

## Teaching Assistant Orientation

This is a two day workshop put on by the center for teaching (CFT) for new teaching assistants. The workshop has three parts. Part one is our training. I was encouraged to apply and was accepted as a 2009-2010 teaching affiliate for the CFT. We spent time prior to the workshop learning teaching strategies, looking at past lessons, and preparing our lesson plans. The second part was a four hour workshop where we answered questions and introduced teaching strategies they could choose to implement or think about as they begin teaching. Thirdly, we allowed them a chance to practice teaching in a small group. We recruited peers from our department to help give feedback as they practiced.

On pages 2-5 you will find the lesson plan I prepared for this workshop, and then comments where I annotated this plan as part of a reflective process and to help future TAO leaders. Activities or videos are typed in pink, take-home messages are in blue, and discussion questions or instructions for the lesson are in black.

The adjacent pages are a printed version of the power point I used in my lesson. Videos and other media were used as noted in the lesson plan.

Handouts are included last.

**Chemistry Department**

Leslie Hiatt

*Session 1: Understand Roles and Relationships of TAs, intro to HPL, reasons for TAO (1-2:45)*

1. Icebreaker: "Common Ground" (10 min)
2. Introduction (10 min)
  - a. Who am I- Role as facilitator
  - b. Key points of the session/Vision
  - c. "5-minute University"
    - i. How does this make you feel about the education you received?
    - ii. What truths do you see in this video?
    - iii. Use this to segue into how faculty, TAs and students view college learning/roles
  - d. Enduring Understanding (EU): Teaching without learning is just talking.
3. Role as TA (30 min)
  - a. Visual Speak
    - i. Hand out note cards with their role to divide them into 3 groups (F, TA, S)
    - ii. How do you (as a faculty member, TA, or Vanderbilt student) see the role of the TA?
    - iii. A.k.a. What do you want from the TA?
    - iv. Have them Pick a picture
    - v. Discuss why they picked their respective pictures and list a few words describing it on the board
    - vi. Perspective- Implications (Pros/Cons)
    - vii. Museum Tour, play devil's advocate
  - b. EU: There are pros and cons to the TA role that can be either challenging or helpful.
  - c. Summarize main points about Faculty/TA role and responsibilities.
  - d. Which 2 questions for supervisors could you see yourself asking?
4. Novice vs. Experts (15 min)
  - a. "Devil wears Prada"
  - b. Make a practical application to chemistry
  - c. EU: Relationship of TA with Student
    - i. Think of ways to help students transition from novices to experts.
    - ii. Almost all teaching has pros/cons.
    - iii. What makes a teacher effective/ineffective?
5. Preconceptions and Motivation (30 min)
  - a. "Fish is Fish"
    - i. What is wrong with the pictures?
    - ii. How could frog have known what fish was thinking?
    - iii. What could frog have done to help fish learn truth?
    - iv. How can we relate this story to our students?

**Comment [L1]:** This went decently well. Basically, each person would state their name, where they were from and then something they enjoyed. Someone who shares that interest would stand up next and so on. I had had one comment that it was "awkward" but then I had others that commented that they liked it. Not too bad as ice breakers go!

**Comment [L2]:** They loved this clip and it served well to bridge into visual speak.

**Comment [L3]:** Kinda sporadic, but it seemed to work better this way. I had one group that was just fantastic and really worked hard and seemed to get the point. The other two groups got the point across and enjoyed themselves but needed a lot more prompting. It was fun to see how even with the same instructions, each group seemed to address the question differently and have much different group dynamics. This activity really seemed to put them in a good mood. I think they all started to realize they were not going to get lectured for 4 hours which made them relax and begin to enjoy themselves!

**Comment [L4]:** We covered this so quickly! After the video was over, we talked about novices and experts and they just could not get over how mean Miranda was! I kept trying to open discussion on this, but they seemed to think the point was pretty clear (Don't be mean and think about how the way you are teaching can help the student, not just demoralize them) and no more explanation was needed, so we moved on. Would have liked a little more discussion before we bridged to Fish is Fish, but it worked out alright.

**Comment [L5]:** This video went over well. We talked for awhile about students and just how important understanding and putting yourself in others shoes is for real learning to occur. Having done visuals speak previously, they had a lot they could refer back to, which was nice to hear. Very good discussion.

- b. EU: Each student brings with them their own set of learning styles, knowledge, skills, and beliefs.
  - c. Think, Pair, Share: What motivates Vandy Students?
  - d. Make a list on the board
  - e. Allowing students to be wrong is one way of helping them change their mental models.
  - f. Show ppt of basic three: Fear of Failure, Challenge, Competition
  - g. HPL Venn diagram
  - h. EU: Understanding who your students are, who they want to be, and where they are coming from will help you teach in ways that they can learn!
6. Wrap-Up/Summary (10 min)
- a. Briefly go over what they learned and what they will be doing in session 2
  - b. "minute-paper"
    - i. Have them write down one thing they learned that they might be able to use in their own teaching.
    - ii. Also have them write down one thing that was confusing or something they want to know more about.
7. Break! (2:45-3)

**Comment [L6]:** The chemistry department told them they all had to be there by 12:30, so when I walked in at a quarter till, they were all begging me to get started. Unfortunately, I was planning on being at the beginning of the break and we were running along smoothly, so at this point, I realized I still had about 45 minutes that I had to use! I knew one question would probably not do the trick, so I had them use the post-it notes (which they loved!) for multiple questions. Giving them a new one once they finished the old one. When we were finished we put them all on the board and discussed what they could expect when they got to their classes. Then we look at the HPL framework and discussed how each of their thoughts on Vandy students would fit into the framework. They were very willing to contribute to this, as I am sure the looming idea of food was a good motivator. They had some good ideas of how each of the motivations could be used in multiple ways to help them learn.

**Comment [L7]:** We bridged from here to talking about syllabi. We still had about 20 minutes left before we could break, so I grabbed the hand out I was planning on looking at in the second session and we talked about how a syllabus can motivate or de-motivate students. Basically one way you can alleviate fears from the beginning is to establish clearly your expectations and goals for the class. They looked at 3 sample syllabi and talked about them with their groups. It was kind of a nice wrap-up. They were silent for about 5 minutes straight just reading and thinking. I had them mark them up saying what they thought was awful about each and there was a large variance between those that thought they should be meaner and those that wanted to be nicer. Generated good small group discussions.

**Comment [L8]:** I found the minute paper to be very useful. Most of what they wanted to know more about, I was already planning on covering and there were a few things that I could just mention briefly in passing. It was also nice to see positive comments about how they thought this could be useful for them. As we broke I had one girls say, "I thought this was going to really suck, but it has been fun!"

Session 2: Understand what it means to be a TA at Vandy with practical aspects and situations. (3-5)

1. Icebreaker/Power of Instructions (5 min)

- a. "Bouncing Ball"
- b. Explain the importance of instruction
- c. EU: Students will miss things they are not looking for, so work hard to make sure your instructions are precise.

**Comment [L9]:** We had about 5 students come in late, so we just started without them. One of the students just shouted out about the gorilla as soon as the video was over, so it ruined a little of the surprise/discussion. As soon as the other students came in, we let them watch it as everyone else laughed and we were able to generate discussion from that point.

2. Grading- Importance of Rubrics and consistent assessment (35-40 min)

- a. Why do we grade?
- b. Briefly explain formative and summative assessment
- c. Clickers: Hand out Intro and Experimental Sections
  - i. Have them assess a grade for the introduction section, explaining why someone might give the lab report the grade that they did
  - ii. Have them assess a grade for the experimental section
  - iii. Focus them on their differences and what they might do to make a more uniform grading process
  - iv. Fill in the sample rubric with them then revote
    1. Rubric for experimental as a large group, revote
    2. Intro rubrics as a small group, revote
- d. EU: Rubrics help, clear concise requirements make everyone's life easier, use assessment to help students learn from their mistakes, cooperation within TAs is essential.
- e. Note: They will also be evaluated, so their evaluations will improve if they set clear goals, make themselves approachable while still maintaining authority, and if they can see that you are trying to help them learn.

**Comment [L10]:** They loved the clickers. I only had two not work from the beginning, but after pressing random buttons, I was able to make all of them work!

**Comment [L11]:** They actually were getting kind of annoyed that there seemed to be no straight forward/consistent way of getting them all to agree on a grade, so they asked about rubrics... then we went to the next slide and made a rubric together. It went well and they seemed to appreciate taking the time to work together to create one. This being said, I felt like I allowed this activity to go on too long and it got bogged down. They started arguing over the exact point value each item should get- I should have done a better job of controlling discussion at this point and moving it along. I was not prepared for them to seriously care and be passionate about what grade they were giving this made up lab report!

3. Office Hours (10 min)

- a. Work on the powerpoint with them to make a list of things students might come to you for during your office hours
- b. EU: Help them understand that in different contexts, different questions will come up, but they need to think about them beforehand and make intentional informed decisions.

**Comment [L12]:** We skipped this because we were running out of time and I felt it had been adequately covered in previous discussions. I went quickly over the list I had made with them.

4. Policies and Resources (30 min)

- a. Clickers
- b. EU: Familiarize them with the resources they will need should any of these situations arise.

**Comment [L13]:** Once again, they loved the clickers and liked thinking through the scenarios. I found myself closing the audio clips before they were over because they were too rambling and I could see they were getting the point. Abby's quote in particular was really long! They had never thought about these kind of scenarios happening and liked having knowledge of who to turn to or help with them.

5. Pre-Lab Prep (20 min)

- a. Small groups: P-Chem, Orgo, 2 Gen Chem
- b. Have them discuss the learning goals of their respective labs
- c. Determine the EUs and have them determine a way to teach and assess that goal
- d. Remind them that teaching is similar to research, experiment, exp, exp!
- e. EU: Utilize what they have learned about HPL and classroom design to gain the confidence they will need to help their students learn.

**Comment [L14]:** I felt like they were ready to go by this point, but one group did really well brainstorming with each other. Some of the other groups had students who were not going to be required to teach this semester and you could tell they did not want to participate.

6. CFT Offerings and Wrap Up (5 min)

- a. Powerpoint- A la carte vs. value meal
- b. EU: Let them know the CFT exists -Summary and info on practice teaching the next day

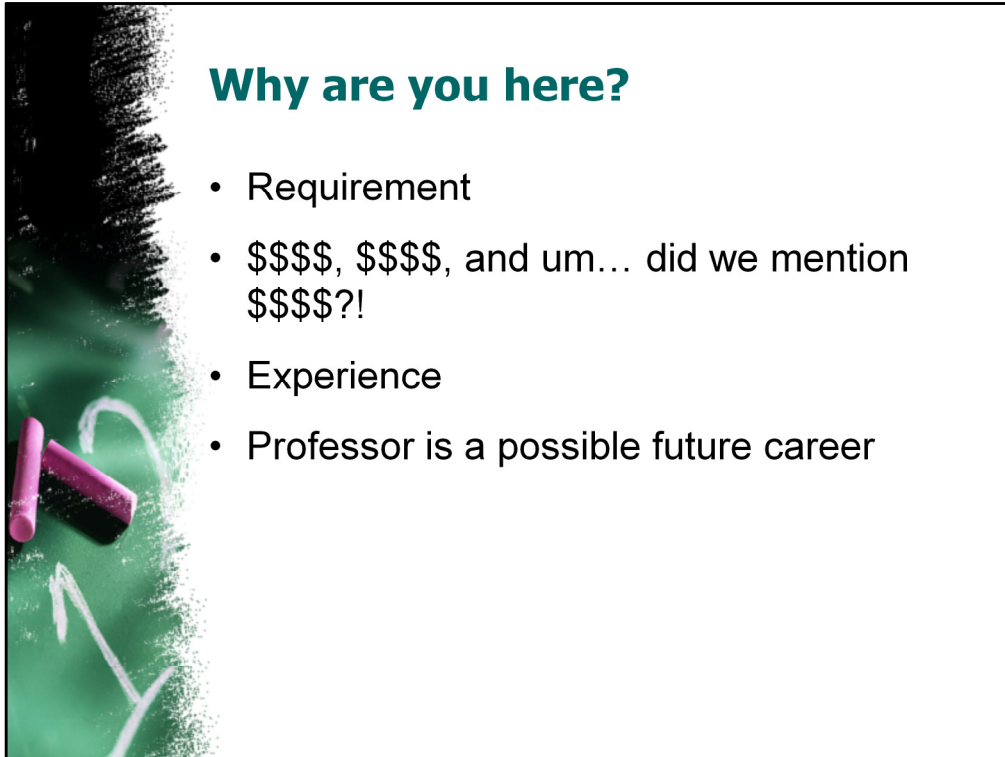
General comments:

They really enjoyed the both session and I received positive feedback from them at the break, happy that it was not going to be four hours of lecturing. I felt like they enjoyed the clips, visual speak, post-it notes and the clickers the best and seemed to get a lot out of the discussions. If I were to do it again, I would keep session 1 exactly the same. It went really well! Even though it included lots of action and had everyone moving around, I never felt like it was crazy. The second session had less movement from them, but it felt crazy at times. Maybe starting with the rubric after the video, working in small groups on the post-it notes, and then putting them on the board and making a final one as a group might have gone better. Then we would not have had so much digression in the middle of the grading. A rubric is a much needed practical aspect, but I felt it distracted from some of the other points I was trying to get out of the grading activity. It would then flow nicely into the policies and resources section. I would do away with the pre-lab prep and office hours sections. They were not really needed. Replacing these sections with a better activity of some kind to help them have more time at the end to reflect on what they learned and practical implementation might have worked better! Also, have them sign up for time slots for practice teaching the next day when they get back from break. I forgot that they love sleep as much as I do and have been getting to work early for the past week. I think I was almost got ran over when I said you can sign up, now! Letting them sign up when they get back from break will encourage them to get back on time, and let them stop worrying about it. Trying to explain the practice teaching without having them first sign up was useless. They just kept asking when they could sign up and did not pay attention until I realized this, let them sign up, and then continued my explanation. All in all, it was a very positive experience for me and I believe it was for them as well!



Begin with cheesy icebreaker “common ground”.

Introduce yourself including something unique or random about you. Anyone that shares that interest or commonality, must stand. The first one to stand continues with their own introduction, the others sit down, and the chain continues. This is finished when everyone is standing having introduced themselves.



These were their responses per email prior to workshop as to why they are teaching this semester.



## Harvard Dept of Chem and ChemBio

- In 2008, 23.5 percent of the Ph.D. recipients entered positions in academia, 20.5 percent accepted permanent positions in industry, 41 percent conducted postdoctoral research before accepting permanent positions in academia or industry, and 15 percent pursued other directions.



## **Why make an effort as a TA?**


- Why not? Consequences are low.
- Evaluations
- Identifies your own strengths.
- Disaster in the tenure track is much worse.
- Educational Grants
- NIH, NSF educational merit



## What do you want from your experience as a TA?

- Improve teaching and public speaking skills
- Prep for teaching later in life
- Become a better teacher
- Have some fun as a TA/ make friends
- Make chemistry fun for others
- Leadership development
- Better time management skills
- Experience

These are there responses per email prior to workshop.



## Outline

- Introduction
- Session 1:
  - *Roles and Relationships of TAs*
  - *Understanding how people learn*
  - *Teaching vs. Learning*
- Break (~3:00)
- Session 2:
  - *Practical aspects/situations*
  - *What does it mean to be a TA at Vandy?*
- Practice Teaching: Wednesday Morning




“Father Guido Sarducci's Five Minute University” video clip  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO8x8eoU3L4>

“Teaching without learning is  
just talking.”



Angelo & Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for  
College Teachers* (1993)



**Take a moment to put yourselves in the role of the person listed on your note card.**

- Professor (Prof.)
- Teaching assistant (TA)
- Vanderbilt Student (Student)

**Ask yourself:**

- If you were/are this person, how would you see the role of the TA?
- What would you want from your TA?

Divide them into their respective groups, have them pick a picture from VisualsSpeak that they identify with their response. Work as a team thinking about and summarizing responses on the board. Go around the room with each group explaining their answers.

Enduring Understanding: There are pros and cons to the TA role that can be either challenging or helpful.

What main points have we gained from this activity that help us identify roles and responsibilities of each, Professors, TA's and Students?



"The Devil Wears Prada" video clip about the cerulean blue sweater

<http://www.hulu.com/watch/13046/the-devil-wears-prada-cerulean-sweater>

- What does this clip illustrate about the differences between experts and novices?
- In what ways is Meryl Streep's character an effective teacher in this clip? In what ways is she not effective?
- See where this discussion goes. Give it up to 15 minutes or so if it's going well.
- What does HPL tell us about the differences between experts and novices?
- Miranda and Andy
- Anne Hathaway

**Experts notice patterns.**







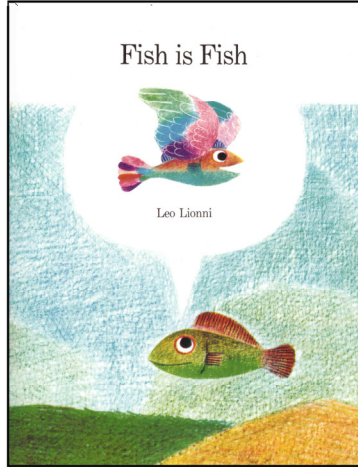
**Experts can  
quickly retrieve  
knowledge.**

Experts respond  
adaptively to new  
situations.



When we consider the novices in our classes, it's important not only to recognize the ways in which they are novices (that's being learner-centered) but also our goals for their learning. What kinds of expertise are we interested in developing in our students? That segues into our next video...

**Fish is Fish** by Leo Lionni



## **Fish is Fish** by Leo Lionni

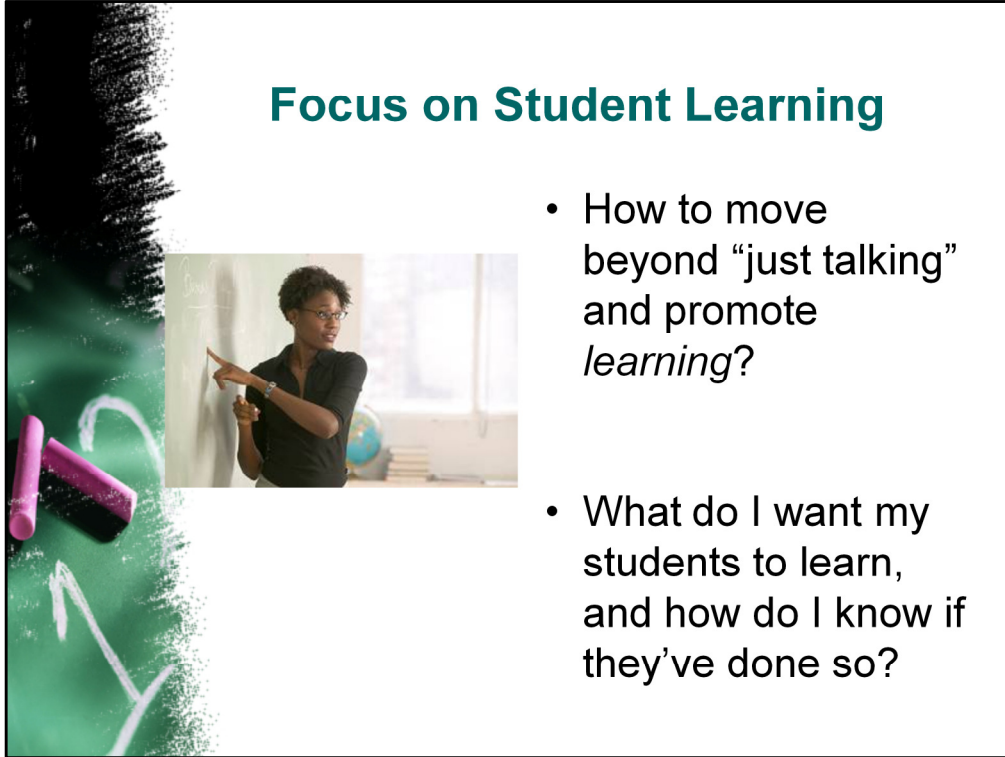


Watched a video reading of the children's book "Fish is Fish" by Leo Lionni leading to questions of students misconceptions, preconceptions and motivation in the classroom.



“It’s fantastic—there are things called birds that have wings and fly in the air”

## Focus on Student Learning



- How to move beyond “just talking” and promote *learning*?
- What do I want my students to learn, and how do I know if they’ve done so?

## **VU Class of 2011**

- 12.4% of applicants accepted (1590 enrolled)
- 42% live in fraternities / sororities
- ~60% receive some kind of financial aid
- Sports: varsity, intra-murals, sports clubs
- Volunteer, cultural, musical, religious activities

Help familiarize each of these new TA's with the students they will be teaching.

## High School Activities

- Socializing with friends – 11 to 15 hours per week (median response)
- Exercise or sport – 6 to 10 hours
- Studying or homework – 3 to 5 hours
- Watching TV – 3 to 5 hours
- Student clubs or groups – 1 to 2 hours

Yes, that's just 3 to 5 hours studying outside of school per week. Faculty often advise students to spend 2 hours studying outside of class for every hour in class. For a typical course load, that's 30 to 36 hours of studying per week.

# Vanderbilt Undergrads

Extracurricular Activities:

The Greek System

Volunteer Activities

Athletics and Recreation

Religious Activities

Arts and Culture





**Three basic motivators and which type of learner deals with each best:  
Competition, Fear of Failure and Challenge**

**Strategic Learners**

- These learners react well to competition and the chance to do better than anyone else.
- They often become strategic learners, making high grades but seldom grappling deeply enough to change their own perceptions.
- They are often “regurgitators”—learning material for the test and then quickly expunging the material to make room for something else.



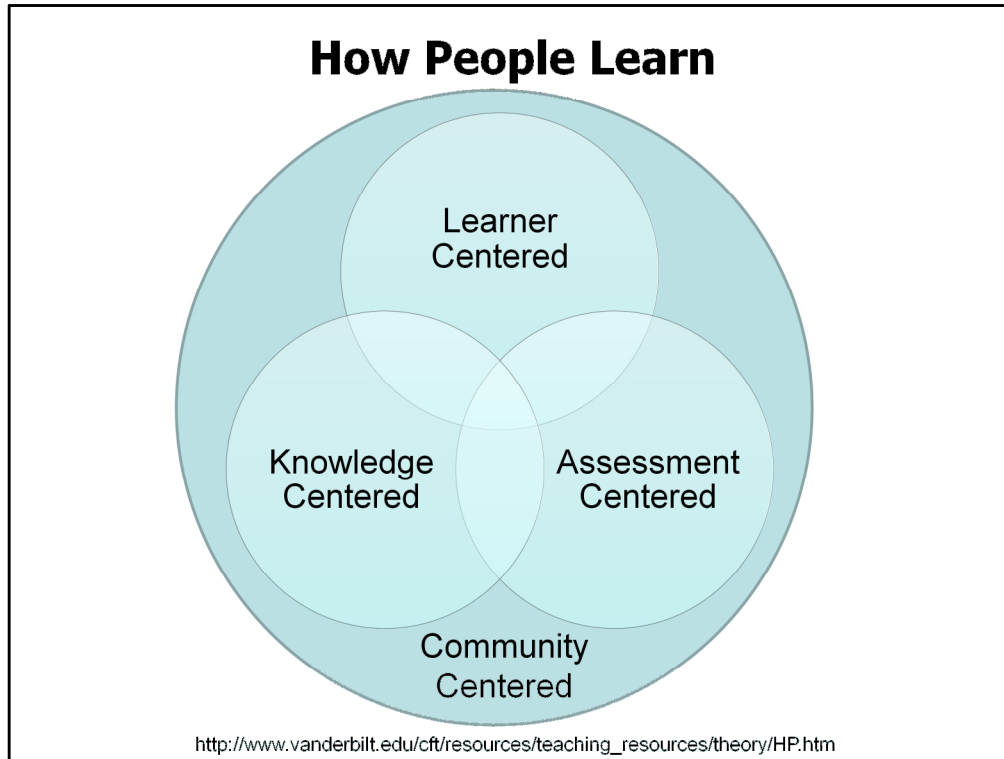
### **Surface Learners**

- These students seek to avoid failure, and as a result, they are never willing to invest enough of themselves to probe a topic deeply.
- They feel intelligent when they avoid those activities most likely to help them learn—struggling, grappling, and making mistakes.



### **Mastery Learners**

- These learners respond primarily to the challenge of mastering something, getting inside a subject, and trying to understand it in all its complexity.
- They feel intelligent when they initially do not understand something and are given the chance to work hard, figure it out, and learn something new in the process.
- These students tend to become deep learners.
- Practicing learner-centered teaching involves figuring out ways to motivate students to be deep learners!**
- Deep learning leads us to the next part of the HPL framework...



### Learner-centered

environments pay careful attention to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that learners bring to the educational setting

### Knowledge-centered


environments take seriously the need to help students become knowledgeable by learning in ways that lead to understanding and transfer

### Community-centered

environments foster norms for people learning from one another and continually attempting to improve

### Assessment-centered

environments provide frequent formal and informal opportunities for feedback focused on understanding



## **Preparing a Syllabus: Truth in Advertising**

- Course Overview
- Departmental Requirements
- Presentation of Material
- Expectations for Class Time
- Expectations for Outside of Class
- Instructor Responsibilities
- Student Responsibilities
- Assessment

Passed out sample syllabi and talked about things that could be included/ bad examples. Let them know it sets the tone for the class as well as sets out expectations.



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- “bookshelf spectrum, revisited” by chotda
- “good ol days” by emdot
- “My old Swiss army knife #01” by Luca Passoni



**BREAK TIME!**  
**SEE YOU BACK IN 15**  
**MINUTES!**

Handed out note cards and had them write:

- One thing they learned that they might be able to use in their own teaching
- One thing that was confusing or something they want to know more about



## Welcome back from break!

### Instructions

- Watch the people who are wearing white t-shirts.
- Count the number of passes they make to each other.
- Remain silent during the video as to not distract each other.



#### Bouncing ball video

While they are focusing so hard on counting the number of passes, very few of them saw the gorilla walk across the screen!

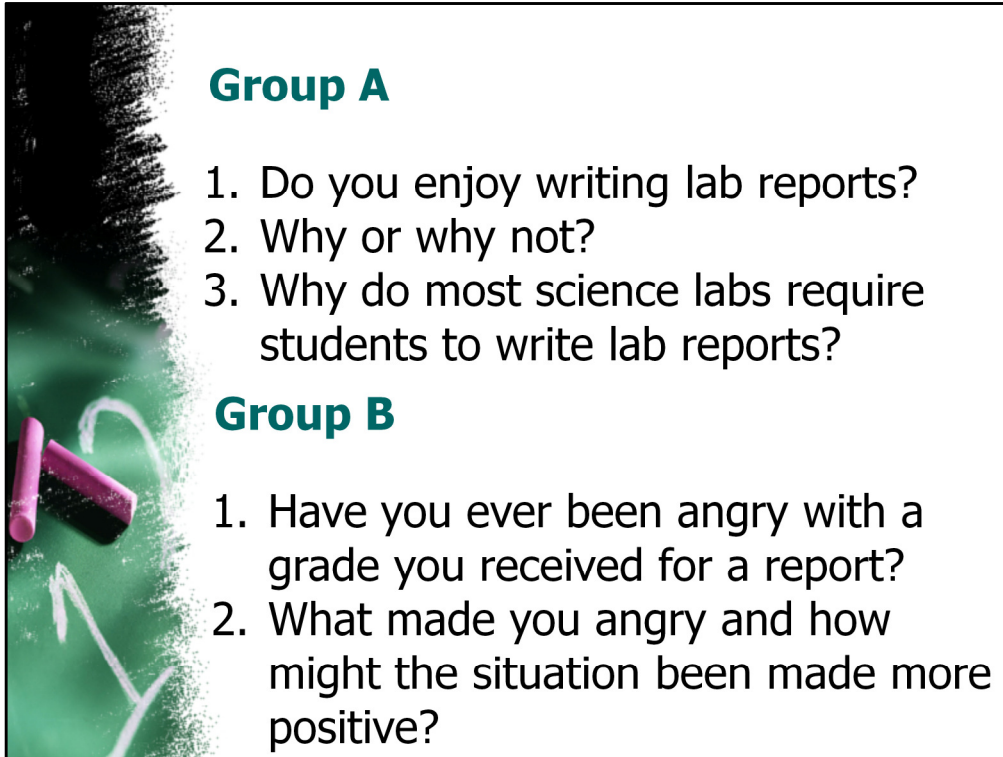
So many lessons we can take from this! See what they come up with!



## **Grading**

**Introduction to Lab Report Assessment  
and Importance of Instructions**

**Leslie Hiatt**



**Group A**

1. Do you enjoy writing lab reports?
2. Why or why not?
3. Why do most science labs require students to write lab reports?

**Group B**

1. Have you ever been angry with a grade you received for a report?
2. What made you angry and how might the situation been made more positive?


Break them up into small groups and have them converse on their topic.



## Why write lab reports?

- Practice Scientific writing
- Critical thinking
- Interpret others scientific writing
- What you get out/in
- Tradition
- Good teaching tool
- Scientific writing classes/workshops

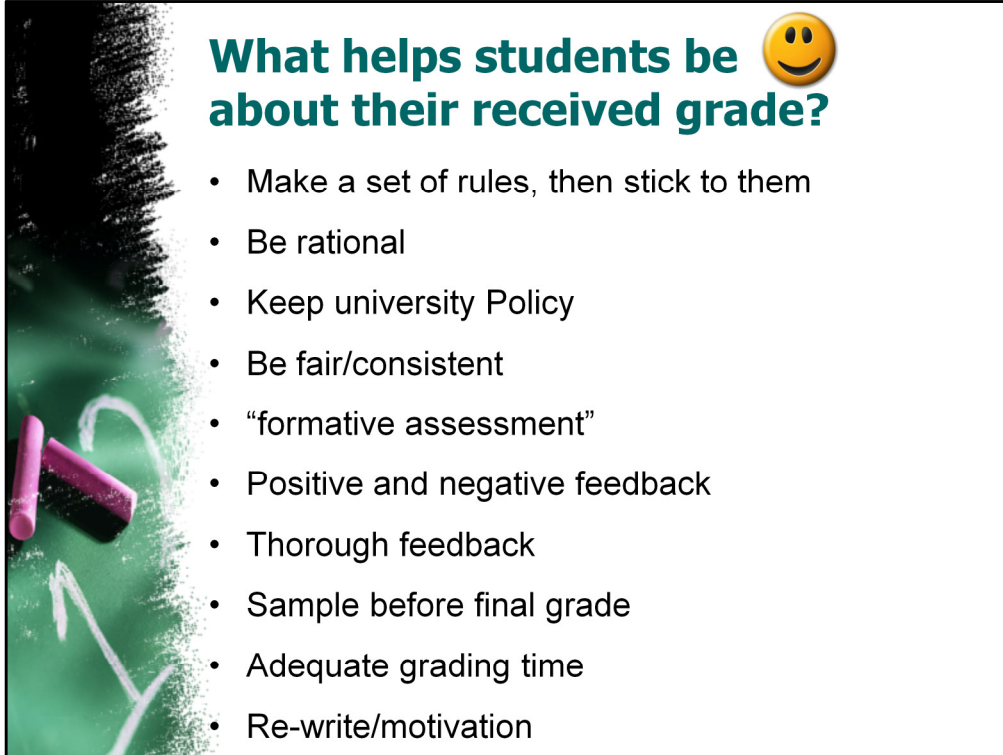
Summarized their thoughts with them live in front of the class after giving them a few minutes to discuss within their groups.



## Why write lab reports?

- Help improve writing skills
- Assess student's understanding of the lab
- One method of demonstrating content knowledge
- Help students learn from mistakes
- Assess your ability to teach in this avenue

My thoughts on the subject prepared ahead of time.



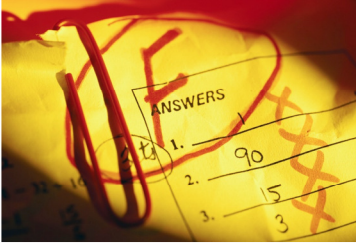

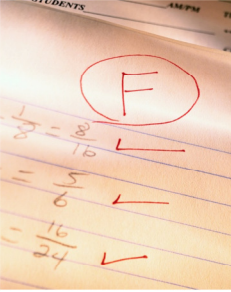

## What helps students be 😊 about their received grade?

- Make a set of rules, then stick to them
- Be rational
- Keep university Policy
- Be fair/consistent
- “formative assessment”
- Positive and negative feedback
- Thorough feedback
- Sample before final grade
- Adequate grading time
- Re-write/motivation


Summarized their thoughts with them live in front of the class after giving them a few minutes to discuss within their groups.

## What helps students be 😊 about their received grade?

- Helpful Comments
- Well explained Directions
- HELP! Especially on the first one

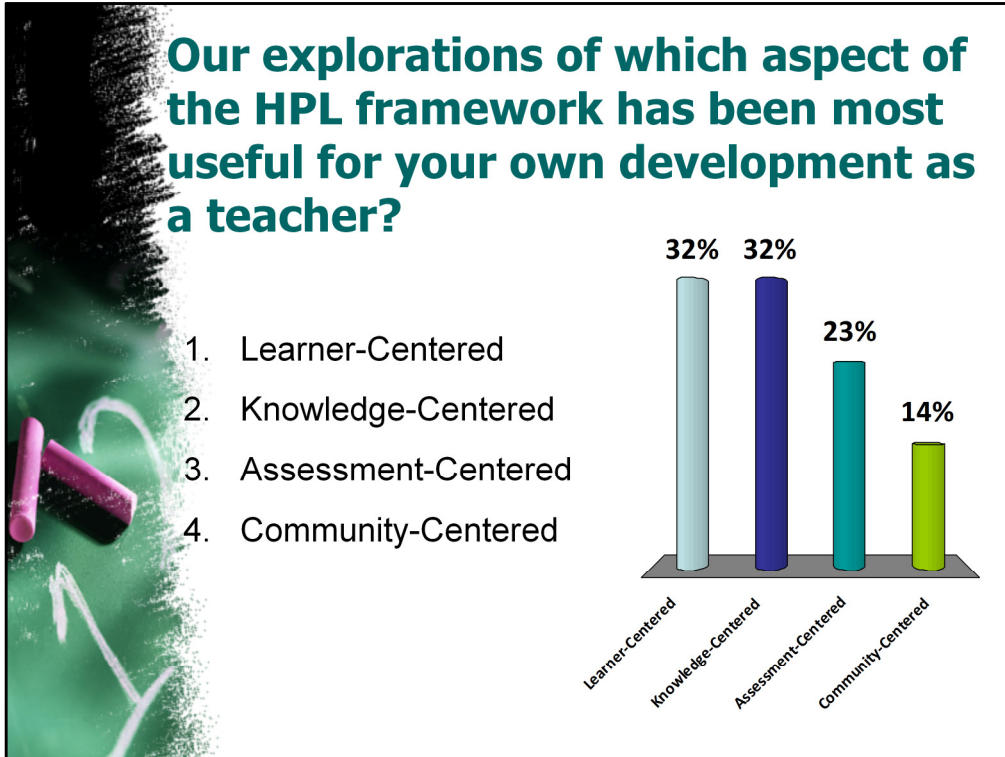


My thoughts on the subject prepared ahead of time.



## Principles of Assessment

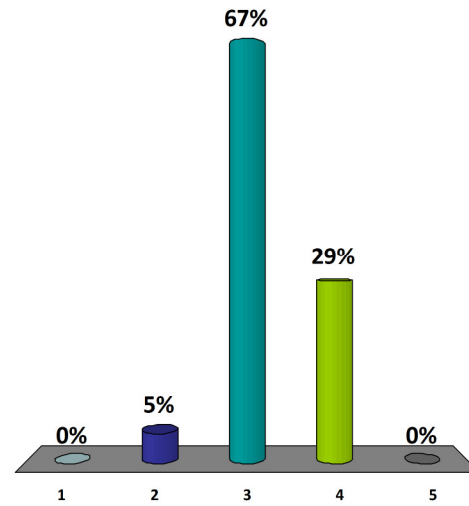
- Without assessment, misconceptions endure
- Clear concise requirements alleviate confusion and make everyone happier.
- Understand that each student is unique and their learning styles will be as well.
- Help students learn from mistakes and misunderstandings and apply the knowledge gained to new learning tasks.
- Cooperation within TAs is important to ensure fair, consistent grading.
- Informal assessment can help you tailor your teaching to the needs of your students.



Clickers! The room was polled and their answers tabulated automatically.

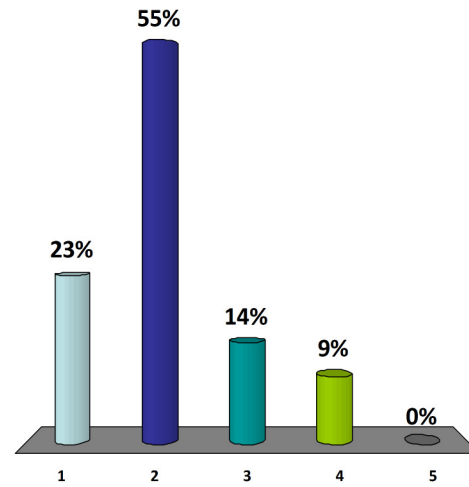
## Please give a grade for the sample introduction section

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. F



## Please give a grade for the sample experimental section

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. F



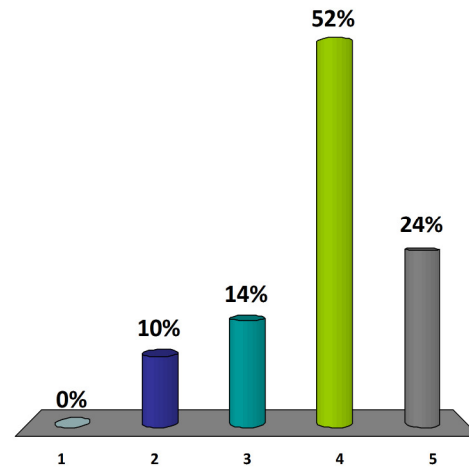
## Rubric?

Point Value (10 max)	Introduction- Would be expected?	Experimental- What would be negative qualities? Positive?
2.5(5)	Background/Theory	Organize- Reproducible
2.5(3)	Pertinent Eq/diagram/figures	Formatting, grammar, tense, list vs paragraph, 12 pt, margins
2.5(1)	Formatting-No experimental data	Concise- not verbose
2.5(1)	Purpose/-Overall application	Significant Digits Correct, actual value

We made a rubric to help us re-grade and try achieve a uniform grading system within the TA's. I encouraged them to collaborate with each other as they graded this semester.

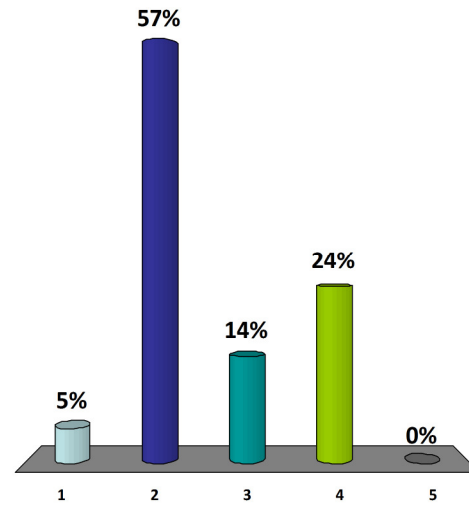
## Please give a grade for the sample introduction section

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. F



## Please give a grade for the sample experimental section

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. F

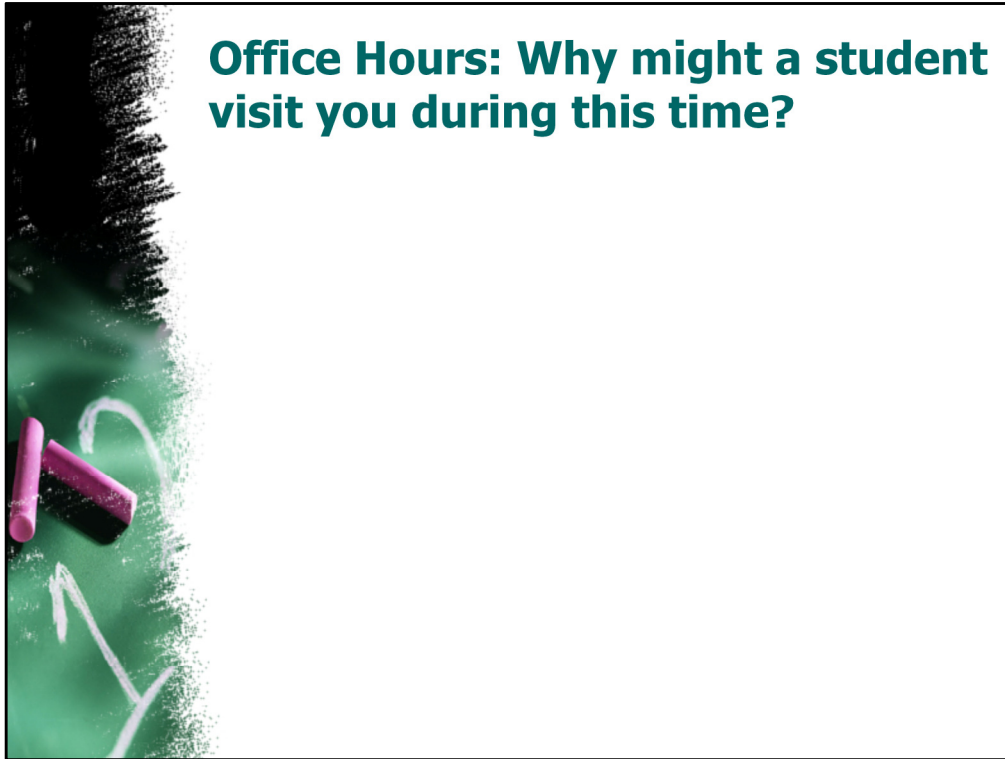





## The First Day of Class

- Introduce yourself.
- Allow the students to introduce themselves.
- Work hard to set up a warm and comfortable learning environment from the beginning.

I wanted to talk about some generic responsibilities to help relieve any fears that might have as they begin TA-ing.



Open ended discussion.



## Office Hours: Enduring Understandings

- Know the content well enough so that you don't get really stuck.
- Model the problem solving process for the students whenever possible.
- Balance helping one student with making the session useful for all students. (Triage)
- Help students enough but not too much. (Hard in group settings!)
- You never know what to expect from students.

### *Decisions/Discussion questions*

Work through problems ahead of time?

Solve the problems live in front of the student?

Work entire problem or just do troubleshooting?

Start with mini-lecture? Or summarize at the end?

Keep the focus on you or have the student work problems while you circulate and troubleshoot?

Planned session or very reactive session?

In different teaching contexts, different answers might apply!

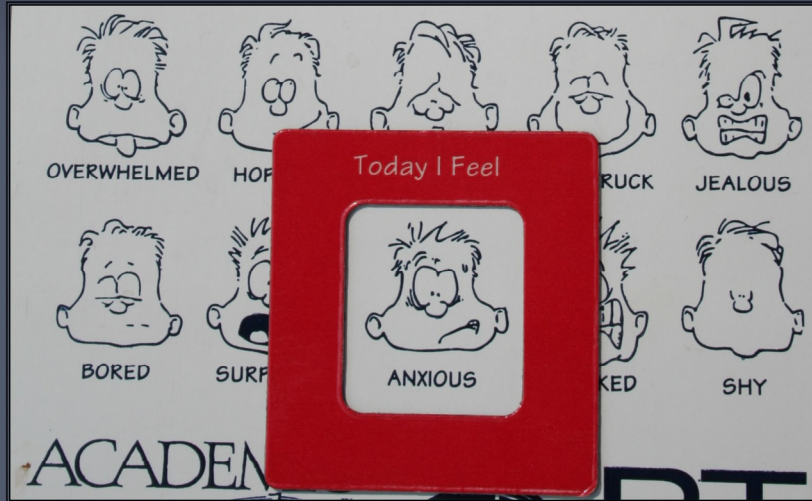
## Responsibilities as a 1<sup>st</sup> Year Graduate Student

- Taking Courses
  - Exams & Quizzes
  - Problem Sets
  - Homework
  - Studying
  - Term Papers
  - ~ 20 hrs/week
- Rotation Research
  - ~ 20 hrs/week
- Teaching Responsibilities
  - Lab TA
  - Grading
  - Office hours
  - ~ 20 hrs/week

**60 hrs/week!!!**

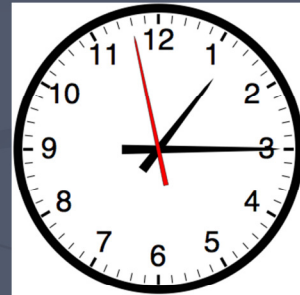
Welcome to grad school!

# Feeling Anxious Yet?



## It's All a Balancing Act

- Time management is key to survival
  - Plan ahead to place grading at convenient times where tests are not as near
  - Pressure builds as semester progresses
    - Deadlines typically fall during the final month of the semester- so try not to get behind
    - Ask older students what was expected in the class for a “good” grade
- Stay mentally/physically healthy
  - Utilize free time to enjoy yourselves



<http://blog.wolfram.com/images/carlson/clock.gif>

# Vanderbilt Policies and Resources



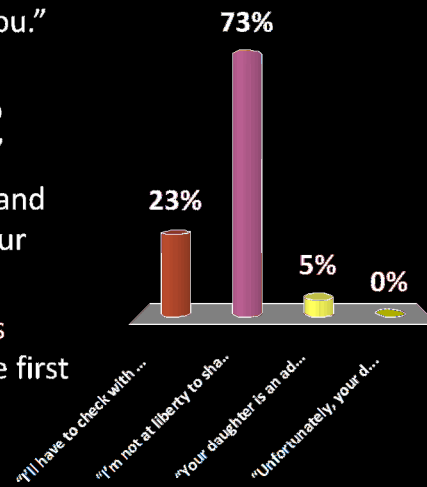
Familiarized them with these policies and resources in the chances that any of these situations arise.

## Scenario #1

During your regular office hours in mid-October, the father of one of your first-year students calls. He explains that his daughter received a deficiency report in your course. The father is concerned about his daughter's adjustment to college, and he wants to talk with you about her performance in your class, asking specifically about attendance and grades. What should you say?

## Scenario #1

- A. "I'll have to check with your daughter to make sure it's okay for me to discuss her grades with you."
- B. "I'm not at liberty to share that information. I encourage you to discuss this with your daughter."
- C. "Your daughter is an adult now and her grades are really none of your business. Good bye."
- D. "Unfortunately, your daughter is doing poorly. She got a D on the first test and an F on the second."



## Scenario #1

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment
- See the FERPA brochure in your packet for more information.
- Commentary by Lydia Norfleet, Associate University Registrar 🗣️

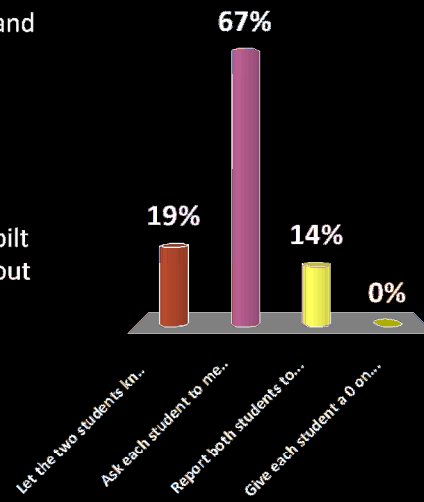


## Scenario #2

You've recently finished grading your students' first assignments, and you notice that two of them are identical except for formatting. Your students were encouraged to work together on the non-graded homework, but they were to do their own work on the graded assignment. What should you do?

## Scenario #2

- A. Let the two students know that it looks like they have collaborated inappropriately on the assignment, and ask them to redo the assignment.
- B. Ask each student to meet with you individually. Show each student his assignment and ask him to explain himself.
- C. Report both students to the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Honor Council, without first contacting the students.
- D. Give each student a 0 on the assignment.



## Scenario #2

From the “Honor System” section of the Faculty Manual:

“A faculty member should neither punish nor excuse Honor Code violations. If a faculty member has reason to believe that a breach of the Honor System has been committed, he or she is obligated to take action in one of the following ways:

- Issue a personal warning to the student(s) suspected of academic dishonesty that, unless the action(s) that led to his or her suspicion ceases, the incident will be reported to the Honor Council, or
- Report the incident to the Honor Council.”

## Scenario #2

“The flagrancy of the violation determines which course of action the faculty member or student is expected to follow. The option of warning the student personally is open to the instructor only in the event of a minor suspicion or if there is not evidence available. If suspicion is strong or if evidence is available, the instructor is obligated to report the incident to the Honor Council. It should be understood, however, that the instructor need not have evidence in hand before notifying the Council - just suspicion well founded. The Council will investigate all cases.”

## Scenario #2

- Vanderbilt Undergraduate Honor Code
- [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student\\_handbook/chapter2.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter2.html)
- See the CFT's [Getting Started Teaching at Vanderbilt](#) Web page for further information:
- Commentary by Abby Stufflebam, 2008-09 President, Undergraduate Honor Council 🗨️

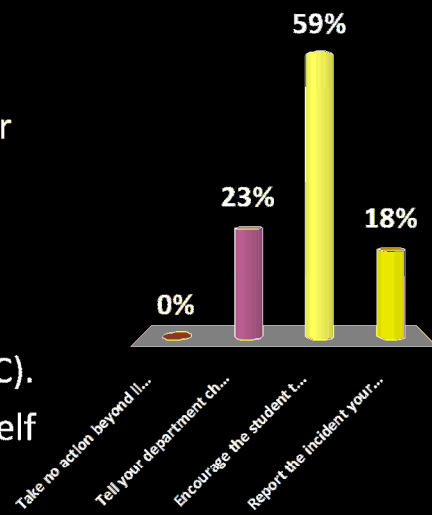


## Scenario #3

One of your students stops by your office hours to ask for help with an assignment from another class, one taught by a senior faculty member in your department. You recommend that she ask that professor for help. She indicates that she had gone to see him recently about an earlier assignment and that during their conversation, the professor asked her if she would have dinner with him that evening. She says that the professor implied that if she did, then there would be no more trouble with her grades in the course. What should you do?

## Scenario #3

- A. Take no action beyond listening to the student at this time.
- B. Tell your department chair about the incident.
- C. Encourage the student to report the incident to the Vanderbilt Opportunity Development Center (ODC).
- D. Report the incident yourself to the ODC.



## Scenario #3

- Vanderbilt Sexual Harassment Policy
- See the brochure on sexual harassment in your packet for further information.
- Commentary by Anita Jenious, Director, Opportunity Development Center

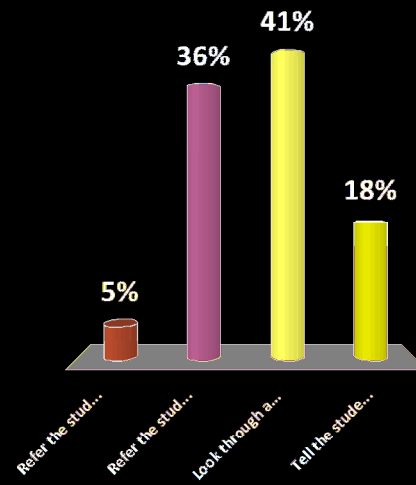


## Scenario #4

One of your first-year students comes to your office hour the day after the first test in your course. (The test hasn't been graded yet.) He tells you that he did a really poor job on the test and that it was a very stressful experience for him. He says he panicked during the test and only finished half of it. What should you do?

## Scenario #4

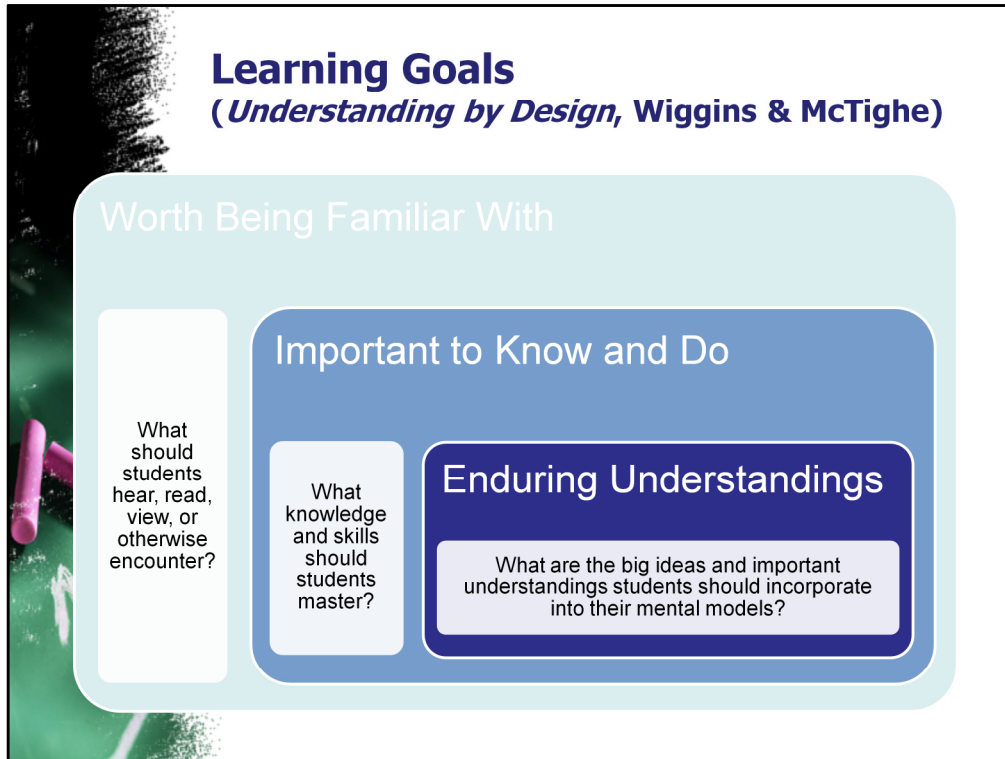
1. Refer the student to the Opportunity Development Center.
2. Refer the student to the Psychological & Counseling Center.
3. Look through a copy of the test with the student, asking him to describe the problems he had with each question.
4. Tell the student, "Hey, this is college. Get your act together."



## Scenario #4

- Vanderbilt Student Services
- See the CFT's [Getting Started Teaching at Vanderbilt](#) Web page for further information.
- Commentary by Rhonda Venable, Director, Psychological & Counseling Center





Direct participants to the back of the *Understanding by Design* handout for a description of three categories of learning goals: enduring understandings, important to know and to do, worth being familiar with. Describe some example goals from each category.

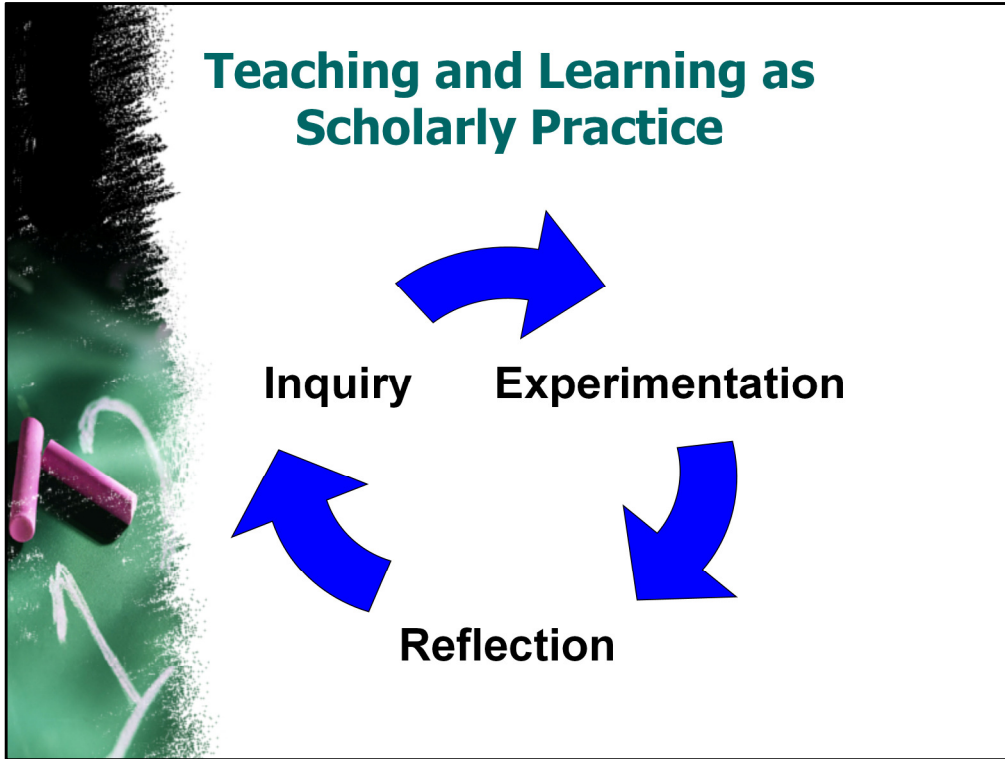
Separated them into small groups and had them design learning goals for their upcoming labs.

## Teaching and Learning as Scholarly Practice

Inquiry

Experimentation

Reflection





## Final Thoughts

- Center for Teaching
  - *A la carte*
  - *Value meal*
- Feel free to drop by anytime during the semester! I will organize some kind of get together, normally involves food, sometime during the course of the semester.
- Sign up for practice teaching



## Practice Teaching Logistics

- Leslie, Josh Swartz, Ralph Mueller, Stephen Chau
- Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> SC
  - *Session 1: 9-10:30*
  - *Session 2: 10:45- 12:15*
  - *Attend either Session 1 or 2*

# Handouts

Email sent prior to TAO:

Welcome to Vanderbilt! I hope your move to Nashville has been a good one. I will be leading the chemistry section of TAO (Teaching Assistant Orientation) next Tuesday. Please answer these questions and send your responses to: [leslie.hiatt@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:leslie.hiatt@vanderbilt.edu) . I hope this workshop will be beneficial to each of you as you begin TAing.

1. Have you been a TA before?
2. Why are you TAing?
3. What does being a TA mean?
4. What do you want to get out of TAing?
5. What would be the most helpful to you at TAO?

A little about me: I work for David Cliffler (Bioanalytical/Electrochemistry) and am beginning my fourth year here. I have been a TA for both general chemistry and forensics here at Vandy and organic chemistry at my undergrad. I look forward to meeting each of you!

If you have not registered for TAO yet, please do so now:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/cft/regdev/home.php?event=100152>

Thanks for your participation!

Leslie

## TAO Training 2009

### Teaching Policies and Resources

#### *Scenario #1*

During your regular office hours in mid-October, the father of one of your first-year students calls. He explains that his daughter received a deficiency report in your course. The father is concerned about his daughter's adjustment to college, and he wants to talk with you about her performance in your class, asking specifically about attendance and grades. What should you say?

- A. "I'll have to check with your daughter to make sure it's okay for me to discuss her grades with you."
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- D. Give each student a 0 on the assignment.

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One of your students stops by your office hours to ask for help with an assignment from another class, one taught by a senior faculty member in your department. You recommend that she ask that professor for help. She indicates that she had gone to see him recently about an earlier assignment and that during their conversation, the professor asked her if she would have dinner with him that evening. She says that the professor implied that if she did, then there would be no more trouble with her grades in the course. What should you do?

- A. Take no action beyond listening to the student at this time.
- B. Tell your department chair about the incident.
- C. Encourage the student to report the incident to the Vanderbilt Opportunity Development Center.
- D. Report the incident yourself to the ODC.

*Scenario #4*

One of your first-year students comes to your office hour the day after the first test in your course. (The test hasn't been graded yet.) He tells you that he did a really poor job on the test and that it was a very stressful experience for him. He says he panicked during the test and only finished half of it. What should you do?

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- B. Refer the student to the Psychological and Counseling Center.
- C. Look through a copy of the test with the student, asking him to describe the problems he had with each question.
- D. Tell the student, "Hey, this is college. Get your act together."

## Chemistry Lab Syllabus

TA:

Email:

Office Hours:

Mail Box: Graduate Student mail room (under the stairwell on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Bldg. 7)

### Lab Rules:

- Follow lab safety rules: 3 strike policy.  
Strike 1: A warning  
Strike 2: Points off your lab  
Strike 3: Kicked out of lab and receive a zero for the lab.
- If you come inappropriately dressed you will be sent home to change.
- Time management is a must. I want you to work as efficiently as possible, so you have plenty of time to finish. Stragglers will be asked to leave at the scheduled end of lab.
- I will not give answers, but I will help lead you to the correct answers.
- Goggles must be worn at all times.
- Bring your Lab manual and notebook to each session. Be sure to be taking notes and writing down ALL relevant procedures and data in your lab notebook. I will be collecting a carbon copy at the end of each class.

### Grading:

Grading will be conducted in accordance with the standards set by the course advisor. There are 100 possible points for the semester. During this semester formal lab reports will only be required upon your TA's request. Work for most labs this semester will be due at the end of lab and no late work will be accepted. For these handwritten assignments, my policy is that if I cannot read it, it is wrong and will receive a less than satisfying grade. So take your time and write neatly. Grades for each typed lab report will encompass the concept questions, calculations, accuracy and precision, correct identification of analytes, clarity, writing style, and significant figures. I reserve the right to take off points for improper grammar and spelling if the problem becomes excessive. A good suggestion is to type all assignments (double-spaced, Times New Roman size 12 font with 1 inch margins all around). Failure to do so could result in a grade

reduction at the TA's discretion. Typed lab reports are due at the beginning of the next appropriate lab period. Lab reports will be accepted up to **ONE WEEK LATE** but with significant penalties (10% per day). These guidelines are to protect you and help me. If there are questions about grading or if you felt there has been a grading error, you have one week starting the day the assignment is returned to see me during office hours or by appointment. No questions about grading or grades will be taken during the regular lab period. Your lab work will be graded in light of the following statement: "minimum effort receives a minimum grade." Just doing enough to finish the experiment and handing in a report is considered an "average job", and an "average job" will receive an average grade.

### Lab Cleanliness:

In the past, students in this course have had problems in keeping the laboratory areas clean. Since this is a matter of personal safety we will be following the motto: "leave things BETTER and the way you found them." I will not accept any students work until his/her personal lab area is clean and I have inspected it. Furthermore, the class as a whole will be responsible for keeping the community lab areas clean. This includes the weighing areas, side counters, and hoods. Students will not be permitted to leave until I confirm that their assigned areas are clean.

### Other Information:

"Instructor Evaluation" is my evaluation of your overall performance and counts for a total of 10% of your grade. Things that will lower your evaluation include but are not limited to: constantly removing goggles, failure to clean up bench top, not completing assignments on time, poor laboratory technique, and inappropriate behavior.

Write everything in your lab notebook. Accurately recorded observations will greatly assist you when writing lab reports. I will be checking your notebooks periodically and lacking notebooks will result in a reduction to the "instructor evaluation."

Feel free to come to my office hours or any other TA's office hours for help with anything lab or course related.

## Chemistry Lab Syllabus

### TA:

Lab Residence:

E-mail:

Office Hours:

Mail Box: Below stairwell on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (of SC building 7)

### Lab Rules:

- 1) Follow lab safety rules: 3 strike policy
  - a. Strike 1: A warning
  - b. Strike 2: Points off your lab (~2pts)
  - c. Strike 3: Kicked out of lab and receive a zero for the lab
- 2) If you come inappropriately dressed (must have closed-toed shoes and long pants), you will be sent home to change.
- 3) Time management is a must. I want you to work as efficiently as possible so you have plenty of time to finish. Stragglers will be asked to leave at the scheduled end of lab.

### Grading:

Grading will be conducted in accordance with the standards set up by the course advisor.

There are 1000 possible points for the semester. The lab reports are due as you enter the lab

along with anything else assigned. All lab reports must be typed (double space, size 12 font,

Times New Roman, 1.0" margins) and stapled. Failure to do so will result in a grade reduction

at my discretion. Grades for each typed lab report encompass organization (title pg-intro-proc.-

results-discsn-conclsn-references), calculations, accuracy and precision, correct identification of

analytes, clarity, writing style, and significant figures. Labs should be written in 3<sup>rd</sup> person,

past tense, and passive voice (ex: The door was opened. An incorrect ex: I opened the door.)

Typed lab reports are due at the beginning of the next scheduled lab period. Lab reports will be

collected at 1:10pm; once lab has started (after 1:10pm) and quizzes have been distributed,

lab reports will still be accepted, but they will be considered late and receive a 10%

deduction. Lab reports will be accepted up to a week late but with significant penalties (10% deduction per day). These guidelines are to protect you and help me.

Remember the university's stand on the Honor System before submitting any work as your own!!!! I will not tolerate plagiarism or group efforts on individual work. If you wish to use information from another source, you must cite it using MLA format. Ex) Author. Source. Publication information. Page numbers.

If there are questions about grading or if you felt there has been a grading error, you have one week starting the day the assignment is returned to see me. No questions about grading or grades will be taken during the regular lab period, but I am willing to go over your reports during my office hours, or another prearranged time. Your lab work will be graded in light of the following statement, "minimum effort receives a minimum grade." Just doing enough to finish the experiment and handing in a report is considered an "average job," and an "average job" will receive an average grade.

### Miscellaneous:

A "Technique and Safety" evaluation of your overall performance will be 1.5% of your grade. **Things that will lower your evaluation include but are not limited to:** constantly removing goggles, failure to keep lab area clean, not completing assignments on time, poor laboratory technique, and inappropriate behavior.

Write everything in your lab notebook. All measurements, observations, and a rough step-by-step procedure should be in your laboratory notebook. Accurately recorded observations will greatly assist you when writing lab reports. Specific lab notebook expectations are listed in your lab text.

I HAVE RECEIVED, READ, AND UNDERSTAND THE SPRING 2006 CHEM 212A LAB  
SYLLABUS GIVEN TO ME BY MY LAB TA.

---

Student signature

DATE

---

Student name (print)

---

Student **preferred** name if different from above entries

**Instructor:** Grace Zoorob

Chem 227 W, Spring 2008, 3 credit hrs

**TA:** Leslie Hiatt

Email: [leslie.hiatt@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:leslie.hiatt@vanderbilt.edu)

Office hours: Monday 3-5 in SC 5512

Mail Box: Below stairwell on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of SC building #7

**Course Objectives:**

- Understand experimental design and its direct application to forensics
- Become comfortable with the analytical techniques utilized
- Improve writing skills to prepare students for post-graduate work

**Course Expectations:**

I want to help you succeed in this course. Please feel free to stop by for help during my office hours or send me an email with any questions. If you are working hard, I will work hard to help you.

**Lab Rules:**

1. Follow lab safety rules: 3 strike policy
  - a. Strike 1: Warning
  - b. Strike 2: Points off your lab
  - c. Strike 3: Kicked out and receive a zero for the lab
2. If you come without appropriate lab attire, you will be sent home to change. (Closed toe shoes and long pants)
3. Quizzes will be handed out at the beginning of class. If you miss it due to tardiness, you will receive a zero. I will also not delay the whole class to let you finish if you arrive late.
4. Pre-labs need to be turned in at the beginning of lab. Lab reports are due one week after the experiments are completed. No late work will be accepted.

**Grading and Assessment:**

Each lab report will be worth 100 points and each quiz will be worth 5 points. There will be 8 lab reports in all. Please review Vanderbilt's honor code as no dishonesty will be tolerated.

([http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student\\_handbook/chapter2.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter2.html))

Laboratory reports need to follow the format of a research paper in the American Chemical Society journal. These reports are the primary writing assignment in the course. They will be graded on content and scientific writing style (format, organization, clarity, grammar etc.) using a detailed rubric. Students are encouraged to turn in a draft lab report for the first experiment only and schedule a conference with the TA to get feedback. All other submitted laboratory reports are final.

If there are any questions about grading, or if you feel there has been an error, please see me during my office hours.

# Questions TAs Might Ask Their Supervisors

Misunderstandings occur between TA and professors when both take each other for granted and expect one to guess the needs and feelings of the other. Professors who have worked with many TAs sometimes assume every TA knows all of their wishes. And TAs who are new to a professor need to be told what is expected.

The most important element in a relationship between a TA and the faculty member responsible for the class is open communication. This should be established at the beginning of the semester and maintained throughout the course. TAs and professors should discuss the framework and the background of the course so that they can work together to teach the course more effectively. TAs should ask the professor for his or her decisions on many of the following matters before the course begins.

## TA Responsibilities

- Will I be lecturing?
  - On a regular basis? Occasionally? When the instructor is absent?
- Will I be leading discussions?
  - On a regular basis? Occasionally? When the instructor is absent?
  - If yes, should I:
    - Stay close to the text or lectures?
    - Encourage all students to talk?
    - Do most of the talking?
    - Deal only with student questions?
- Will I be tutoring and/or giving individual assistance?
  - How much help is too much?
  - What kind of assistance should I give?
- Will I be holding review sessions?
- Will I be conducting/supervising laboratories?
  - Obtaining and keeping track of supplies and materials?
  - Designing or revising experiments?
  - Giving demonstrations?
  - In case of emergency, what do I do?
- Do I need to hold office hours?
  - If so, how many hours per week? When?
  - Should they be coordinated with the instructor's?
- Do I need to attend class?
- Do I need to proctor the exams?
- Will I be evaluating/grading papers, projects, reports, quizzes, exams, or student participation?
- What are the criteria for assignment grades?
  - What is the process/formula for combining graded work to come up with a final course grade?
  - Will I be furnished with an answer key, or will I have to prepare one?
  - Are there any special instructions for the material that I am grading?
  - When grading homework, should I be concerned with the student's approach to the problem or simply the final answer?
  - Can we discuss grading after I receive the first assignment?
  - Can I penalize students for sloppy work?
  - What do I do about grade protests? Will the instructor review disputed grades?

- How much time will I have for grading?
- Who records the grades?
- Should I make two copies of all grades?
- How much autonomy or latitude will I have?
  - To try things? To present new ideas?
  - To present perspectives different from the instructor?
- What is the procedure in this department for handling student issues such as:
  - Plagiarism or cheating on tests?
  - Grade appeals?
  - Grievances?

## Class Format

- What exactly are the goals of the course?
  - Is it a prerequisite for future courses?
  - Is it a general education course for non-majors?
  - What particular skills and/or expertise is it intended to build?
- Do I need to develop my own syllabus, or will one be provided?
- Will I be expected to create and/or use a course site on [OAK](#)?
- Will I be using AV material/equipment?
  - What equipment?
  - Am I responsible for getting and returning it? Whom do I call to schedule equipment?
- Can students collaborate on homework/lab reports? How does the honor code pertain to my course? What do I do if I suspect someone of cheating?

## Resources

- Will you provide me with a textbook and/or other materials for the course?
- Are there additional materials that would help prepare me for the course?
  - Texts? Manuals? Guides? Test items?
- Where do I get supplies that I may need to perform my job (i.e., copying, enrollment sheets, etc.)?

## Supervision

- Who will supervise me? How? How often?
- What should I do and whom should I contact if I can't make a lab/discussion section?
- How will I be evaluated? By whom? How will I be informed of the results of any evaluation?

---

Adapted from: *Teaching Pedagogy to Teaching Assistants: A Handbook for 398T Instructors*. Karron G. Lewis, ed., The Center for Teaching Effectiveness, The University of Texas at Austin, 1992.