Objectives **must** be measurable so the intern might collect data regarding the effectiveness of the lesson.

IV. **Materials**: List the materials that you and your students will use during the lesson (e.g., textbooks, overheads, color chalk, etc.)

V. **Pre-Requisite Knowledge**: List knowledge students will need from previous lesson to enable them to understand the content of this lesson and/or successfully complete the activity planned.

VI. **Procedures**: Identify how you will carry out the following parts of your lesson.

a. Set Induction – Grab student interest by using motivational strategies, stating expectations, reviewing information, creating scenarios, etc. The purpose of this segment of the lesson is to help students access and use prior knowledge and understand the cognitive framework they will develop.

b. Development – Explain (1) the content, concepts and/or skills that will be developed during this lesson and (2) the sequence of activities that the students will undertake to engage themselves with the material. Third (3), justify your choice of activities by articulating how they will enhance student learning of the material.

c. Questioning – List the questions you will ask (either in writing or orally) to clarify student knowledge, extend their understandings, and develop their reasoning. Try to build from concrete to more abstract questioning, helping students to understand concepts and build generalizations. Be sure to ask for reasoning, examples and clarification. Do not hesitate to use higher order questions.

d. Closure – How will you find a way out of this lesson or activity? Explain how this is a natural closure for this lesson.

e. Assessment – Summarize the daily and long-term assessment for this lesson. Is it being used: (a) to assess student knowledge? (b) To motivate students to learn? (c) To evaluate student knowledge? and/or (d) to determine the focus of the next lesson/s or unit? Explain how your assessment will give you the information you are seeking. List items that could be used as review or test items. These items should connect with the learning goals(s) and specific objectives. How does this assessment method ensure the students have learned the material and not guessed?

VII. **Follow up**: What will take place during subsequent lessons that extend this lesson? State any homework assignment or other activities that were used to reinforce information or skills developed in this lesson. How will you assess what was learned in the future?

VIII. **Reflective Self-Evaluation**: Ask yourself one or more open-ended and reflective questions. Critically assess the procedures of the lesson and the appropriateness of the materials used. Consider your delivery or "presence" in the classroom and ways to improve these. Is there a tension between what you believe should work "in theory" and how it worked "in practice"? What was the strongest part of the lesson? What would you change? How did the students react to the lesson? Be able to tell one thing you could do to ensure learning.

LENGTH OF THE TEST

The length of the test is determined by the amount and degree of content to be covered as well as a strict time limit. Multiple choice, matching, or true-false questions can be answered in a minute or less. Short answer questions can be answered in approximately two minutes. Ten to fifteen minutes may be needed to answer a short response question while thirty minutes or more may be needed for an essay question.

FREQUENCY OF TESTING

Remember that students need regular feedback. Using a variety of assessments throughout the course assists students with learning and understanding the content. Too many quizzes and exams tend to discourage students. Quizzes given weekly or biweekly should be brief.

ANNOUNCING QUIZZES AND EXAMS

The dates of quizzes and exams should be stated on the course syllabus. This allows students to plan their study schedules and benefit from the process of studying for the quiz or exam. "Pop quizzes" are less effective learning devices than tests when the students have had time to study and prepare. Reminders or announcements of exams should be given at least one week ahead of time. It is also helpful to discuss with students the exam's format, including the types of questions and length of the exam.

GENERAL TIPS ABOUT WRITTEN TESTS

When written tests are used, some general advice for instructors includes the following:

1. Compose test items throughout the semester to be sure to include all key concepts presented.

2. Use a variety of question types.

3. Test early in the semester to demonstrate your testing style to the students.

4. Test often to keep students on task, gather multiple grades and give students regular feedback.

5. Test what you really want students to learn.

6. Proofread your test for errors.

7. Include questions to build students' confidence and lessen test anxiety.

8. Make appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

9. Bring enough copies.

10. Ask for help in preparing exams from your supervisor or the instructor, if needed.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS

Multiple-choice items can be used to test factual recall as well as higher levels of understanding and ability to apply learning. Multiple-choice items can also provide an excellent basis for post-test discussion, especially if the discussion addresses why the incorrect responses were wrong as well as why the correct responses were right.

Suggestions for constructing multiple-choice items include:

1. Use the stem (first part of the question) to present the problem or question as clearly as possible.

2. Include as much of the item as possible in the stem so that alternatives can be kept brief.

3. Keep all alternatives in a similar format (e.g., all phrases, all sentences, etc.).

4. Be sure that all options are plausible responses to the stem.

5. Check to see that all choices are grammatically consistent with the stem.

6. Use "all of the above" and "none of the above" sparingly since these alternatives are often chosen on the basis of incomplete knowledge. Words such as "all," "always," and "never" are likely to signal incorrect options.

7. Use capital letters (A, B, C, D, E) on tests as responses rather than lower-case letters.

8. Try to write items with equal numbers of alternatives in order to avoid asking students to continually adjust to a new pattern caused by different numbers.

9. Phrase the item as a statement rather than a direct question.

10. Avoid using negatively stated items.

11. Be sure that there is only one correct response to the stem.

12. Limit the number of alternatives to five or less.

13. Randomly distribute correct responses among the alternative positions so that there are no discernible patterns to the answer sequence.

14. State items so that there is only one interpretation of their meaning and use language that students will understand. Do not make it a test of reading skills unless that is your goal.

Suggestions for constructing multiple-choice items that measure higher-level objectives include:

1. Present unfamiliar, real-world problems or construct scenarios for the students. Write several items which ask students to apply concepts or theories to the scenario or to evaluate several alternative solutions.

2. Present quotations from newspapers, journals, or other published sources, pictures, charts, tables, graphs, or other primary source material. Ask students to interpret or evaluate the quotations.

TRUE/FALSE ITEMS

True/false items are usually easy to prepare. Test items are drawn directly from the content. They are easy to score accurately and quickly. True/false items, however, may not give a true estimate of the students' knowledge since half can be answered correctly simply by chance. True/false questions tend to be either extremely easy or extremely difficult. These items do not discriminate between students of varying ability as well as other types of questions do.

Suggestions for constructing true/false items include:

1. Keep language as simple and clear as possible.
2. Avoid using verbatim sentences from the textbook.
3. Avoid the use of negatives in the statements.
4. Avoid ambiguous and trick items.
5. Avoid words such as ALL, ALWAYS, NEVER, AND ONLY since they tip students off to the correct answers.

MATCHING ITEMS

Matching items are generally brief and especially suitable for who, what, when, and where questions. They are used to have students discriminate among and apply concepts. Matching items are easy to

score accurately and quickly. The drawbacks of matching items are that they are difficult to use to measure learning beyond recognition of basic factual knowledge, they are usually poor for diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses, and students may use processes of elimination to guess answers to items they do not know.

Suggestions for constructing matching items include:

1. Supply directions that clearly state the basis for the matching, indicating whether or not a response can be used more than once, and stating where the answer should be placed.

2. Avoid giving grammatical clues to the correct response (e.g., using a/an, singular/plural verb forms).

3. Arrange items in the response column in some logical order (alphabetical, numerical, and chronological) so that students can find them easily.

4. Avoid breaking a set of items (stems and responses) over two pages.

5. Use no more than 15 items in one set.

6. Provide more responses than stems to make process-of-elimination or guessing less effective.

7. Use capital letters for the responses rather than lower-case letters.

COMPLETION ITEMS

Completion items are useful in assessing recall of factual information when a specific word or phrase is important to know. They eliminate guessing that is possible on limited-choice items since they require a definite response rather than simple recognition of the correct answer. Completion items, however, tend to test only rote, repetitive responses. They are more difficult to score than forced-choice items and scoring often must be done by the test writer since more than one answer may have to be considered correct.

Suggestions for constructing completion items include:

1. Use original questions rather than taking questions directly from the text.

2. Use vocabulary and phrasing that comes from the text or class presentations.

3. Provide clear directions as to what amount of variation will be accepted in the answers.

4. Avoid using a long quote with multiple blanks to complete.

5. Avoid providing grammatical clues to the correct answer.

ESSAY/SHORT ANSWER ITEMS

Essay and short answer items encourage students to demonstrate achievement of higher level objectives such as analysis and critical thinking, and invite expression of originality, creativity, and

divergent thinking. These items offer students the opportunity to use their own judgment, writing styles, and vocabularies. They are less time consuming to prepare than any other item type. Tests consisting only of essay or short answer items evaluate a limited sampling of content learning due to the time required for students to respond. The main disadvantage is that essay items are difficult and time consuming to score and may be subject to biased or unreliable scoring.

Suggestions for constructing essay questions include:

1. Make essay questions comprehensive rather than focused on small units of content.

2. Provide clear directions as to the expectations for the content of the response.

3. Use a grading rubric to limit bias in grading. 4. Allow students an appropriate amount of time. 5. Give students guidelines on how much time to use on each question. 6. State the desired length and format of the response, such as full sentences, phrases, or outlines. 7. Inform students of the proportional value of each item in comparison to the total grade. 8. Require students to demonstrate understanding of the content by asking them to provide supporting evidence for claims and assertions in their responses. 9. Decide in advance how much writing skill will count in the evaluation of the response.

DESIGNING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Student learning can be assessed through written assignments such as short reflective exercises, collaborative projects, or traditional research papers. Written assignments can assess higher-order critical thinking skills, such as evaluation and synthesis. Writing is not only an important skill for students to learn, but it is also a great method for them to learn the course material more fully and deeply.

ADMINISTERING EXAMS

Some suggestions for administering exams are:

- o Arrive early and distribute exams at the designated time.
- o Be sure the test directions are precise.
- o Review the instructions for each section of the exam at and ask if students have any questions.
- o Inform students periodically during the exam of the amount of time remaining.
- o Stay in the room during the test and be available to answer questions.
- o Seat students in ways that make cheating difficult.
- o Have the students remove from view any materials which are not to be used during the exam, such as notebooks, texts.
- o Answer student questions during the exam, but be sure your answers don't supply a clue to the correct answer. If a student asks a question about a point which is likely to cause confusion for the class, announce this to the class.

PAPERS, ESSAYS AND MAJOR CLASS PROJECTS

Consult with the instructor of the course to determine your responsibilities for assigning and evaluating student papers, essays and class projects. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Establish a clear policy regarding the due dates, penalties for late papers, group vs. individual work, etc. on your syllabus. Then stick to the policies you have established.

2. Provide written rather than oral guidelines. Set aside classroom time to discuss major projects.

3. Give students a choice of topics on which to work whenever possible.

4. Establish preliminary steps to completing the project such as preparing an outline or handing in portions of the completed assignment prior to the due date. This helps students keep on schedule and allows you to provide them with positive feedback. Plagiarism also may be prevented.

5. Spread out the task of reading and evaluating papers over a period of a few days whenever possible. Reading only two or three papers at a sitting may help keep your mind fresh and focused, and you will be better able to fairly evaluate and comment on the students' work.

6. Provide as much feedback on each assignment as time permits. Students are disappointed to have a paper returned with no comments other than the grade earned. Be sure that criticism is constructive and not derogatory.

7. Return assignments and tests promptly.

HOMEWORK

Homework can be a useful learning tool in many disciplines. It gives instructors continued opportunities to assess student progress and encourages students to keep up with the course materials. Check with the course instructor regarding the policies governing regular student homework assignments.

GRADING AND RECORD KEEPING

A reminder for submitting grades online will be sent to your department prior to the week of final exams. All final grade reporting is done electronically. Check with your supervisor to determine who will be entering the grades. Make sure to note the deadline for submitting grades.

Be sure that you grade students fairly and objectively. The grading policies for the course must be clearly stated on your syllabus. Secondly, give fair exams and fair assignments. Thirdly, keep accurate and complete records of your students' work.

Some useful ideas on record keeping include:

- Student grades can be recorded on Blackboard. For assistance go to http://www.csuohio.edu/elearning.
- Keep records for all aspects of the course included in evaluating students, including scores from all exams, homework assignments, attendance and participation.
- Document strategies you use in averaging individual marks to compute a final course grade.

- Check your calculations of grades for accuracy.
- Keep students informed of their grades and progress throughout the semester.

Your grades, class rosters and other course records are official University records and must be available to your course supervisor and the department chairperson at all times.

(*Excerpt from: University Center for the Advancement of Teaching. (2009). Handbook on Teaching @Ohio State, Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.)

The criteria for evaluating an assignment or paper must be clear and specific. Rubrics can be developed and given to students at the time the paper or project is assigned to inform students of the criteria and point value awarded for the completion of the assignment. Rubrics provide clear expectations and specific feedback to students. A sample rubric for a writing assignment is provided below. Additional rubrics and assistance with creating rubrics are available at the Writing Center (RT Library 124).

RUBRIC FOR SCORING WRITTEN RESPONSES TO READING/S (Note: Not all readings will require written responses- some may use alternative formats.)

Response #_____
Student Name_____   /30 pts.

	0-1	2-3	4-5	Comments
Brief summary of reading's main points	Not evident or Minimally evident	Overly long and detailed (but present) or present but superficial or did not include all assigned readings	Concise summary of all assigned readings	
Thoughtful Analysis	Not evident or minimally evident	Superficial opinions not grounded in text. May not have addressed all assigned readings.	Thoughtful analysis of all assigned reading. Asked perceptive additional questions.	
Writing Style and Coherence	Rambling, confusing or otherwise disorganized writing. Immature or informal vocabulary. Writing does not demonstrate coherence at a college level.	Adequately organized and clear. Style and vocabulary are reasonably mature.	Sophisticated and elegant organization and flow. Writing demonstrates clarity, coherence, and maturity in style. Advanced and varied vocabulary and word choice.	
Writing Mechanics (grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, capitalization, etc.)	Writing is full of errors that interfere with clear communication of ideas and knowledge. Sub-par for college level writing.	Writing has some errors but these do not substantially interfere with clear written communication. Minimally adequate for college level writing.	Writing is relatively free of errors and errors do not interfere with clear written communication. College level writing.	

(Created by Dr. Susan Rakow, Dept. Of Curriculum & Foundations, CSU, 2009)

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