

A Climate of Respect: A Handbook for Teaching at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa



*Center for Teaching Excellence
Office of Faculty Development and
Academic Support
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Fall 2002*

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A'ō Aku A'ō Mai

Alberta
Pualani
Hopkins

One of the first word games native speakers of English learn to play is "Opposites." As children learning to speak we are taught to respond with the correct opposite word - come/go, teach/learn. Early on it is ingrained in our subconscious that not only are these things different from each other, they are in conflict and are contradictory to each other. After all, that is what it means to be opposite, to be opposed. In learning to conceptualize in this fashion, it follows logically that only one action can be performed at a time. One of the most common English expressions of confusion is, "I didn't know if I was coming or going!"

Embedded in the structure of English language are ways of seeing the world, one's place in it, and one's relation to others within it. So when professor and students come together in the classroom, teaching and learning are viewed as two discrete activities, performed by at least two different actors. There are two events, each with its own label; never mind that they involve a common group of participants acting *simultaneously* in a common setting. The vocabulary of opposites imposes its own dichotomy on what is happening, and the expectation of who plays what role is defined by this division.

Contrast this with the holistic world view of Hawaiians and other Polynesians. Where English uses four words - come/go, teach/learn - Hawaiian uses two - *hele, a'ō*. How is this possible?

We use the word "*hele*" to describe a person moving through space; whether a person is coming or going is really a matter of the perspective of the speaker. I would describe a person moving toward me, that is, coming, as "*hele mai*"; when that person moves away from me, that is, goes, I would say "*hele aku*." "*Mai*" and "*aku*" are directionals that describe the flow of any action in relation to the speaker. Of significance here is that there is only *one* action, and that this action changes directions and moves back and forth.

So it is with the exchange of information and knowledge. Where English gives us "teach" and "learn," Hawaiian gives us "*a'ō aku, a'ō mai*." When I gather with people in a classroom, we are all there to *a'ō*. As I share my knowledge and understanding of a subject, from my perspective I am in the "*a'ō aku*" mode; from the students' perspective, it is "*a'ō mai*" time. When I stop speaking and they respond with their insights and experiences, they begin to "*a'ō aku*", and it is my chance to "*a'ō mai*." We are engaged, then, in a common activity with an elliptical, reciprocal flow that informs and energizes all participants. This may be imagined as a process *inside which* teacher and student are brought into being as common participants.



If a group of people can establish this pattern in a classroom, truly exciting things happen, and burnout and boredom are minimized. Accomplishing this atmosphere of mutual participation requires letting go of a lifetime of attitudes about who does what in a classroom so that assuming responsibility for keeping the action flowing back and forth belongs to everyone. Teachers must be willing to learn and students must be empowered to teach so that these processes can be transformed from an oppositional teaching/learning to reciprocal exchanging and sharing knowledge for the benefit of all.

E A'O AKU A'O MAI KAKOU!



Pua Hopkins, teacher, workshop leader, community organizer, and essayist, establishes our departure point for this handbook for entering faculty, lecturers, and teaching assistants at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The classroom represents the community that surrounds it and Pua's essay reminds us as teachers that we too must find a way to take our part within that community. The first step towards locating ourselves there is to reflect upon what it is that we imagine teaching to be, and what assumptions we make about learning. It is possible that the process of *a'o* reminds us of something that we have experienced, but which has not been firmly or well articulated in our broad cultural norms regarding teaching.

Most of what we learn and teach is learned and taught outside of the classroom. Yet, the latter is the context to which we limit our discussions of teaching. Once we recognize the ubiquity of teaching and learning in everyday life, classroom teaching ceases to be so mysterious a process.¹

¹Eisenberg, C. January 1987. "The Stresses of Beginning Teaching". *On Teaching and Learning: The Journal of the Harvard-Danforth Center*. Harvard University. P. 17.

It is possible that *a'o* resembles the processes of how we have learned many things outside of the formal classroom. It may be that it is difficult to recall those moments precisely, because they may represent a state of being that we can only recognize as “natural”, because things seemed to come so naturally to us. *A'o* represents at least two possibilities to those of us outside of Hawaiian language and culture; a way of reconceptualizing our work and our role within the classroom as well as a way of aligning our classroom to our community, our teaching work to the wide world.

...one does need to understand the subject matter thoroughly in order to present it accurately; that is, with a careful exposition of its logic and the premises on which it is based and with explicit acknowledgement of its uncertainties. At the same time, one must care enough for the student and for the process of teaching to invest the topic with the energy and enthusiasm needed to bring it to life. After all, the relationship between teacher and students is different than that between books and readers. In terms of content, there is little a (teacher) can say which she or he cannot write more concisely. What makes a course more than the sum of the readings on which it is based is the social experience; the sets of relationships between teacher and students and students with one another. The quality of that experience does not flow automatically from the subject matter; it is *created* by the teacher.²

Even for the TA who does not author the syllabus or select the texts, the quality of the time spent with students *is* within their province, whether in the lab or classroom, in reading their written work, or in conference with them during office hours. And because it is within your province, the first place to look for how to begin the practice of teaching is within yourself.

What assumptions do you bring to your teaching? Are these assumptions consistent with the experience, expectations, and behavior of [the] students [in University of Hawai'i] classrooms? What do you take for granted about the academic background of college students? What do you believe about how students learn? What has been your own experience of student-teacher relationships?³

These are significant questions for any teacher to reflect upon. For the entering teachers addressing these questions provides the wellspring from which everything will flow; from the syllabus to the evaluation of the students work, from lectures to small group discussion, from the first day of class to the forming of next semester's course. These questions focus away from concerns like “what do I say in the syllabus?” and “how do I act in class the first day” and focuses instead on the underlying issues of what one believes, wants and expects. One teacher, who asked herself questions similar to those above, wrote the following:

As I confronted these basic questions, the process of designing and teaching the class became clearer...I [approached my field of study]

²Eisenberg. P. 18.

³Sarkisian, E. 1990. *Teaching American Students: A Guide for International Faculty and Teaching Fellows*, Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University. P.12.

as a series of questions with partial, often inadequately investigated answers...My goal was...to engage students in the questions my discipline defined as important. I wanted to promote active learning among those 130 students sitting in desks bolted to the floor. My role as an instructor would be...as a guide rather than an expert...to make explicit what [my discipline] is trying to do, what its strengths and weaknesses are, what the recurrent questions are with which it struggles, and how it attempts to answer these. I would model a critical attitude toward my own discipline and toward published textbook and popular "answers."⁴

Embedded in the commitments expressed in this statement is a clarity and coherence that comes with an examination of oneself in regard to the desire to teach...and to learn:

Some of the things I tried as I attempted to engage students in critical inquiry worked well; some had mixed results. All provided insight into the complicated process of developing a teaching style that motivates learning. As I predicted, I learned alot.⁵

*Roberta
Kahakalau
with students
from her
Intermediate
Hawaiian class*



⁴Dowdy, B. Spring 1993. "Learning to Teach as a GTA: Discovering and Exploring Diversity", *VCU Teaching*. Vol. 5, Number 2. Virginia Commonwealth University. Richmond, VA. P. 4.

⁵Dowdy, P. 4.

Introduction

In the approach to this handbook, we have taken inspiration from many fine handbooks from other campuses. Those that read best were handbooks in which it was possible to see how priorities and purposes were decided upon. We discovered in our readings that there are many ways to construct a good and useful handbook. Our team, made up of teaching staff from diverse backgrounds and departments, decided that this handbook would be a companion to *In Celebration of Students: Reflections on Learning at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*. That publication addresses the complexities of teaching within a culturally diverse university.

In a similar chord, we made the decision to address the complexities of diverse teaching strategies and practices in this handbook. In that spirit, we have attempted to offer *approaches* to the vastness of the teaching and learning proposition, rather than to strictly prescribe all possible strategies step-by-step. We took our departure point from the belief that it is in the multiple forms of excellence in teaching that the richness of a fine university resides. We wanted to encourage teaching staff to take risks, to go beyond the teaching practices that formed their own learning, and to trust their own good instincts as they find themselves *within* the process of teaching. And finally we wanted to help the new teaching staff to have the confidence that comes not with certainty, but with the willingness to work with the ambiguities of life and of teaching. We feel very strongly about the extraordinary privilege and responsibility of teaching. In our minds, the efficacy of teaching lies in its charge upon the teacher to recognize that their work in teaching is among the most demanding, creative and important of human endeavors. What makes teaching challenging is not that we are not all gifted and wise, but that teaching is a social act that involves complex human kinetics. And that for all the effort, knowledge, and skill that any of us can muster, we are also always creating it as we go.

Along with, and in contrast to that approach, are sections which are quite precise about how to get things done in the planning and arranging for your class. We wanted to help those new to the classroom or to UH Mānoa to avoid being “nibbled to death by ducks.” Not knowing how to submit handouts to the duplicating service can play havoc with a reading schedule, and ultimately with any semblance of competence that we are able to muster at the outset of this new venture. Departments may vary to some extent in the particularities regarding certain operations, but this handbook is meant to be a good point of departure for what you'll need to get done just in order to walk into the classroom!

The Center for Teaching Excellence also offers workshops, panel discussions, and seminars as well as TA training just prior to each semester and a New Faculty Orientation at the start of the fall semester of each academic year. These elaborate upon many of the important themes of teaching, provide opportunity for expanding teaching skills, and provide more extensive materials and resource information. We also provide a companion handbook from the perspective of the new International Teaching Assistant, who occupies a very particular position within the constellation of campus and classroom dynamics.

Also, sprinkled throughout this text you will find valuable information about assisting students with disabilities. We would also like to call your attention to a companion guide book *Great Expectations: Create a Welcoming Classroom Environment for ALL Students* which provides further important information on various disabilities, legal issues, appropriate language and etiquette.

So, we have tried to be helpful in two ways: in alleviating the stress of preparing for class by giving some prior *competence* in the many small details; and then, to encourage a view that *confidence* in teaching must be understood within the context of ambiguity, experimentation, flexibility, and surprise. Teaching and learning are *lively* arts, and to take part in them engenders a sense of humility about knowledge rather than one of grandiosity. Those new to UH Mānoa teaching ought not to confuse that humility with lack of confidence.

If you plan to teach and have not yet observed a class at the University of Hawai'i, you should do this as soon as possible. If you are new to Hawai'i there is much to observe and to learn, both within and outside of the classroom. By visiting classes of teachers that are recognized by students as good teachers, you will begin to see that there is no single right way to teach well. Perhaps the most useful way for any newly arrived teacher to enter the classroom in Hawai'i is to enter it with the humility and sensitivity of a foreigner. Arriving from the continent of North America, from Asia, or from other locales, new teachers cannot help but recognize the degree to which they are newcomers.

In Celebration of Students: Reflections on Learning at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa was created to assist newcomers to begin to see themselves as someone who must find a place for themselves within the unique cultural milieu that exists in Hawai'i. What constitutes "the norm" elsewhere is very different than Hawai'i where the norm is characterized by the fluidity and richness of great diversity. We recommend a reading of *In Celebration of Students*. It will provide background reading to what you will find in your classroom, and will be helpful as a backdrop to observe how other good teachers conduct classes. At the heart of how to teach in Hawai'i is the ability to traverse the different assumptions held by different cultures about the academic background of college students, how students learn, the appropriate role of teachers and students, and even the fundamental purpose of a college education. Teaching in Hawai'i will be challenging for anyone attempting to teach only as they themselves were taught, especially if their teaching reflects radically different assumptions about teachers and students, learning and education.

Cultural diversity in Hawai'i is a challenge for teaching diversity as well. Cultural diversity, critical thinking, active learning and collaborating: these are significant themes in academe because they signify the desire to create lively pedagogy. This handbook honors the desire for that liveliness, which *already exists in our classrooms in Hawai'i*. For a new instructor at the University of Hawai'i, the flourishing of your own diverse teaching styles will flow intrinsically from this recognition. In the presence of the students are your own lessons about diversity and culture, values and knowledge, and of the desire to take lively participation in one's own education.

You cannot possibly be expected to already know what you are about to begin learning about teaching and about diversity. What

you can be expected to do is to recognize your own foreignness; perhaps it could be said that while the new International TA or faculty continually *knows* that s/he is a foreigner, the new faculty or TA from Boston may not. You are in the position to begin learning vastly more than you may ever teach!

Kathleen O. Kane, PhD
Project Coordinator and Editor

Preparing for the Semester

The Syllabus

The syllabus shouldn't read like a rental lease

It lists and narrates; it announces and organizes; it tells when and how; it previews and it cues. At its best it speaks *with* the student. It precedes and it follows the voice of the teacher. Often, it shows more about the teacher than about the course. The question of "what assumptions do I bring to teaching" is brought to bear on the form and the substance of the syllabus...and often these assumptions will appear even *without* the conscious design of the teacher.

As teachers, we either author the entire scope of the syllabus or we do not, but both ways, we have to live with them. While the syllabus is not exactly the expression of an absolute letter-of-the-law, it can get as close to that as anything else we do. Many syllabi appear more as a one-sided contract. These read something like the rental contract between landlord and tenant, in which the privileges of being a landlord are clearly evident in contrast to the liabilities of being a tenant. Of course from a student perspective, a well articulated state of bondage is preferable to one which requires continual interpretive negotiation. And if in fact a landlord-tenant teaching style is desired, it is probably best that the syllabus reflects that reality!

A syllabus is like a map

However, of all the provinces of the teacher, one of the most compelling is the ability to transform reality, or at least expand and diversify it, by engaging the intellect (one's own as well as another's). The syllabus displays and announces one's commitment to that, or lack thereof. In that sense, the syllabus-as-map may be a more fruitful approach than the syllabus-as-contract; here the syllabus acts as a map to "the course" (which to this point has been composed entirely without knowledge of or participation by students-yet-to-come, and "belongs" entirely to the teacher). The student poring over the new syllabus is like the traveler poring over yet undiscovered areas. It is important that the primary landmarks be present and clear, and that there be the ability to anticipate some of the open areas, tributaries, and smaller roads. Sometimes an itinerary is desired, but it need not be so detailed that no side trips or diversions are thinkable. Depending upon the course, the itinerary can be quite open so that the students' already existing knowledge and concerns can determine the best departure points and routes.

What are the assumptions inherent in your syllabus?

The landlord-tenant metaphor produces very particular assumptions about ownership of knowledge and of the course. At best, it is very difficult to begin as a landlord and end up producing partners in a process. By figuring the terrain of teaching and learning as one of co-travelers, one who has traversed before and one who has yet to do so, the dimensions and proportions of the course expand for both.

Would you want to take this course?

Consider the student's position in relation to the course, and then try to view the course, the class and the work from their point of view. The syllabus, along with your presentation of it, will be one of the factors by which the students will decide whether to "drop or add" your class. A syllabus is a means of conveying to our students a desirable attitude or approach towards the course. In order to

construct a strong narrative about the course ask yourself some questions¹ :

- *What is the course really about?*
- What approach does it take to the subject?
- What level of skill and comprehension does it aim for?
- What questions does the course intrinsically pose?
- What is the significance of this course to me, and how might it come to be of significance to my students?

Let the narrative compel your students towards the course ahead

Be specific

The narrative of the syllabus can be written as much from the heart and soul of the course as from the intellect. It is an opportunity to compel the student towards the course ahead of them, as well as to inform them about what is in store and what is expected of them. With the narrative written, a good syllabus will satisfy many of the students' questions. It should include information on course content (with an outline of the semester), the texts (with reading assignments), examination dates, and grading procedures. Make clear and specific your policies on handling absences, late assignments, participation, make-up examinations, incompletes, and extra credit. Include your office location and hours, email, phone, and website if you have one so students know where, when, and how to find you. Here are some questions you can ask yourself in preparing these parts of the syllabus²:

"Knowledge is important, and you had better have a good bit of it, but knowledge is not knowing, which you need even more." MT*

- What kinds of preparation do I expect from the students?
- How important is attendance to me as a teacher?
- How do I want to frame the purpose of the writing assignments, and what will I focus on as I grade these?
- What grading format will best reflect my pedagogy?
- How can grading be used to encourage active learning?
- How much time and effort will this course demand? Is it reasonable? Is it productive?
- What would be *your* strategy if you were a student taking this course?
- Given the constructs of the course, would you want to be a student in this class?

If you are a Teaching Assistant (TA) in a course in which your supervising professor has constructed a syllabus which may or may not be reflective of your own pedagogical principles and practices, it will be important that you establish a tone within your lab or class period that does reflect the way in which you intend to spend your classtime. You may even consider constructing a mini-syllabus for the lab or discussion section for which you are responsible.

Construct a mini-syllabus for your section

It is important that a statement be placed in course syllabi indicating a faculty or TA's willingness to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. An example statement that can be used or adapted for course syllabi follows: "Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs.

*MT are quotations by Murray Turnbull, University of Hawai'i Professor Emeritus in Art.

¹ Parts of this list from: Goroff, D., Lonoff, S., Sarkisian, E., Warren, L., Wilkinson, J. *Teaching Fellows Handbook*. 1990-91. Harvard University: The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences & Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning. P. 21.

² Goroff, et al.

Please contact the KOKUA Program at 956-7511 at Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services (QLC) 013 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities."³ When possible have copies of the syllabus and reading assignments ready three to five weeks prior to the beginning of the classes for students with disabilities.

Three syllabi from UH Mānoa classes

We are offering three syllabi from entry through 300-level courses taught on our campus. They represent different areas of study (science, social science, and education) and are taught by various configurations of teachers; one is taught by a professor, one by a TA, one by a team made up of a professor and a TA. Later in the handbook, we will include examples of student evaluations done on these same courses. Each syllabus represents the desire of the teacher to represent their course in a way that is coherent with their own teaching practices. It is evident that in some syllabi there are more precise measurements of evaluation, in others the language of the narrative suggests a tone that will be taken by the teacher. In the syllabus from the College of Education, we see an interesting case of a syllabus and course designed for students who will soon be teachers. In both the syllabus and evaluations of this course, we find the values and issues reflecting the teaching and learning enterprise from the center of it. It seems to "look both ways", in a sense. These syllabi also vary in degree as to their length and depth of description and information. Partly this reflects different levels of experience in teaching and in writing syllabi. These are not to be taken as models of perfection; they simply exhibit different forms of expression and desire to communicate to the student. They are just a few examples for you to consider.

Examples of Syllabi

■ Course Number and Name _____
Semester _____
Instructor's Name _____
Email and phone _____
Office Location and Hours _____

SYLLABUS

Introduction

This course is designed for students who are committed to understanding and using theories of human learning and the learning strategies derived from them. As such, the course should be helpful for any student interested in acquiring such strategies in order to attain a high degree of academic success. It may be especially useful for future teachers.

In addition to class presentation and discussion of conceptual frameworks, emphasis will also be placed on applying related learning strategies to other contexts, especially to courses in which the student is concurrently enrolled. Thus, you occasionally may be asked to bring in texts, notes, or exam questions from your other courses for class discussion.

As a writing-intensive course, activities will include: two written reviews of major course concepts; short, in-class exercises; regular communication on a computer-mediated conferencing system set up for our class; and an 8-12 page final paper.

³<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/tep/tshooting/preparing.html>

This class is set up in a cooperative format and several of the class exercises will be done collaboratively. My intention is that your performance (and grade) in this class can only be positively affected by supporting and assisting other class members.

Text:Twining, J.E. (1991). Strategies for Active Learning

Specific Course Objectives

Upon course completion, the successful student will be able to:

- 1) use cognitive information-processing models of human learning to describe major factors that influence the acquisition, retention, and flexible use of academic material;
- 2) identify major components of effective learning;
- 3) identify and accomplish clear and realistic short-term academic goals;
- 4) discuss the major factors influencing effective time management;
- 5) discuss the modification of skills or strategies used, depending upon one's personal strengths and on the specific learning situation;
- 6) explain the rationale underlying various note-taking strategies;
- 7) explain the theoretical rationale for adjunct questioning, summarization, paraphrasing, and other pre-reading and post-reading strategies;
- 8) demonstrate "layered reading";
- 9) explain the rationale for common test-preparation and test-taking strategies;
- 10) demonstrate stress-reduction strategies;
- 11) explain common planning, writing, and revision strategies;
- 12) explain common problem-solving strategies; and
- 13) attain a more positive "academic self image."

Course Requirements

- 1) regular attendance and participation;
- 2) regular creation and evaluation of short-term academic goals;
- 3) regular short reports on the Class Computer Notes system of your personal experiences with specific exercises and replies to some of your classmates' notes (see [Class Computer Notes](#) on the next page);
- 4) two 4-page written reviews that demonstrate solid comprehension of major course concepts (see [Concepts Reviews](#) on the next page);
- 5) Completion of an 8-12 page paper demonstrating understanding of applied learning concepts through personal analysis ("How Do I Learn?") (see [Course Paper](#) on the next page); and
- 6) completion of course evaluation instruments.

Grading

Activity	Total Possible Points
Concept Reviews (50 points apiece)	100
Course Paper ("How Do I Learn?")	120
Class Computer Notes:	
6 pts. for each of the first 8 (of 10) strategy reports you complete	48
4 pts. for each set of 3 or more replies for each of the first 8 (of 10) strategy reports completed	32
Extra Credit (for each strategy report over 8) (5 pts apiece)	10
Short-term Goals (2 pts for each of 10 sets)	20
Attendance (2 pts for each class session you're on time)*	62
Completion of course evaluations	20
	412

* 1 point if you're late

The minimum number of points for:

- A=370
- B=340
- C=300
- D=250

Tentative Course Topic Outline(Abbreviated)

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic Due*</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignment(s)</u>
Th	1/14	introduction to course		
Tu	1/19	model of a successful student	Chap. 1	
Th	1/21	vms computer system intro: class conferences (Notes); electronic mail (mm)	Chap 2	[NOTE: meet at MAC Lab (Keller 202)]
Tu	1/26 (STG)	time management: creating a schedule	Chap. 3	SR #1: Influences on My Learning [HOWILRN] (Tu 1 26)
Th	1/28	time management: short-term goals	Chap. 4	1) bring completed LASSI to class 2) SR #2: TimeManagement [TIMEMNGT] (Sat 1/30)
Tu	2/ 2 (STG)	personal use of lrng strategies: LASSI interpretation		
Th	2/ 4	human learning and memory: intro. to the H.I.P. model	Chap. 9	SR#3: Personal Use of Strategies [STRATUSE] (Sat 2/6)

* SR= computer report on strategy experience; CR= concept review; STG= short-term goals



■ Political Science 190: Media and Politics

(Name of Instructor, Office Phone Number
Office Address, Office Hours, Email)

In Greek, the word “media” refers to an intermediate between two sounds. So in French. And inside the meanings of this word is this: media is the link between muteness and breath. From this, we might imagine that media brings sound into “being”; between silence and sound, the act of breath. Esoteric.... perhaps, but these early inscriptions on the meaning of the word suggest that our technologically inscribed notions of what constitutes media are not complex enough. On one hand, we imagine that part of what makes modern culture progressive and complex is our knowledge and mastery of technology, particularly in relation to “information”. On the other hand, we imagine that technology is simply and truly a tool (and therefore, a “thing”), and that it is in the mastery and use of “it” that we articulate ourselves and our truths.

This course will seek to unsettle the metaphor of media as tool or instrument, and to reclaim some of the complexities of the ancient meanings. At the heart of the course then will be politicization of how and why a modern culture of dominance construes a notion of media such that it is instrumental rather than constitutive. One common critique of media (in the modern sense) which seems to argue against instrumentality is the argument that “it” (t.v., film, newspapers, news programs, & so forth) causes what it shows. And so it goes: t.v. causes violence, pornography causes rape, coverage on terrorism causes terrorism. Because instrumentality implies subservience to “ends”, and because “cause” implies knowledge and control, we begin to see that our modern discourse on media is dependant upon and limited by particular notions of power.

The course will argue that to not notice the political, economic and discursive ownership of the media is to ask to be left in peace with our modern myths. On the other hand, to not be able to “read the media” as a text, to not know how to “see” what is (truly) hidden-in-plain-sight, is to imagine an immutable form of power. Somewhere between acquiescence and despair is where we will start: with a tape of the screen of a fighter pilot over Baghdad. We see what he sees. . . we aim with him. . . we bomb the target that has (in this act of watching) becomes “ours”. The complicity of the viewer is profound and terrible. This course will speak to the meanings of that. To the complicity of “the word” and of “the image”; to the extent to which “knowledge” and “truth”, and therefore “power”, are always mediated by and through discursive and figural discourse. This is what the ancients were telling us about. And this is what we will be asked to come to terms with. Among the sets of questions that will be encountered here will be that which asks how it is that the world is constituted and mediated through notions of “the self” as gendered, sexed, racial, ethnic, national, modern, rational, & so forth. . . and notions of “the other”, as all that the self proposes it is not.

Readings:

- * John Berger, Ways of Seeing
- * George Orwell, 1984
- * Edmund Carpenter, Oh! What A Blow That Phantom Gave Me

- * Janet Malcolm, *The Journalist and the Murderer*
- * Andrea Deveare Smith, "Talk to Me: Travels in Media and Politics"

We will pay particular attention to how the media "covers" such things as the war in the Middle East or the current elections or the perpetual abortion rights struggle, in terms of the use of discourses and images, the cultural and political contexts of this coverage (and the extent to which media constitutes the context), the arrangement of the coverage, and so forth.

Video and Film Selections will include:

- Still Killing Us Softly
- Thin Blue Line
- Swimming to Cambodia
- Slaying The Dragon
- Ethnic Notions
- The Will to Power, selections
- Tongues Untied

Evaluation:

It is my perspective that teaching is an agent of empowerment. This dictum presupposes that students are the bearers of their own culture, or collective self-understanding. This course will be a reflection of that perspective, and as such, will involve an engagement of the student in a self-reflective enterprise, one that takes place within a dialogue that questions the most deeply held assumptions.

Five essays (from the French "essai", an attempt), as attempts to order one's impressions and reflections (perhaps also, attempts to dis-order a thing or two) of three pages in length will comprise the written assignments. The topics will be constructed by the student such that s/he sets for themselves a "problem", a "question", and work their way through it. No late papers, please.

Dialogue will clearly be an essential part of this course. Therefore, attendance and participation will be considered highly in the evaluation. Since our course will only meet ten times, it is essential that attendance be observed strictly. There is truly no substitute for the kind of discussion that will take place around a film or video immediately following a viewing.

In this course, the grade will be heavily weighted according to one's presence and participation. Between reading, reflection, writing and dialogue, each student will find her/his strengths. It is upon these strengths, and their employment toward developing less-articulated aspects of oneself that the grade will rest.

At mid-semester and at the end of the course, there will be course/teacher evaluations done in order to enable you to anonymously communicate to me how the course is working for you, and if you have any suggestions for change or elaboration of particular features of the course. I will appreciate as much candor and creativity as you can muster for these evaluations of my work.



■ **Course Title:** Chemistry 161L, Chemistry Lab I
Summer Session

Instructor: _____ **T.A.:** _____

Office Location: _____ **Office Hours:** Mon., Noon - 1:00 pm
Th., 10:30 - 11:30 am
Fri., 1:30 - 2:30 pm

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Required Text: Beran and Brady Lab Manual, 4th ed, 1990

Date Lab # Description (abbreviated)

5/18	1	Check-in + Expt #1 "Basic Lab Operations" (omit prelab assignment)
5/20	2	Expt#2 "Identification of a Compound: Physical Properties".
5/25	3	Expt#3 "Identification of a Compound: Chemical Properties" (partners for the known compounds; individuals for unknowns).
5/27	4	Expt#5 "Chemistry of Copper" (partners).
6/1	5	Expt#6 "Formula of a Hydrate".

IMPORTANT SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:

It is a university policy that all students working in the laboratory wear **SAFETY GLASSES AND COVERED SHOES**. There are **no exceptions** to this rule! That means if you forget your glasses or show up wearing rubber slippers, you will not be permitted to work in the lab and asked to leave. This will then result in a "0" for that day's experiment. Prescription glasses are generally not acceptable substitutes for safety glasses and students should avoid wearing contact lenses in the laboratory.

About the Course:

Chemistry 161L is a 1 credit laboratory course that is offered in conjunction with the large Chem 161 3 credit lecture class. The purpose of the laboratory is to allow the students a chance to gain hands-on experience in the field of Chemistry. It allows students to apply the concepts presented in the lecture and learn some basic laboratory procedures.

Course Policies:

Therefore each student must attend all lab meetings. You may be excused from the lab if you are ill and have a doctor's note. An unexcused absence counts as a "0" for that day's experiment.

Format of Lab:

Before coming to lab you are expected to have read and be familiar with the current day's experiment. Starting with the second lab period, a short quiz will be given at the beginning of the lab. Usually, the quiz will cover material concerning the last lab and the one that will be conducted on the day of the quiz. Generally, our labs will follow this pattern:

1. First 10 min.: short quiz, turn in pre-lab and lab report ((from previous experiment).
2. Second 15 min.: short pre-lab lecture covering examples of difficult calculations, procedures, safety precautions, tips and questions.
3. Remaining time: do the experiment, record data, and laboratory clean-up.

Lab Reports:

Basically, the lab reports contain a data section where data is recorded and a calculation section. In both cases you fill in the blank. Directions are located in the lab procedures. Next are post lab questions which ask you to think about the experiment.

Completed labs are expected to be turned in at the beginning of the session and will be evaluated post-lab and promptly returned at the next lab meeting.

Please do not turn in incomplete labs or ones where there are questions left blank or ones with "mysterious" answers. I HIGHLY encourage you to use my office hours, or time during the pre-lab lecture to ask questions so that you understand and are confident about what you are turning in.

I also highly encourage you to discuss your data and questions with your classmates. But I do expect individual reports in your own words. I can tell the difference!

Pre-Lab Assignments:

Prelab assignments are composed of simple calculations, theory and techniques you will be employing for that day's experiment. The information needed to complete these can be taken directly from the Manual. Completed prelabs covering the present day's experiment need to be turned in at the beginning of each lab.

Evaluation:

The final grades will be calculated on the following point distribution:

- 70% - experiments (60 pts lab, 10 pts prelab)
- 20% - quizzes (20 pts)
- 10% - TA evaluation (10 pts)

- 90% - 100% - A
- 80% - 89% - B
- 70% - 79% - C
- 60% - 69% - D
- 50% - 59% - F

The TA evaluation criteria I use will include such questions as: Is the student prepared for class? If they do not understand procedure do they ask or proceed blindly? Do they follow the safety procedures or are they dangerous? If they do not understand calculations/questions, do they ask or make up "mysterious" and or vague answers?

Overall, I feel the lab should be a fun and comfortable environment for all present. In the learning environment I ask that we all leave our egos at the door and proceed inside to a creatively chaotic bustling room to engage in an intellectual exchange of knowledge about Chemistry.

Details, Details, Details: Tips for Surviving the System

Don't be nibbled to death by ducks

You may have spent hours preparing the world's greatest lesson plan, but if your books haven't arrived, your handouts aren't ready, you have the videotape or the DVD but no player (or vice versa), or a stack of painstakingly prepared overheads and no projector, you may find yourself up the proverbial creek. It helps to be aware that most of these details require the help and cooperation of other people and often other units. The job is not done when you have done your part of it. In fact, that's usually just the start. Give yourself at least a few days, preferably a week, as a margin of error. Also keep in mind that when you require someone's assistance, while they are helping you do your job, often you're making work for them! Therefore, being courteous and organized at every interaction will mean that when you really do need special and speedy assistance, you will be far more likely to get it.

Be courteous

The Department Secretary

One of the most important and knowledgeable people in your department will be your department secretary, who most likely has been there a lot longer than you and can be a tremendous source of information. Introduce yourself and ask what clerical support is available to teaching staff in the department. Secretaries are very busy, often serving many people. Do not assume her time is yours, even though you may observe others doing so. She does not live to serve; she has a very central and stressful position in the department. Consider the relationship that you build with her to be one of respect and reciprocity.

Book orders

These are submitted months before the semester begins. While each department handles book orders a little differently, the general work stream goes something like this. You get a notice from the department secretary asking for your book order by a specific date. You fill out a form which requests specific information. Provide all information requested. If you don't have it, get it. If you don't, someone else who is already overworked will have to and your order may be delayed. The department secretary takes the information on the form and fills out another form required by the bookstore by a specific date. Someone delivers these forms to the bookstore. The bookstore staff then makes sure the book is available, contacts the publisher and orders the book. The books are delivered, bar-coded price tags are printed and put on the books, and the books are placed on the shelves for your students. Sufficient time is allowed so that if the book you requested is unavailable, you can order an alternate. In some cases, a newer edition may be available and the bookstore will call to ask if you would prefer the newer edition. In the case of a text which had been used previously, you want to weigh the benefits of a new edition against the amount of money students can save buying used texts.

Consider the cost

Students with visual impairments will likely need all print material in alternate format which means that they need print material converted to audio tapes, scanned on to disks, braille enlargements or image enhancement. Conversions of materials takes time. It is important that they have access to class materials at the

same time as others in your class. Coordinate alternative formats with the Kokua program.⁴

Put books on reserve for your course

When deciding which books to order, consider the *total* cost to the student. Undergraduates taking four or five classes per semester can easily find themselves having to spend several hundred dollars on books alone, straining their already tight budgets. Copies of required and supplemental texts as well as handouts should also be placed at the reserve desk in Sinclair Library for student use. These can be your own copies or library copies. If you are requesting library copies, submit the form available as early as possible, on line @<http://uhmanoa.lib.hawaii.edu>. They often have to recall books in order to reserve them for you and this takes time.

How many books of each title should you order?

The number of books you order is, of course, determined by the maximum number of students which can register for the class. Do not let the number of students enrolled exceed the number of books ordered particularly in cases where the books you have requested for your class may be purchased by casual buyers. Also, your students are not always able to afford to purchase all their books for all their courses at once. This means that when they go back in later in the semester, they may find depleted shelves, perhaps by students from other courses who are using the same text. If you suspect that a book may have wider interest outside your class, increase your order.

When books run out

Even with all your advanced planning, you may still run out of books. Stop in at the bookstore before the semester begins. If there has been a delay in any of the texts, find out when it is expected and keep your students informed. During the first week or so, ask your students if they are having any problems buying books. Make it a habit to visit the bookstore several times during the first couple of weeks to keep apprised of the status and number of books still available.

If your students tell you there are no more books available, determine how many more copies are needed and then check with the textbook counter at the bookstore. They will be able to tell you if the same books are being used in any other course. If there are extra copies in that area, you can then direct your students to that section. If not, immediately place an order for more copies. If you have not already done so, place a copy on reserve at Sinclair Library *now*. You can also call the local bookstores to find out if they have the book in stock, ask them to hold copies for your students under your name or the course title, and pass this information on to your students. Some stores will hold books for up to one week. Also, check book-selling websites for texts and inform students of availability and cost.

Guest Speakers

If you are having guest speakers from off-campus speak to your class, see if your department has a guest parking pass available. If not, ask your department secretary how to best make arrangements. The parking situation on campus can make your guest's visit to campus very stressful. It can also make them late. So smooth the situation for them. You may also send them a campus map, with parking areas and class building marked.

What is your department's policy on an honorarium for a speaker from off campus? If it is valuable to have someone come and speak to your class, that value should be recognized whenever possible. If possible, greet a visitor with a flower lei.

⁴ <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/textonly/faculty/handbook/page03.htm> and 04.htm.

The Class List

The class list, with the names of your students, their year in school, and their major, is distributed to department mail boxes, or stacked in the office, according to course number or your name, or distributed to the course professor. It can be helpful and reassuring to have the bit of information about your students that it offers when you walk into class the first day and can be used to learn what the actual configuration of the students in front of you actually is at the outset. If it is used to take attendance the first day, with additions added by hand, you can also utilize it to begin learning the names of these students immediately.

Pa'e allows for teaching staff to log on and preview the registrants as it develops. Visit the website at <http://www.pae.hawaii.edu/>.

Handouts and Duplicating Services

All handouts, including your syllabus, should be sent to Duplicating. Your department copier should be used only to prepare materials to be sent to Duplicating or when multiple copies are not needed, or when you are making 10 or less copies. Above 10 copies, Duplicating Services charges your department only a fraction of what your department pays for each copy made on its copier. Because Duplicating has very specific requirements, the following are some guidelines for preparing materials to be submitted:

- Originals should be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" or 8 1/2" x 14" white bond paper. Originals submitted on an 8 1/2" x 14" sheet should not have printing exceeding the 13" space margin (length of document). Do not use erasable bond or colored paper.
- Originals must be jet black and of even tone throughout for good reproduction.
- Jobs with handwritten signatures, notations or drawing should be done in good quality black or red ball-point pens. *Do not use pencil or blue ink.*
- All reproduction will be done on both sides of the paper unless indicated in the remarks section.
- For projects requiring special paper, provide the specific paper in the quantity needed, plus some extra.

"Keep in mind: you are not a dispenser of wisdom but a creator of situations in which learning can occur and be enhanced."
MT

Materials Not Acceptable:

- Originals with black borders. This often happens when copying from a book. Cut off the black edges and make a clean copy to submit to Duplicating.
- Originals with any type of binder holes in the margins.
- Originals printed in blue ink, pastel colors or drawn in pencil.

There is a yellow form, UH Form 6--Requisition for Duplicating Services, that is normally kept in the main office of each department and whether you or the secretary or student help completes it, it will require specific information that you will need to provide. Think ahead, allowing at least 5 working days for copies to be completed. The turn-around time could be longer during periods prior to each semester, and during exam periods. Duplicating handles tremendous amounts of work and so there are times when a page is missing or has been copied incorrectly. When copies are returned to you, make a quick check of them while there is still time to have it corrected.

There is one commercial duplicating outlet on campus that will make arrangements for you to have your student's duplicating done at their shop. Currently, they are located at the ground level of the

Commercial Duplicating Outlets

Campus Center by Pizza Hut and Taco Bell. You need only leave one copy of the materials with the copier, *unbound and loose from page to page*, under your name and course number. You can then send your students to the copier, who will either make the proper number of copies ahead of time and have them waiting for your students to pick up, or will copy them as your students arrive at their shop. Keep in mind that the students incur the cost of the duplicating.

Audio-Visual Equipment

If you are planning to use any audiovisual equipment in your class, find out what is available in your assigned classroom. Many of the large lecture rooms are equipped with overhead projectors, microphones, video, DVD and CD Rom equipment. If what you need is not there, check with your department about what it might have for short-term checkout. If the equipment you need is not available, you have two options. The Center for Instructional Support (CIS) maintains a pool of media equipment that can be borrowed on a short-term basis and moved to any classroom on campus. Another alternative is to have your class meet in a classroom in Kuykendall scheduled by CIS. Kuykendall 101 and 206-208 are the rooms scheduled according to class times by CIS. These rooms are available up to 15 times a semester per class and contain video and data projection equipment in addition to standard slide and overhead projectors. Call CIS at 956-8075 to reserve a media classroom or equipment for checkout. For up to date information on media services and media equipped classrooms and auditoriums, visit <http://www.cis.hawaii.edu/>.

Videotapes and Films

The Wong Audiovisual Center on the third floor of Sinclair Library has an extensive selection of feature films, documentaries, and education films, as well as a diverse music collection. See the printed directories available at Wong Audiovisual Center or online at <http://uhmanoa.lib.hawaii.edu/>. *With a faculty/staff ID*, you may reserve in advance specific materials for the dates you plan to use from them by visiting the website.

Faculty/Staff ID Card

Films and videos can be put on reserve for your class

Materials from your own collection, or from the collection from Wong AV Center, may be placed on reserve to be viewed or listened to at the Center, where there are video and music stations available for student use. You will find this very useful. The application for the Faculty/Staff ID card is available from your department office.

The Classroom

Check out your classroom early

Visit your assigned classroom *well in advance* to make sure it meets your needs and the needs of students. If you discover that you have been assigned a classroom that is constructed in a way that contradicts your plans and visions for the course, speak with the department secretary about how to go about requesting a change. It may be helpful if you can suggest other classrooms that would better suit your purposes; either neighboring classrooms in the same building, or another building which has more suitable classrooms. By requesting a change as far in advance as possible before the semester begins, you may find that some real options exist; once classes have resumed, it is very difficult to locate a better space. If your class meets during the more popular morning hours, your only option might be to make a trade with another dissatisfied instructor.

Does your classroom “like” students?

Many classrooms have been designed, furnished and organized to accommodate outdated assumptions about teaching and learning. Take a good look at your classroom. Notice how the space is organized, how the lighting is set, whether the desks are fixed to the floor or if there are tables for students to sit around, whether the room can be darkened and lit, if the windows let in air and light. How warm or air-conditioned cold is it during the time of day of your class? How much noise is there from the air conditioning in the room, or from the sound of other classes nearby, or from construction work?

If your classroom is inaccessible and a student is unable to get into your class due to disability, your class location must be moved to an accessible location. Call KOKUA immediately for assistance in getting your class location changed.

The point-of-view of the students

Experience your classroom from the point of view of the students. Try sitting in their seats. How comfortable are they likely to be? What kind of surface space is available to them for writing, for keeping their texts and notes available for discussion? What is the distance from their seats to you? Is it possible for all students to see you *and* one another?

Notice what the room conveys about teaching and learning, and about the assumptions of what constitutes education. We find ourselves teaching in classrooms that were literally constructed around notions of education that reflect principles of banking.

The banking concept of education

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor...

This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits...In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing.¹

Many classrooms were formed by this educational imperative. Our campus educational practices are changing but our classrooms remain as they were. It *matters* how we sit down together. Or, that we don't. For example, imagine that you walk into class on the first day and find a long, narrow classroom in which the seats are (thankfully) not fixed, but the size and shape of the room makes logical only two extremely long rows of molded seat/desks.

Be creative!

In such a room, one-half of the floor space is a stage, backgrounded with a long blackboard. The teacher is clearly expected to occupy fully one-half of this peculiar oblong classroom, sitting on a stage above a class of twenty students who are stretched out into two very long rows with a depth of two. Although distance from student to teacher is close, the logistics of “facing the class” would work best for a fish! As a final touch, the lighting has been installed in such a way that there is one long row of lights above the stage (clearly the teacher's space) and none above the students. As an articulation of the banking concept of education, this classroom certainly fails the “bank that says yes”² award! This is a classroom best discovered before the first day of class, so that you have a chance to strategize your move from it, or evaluate your options within it.

In order to escape the imperative of a bank and to expand the realm

¹Freire, P. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum Publishing. P. 58.

²First Hawaiian Bank slogan

of teaching and learning, be creative and do not hesitate to change the arrangement of the room. Even though the arrangement of (or a sign placed in) a room may dictate very clear imperatives as to where everyone and everything “belongs”, as long as the equipment in the room is movable, experiment with arrangements that will enable group discussion and other active learning practices. Gradually, the architecture of university campuses will begin to reflect the changes in educational practices, and buildings will be built and modified around the ideas and practices of active learning and learning centers. Those centers and classrooms will first and foremost be flexible environments. Until that time, the flexibility of our current environs must reside within the *imagination and willingness* of the instructor to recognize the importance of how we sit down together. How we face one another in the classroom reproduces and represents the kind of teaching and learning that we desire and hope for in our classrooms.

Be flexible!

Good environments are flexible ones. That means that each class that meets in a particular classroom might arrange themselves differently. Therefore, one arrangement is not the “correct one”, or the one that is “in order”. If it is necessary for you and your students to reconstruct your arrangements each class period, then do so. It is not difficult to engage students in taking the initiative to do this as they arrive to class. It's an energizing activity, and it focuses them towards the session to come. Another thing that a flexible environment conveys is that because it is set in place during one class period does not mean that it won't be different the next time. Or that *during* a class period, and most emphatically during a long one, the arrangement might change two or three times.

If these thoughts appear trivial to you at this point, consider this: undergraduate students often sit from one class period to another in the same poor seating arrangement (and often within stiflingly constructed chair/seat modules), listening to what begins to feel like one long series of academic droning. Even the most captivating ideas begin to blur inside this kind of schedule. If the arrangement of the room, as a reflection of your many other flexible teaching practices, communicates to your students that *this class is different* you will discover immense pleasure in your teaching.

The Class

To teach is to learn twice.

J. Joubert, *Pensees*

The First Day

The following was written by a new teaching assistant charged with facilitating her own discussion lab, but the themes and even the experiences can occur for any newly arrived faculty.

I'll never forget the first day of my first discussion section. I was very nervous. I couldn't sleep the entire weekend before. I couldn't think how to open the first day. How should I present myself. Being very short, I had visions of the freshmen not taking me seriously. Should I be very severe and set a martial tone for the entire quarter or should I walk in smiling and easygoing? I plotted my attack upon the lectern — should I stand behind it, beside it or in front of it? Did I want its authority to attach to me or did I want to be considered part of the group? I practiced roll call, passing out the reading list, the small preview of course material, and class dismissal. On the Monday of the first day I got up at 6:30 a.m. and dressed very carefully...I made a large breakfast, though by the time I was ready to eat, I couldn't. When I arrived, fear and anxiety were running wild through my body. My heart was thumping. Every surface I touched, I stuck to. And I shook. I watched the clock and counted off the seconds to 9 a.m. sharp. I didn't want to arrive early and have to stand there waiting.

9 a.m. I plodded into the classroom. The lights were dazzling. The electricity of the people sent my blood rushing faster. There were so many of them. All rustling papers. A hush fell as I neared the lectern. It was so quiet I could hear my pulse in my ears. I reached the lectern and turned around. Forty eyes were focused on my body.

I blurted, "Hello. This is the first class I've ever taught, and I'm really nervous." The students sighed, slumped in their chairs, and relaxed. And so did I.

My first section went quite well, I thought. The professor had introduced a few very basic concepts, which I thought I understood fully. I had tried to explain them to the students so that they also understood them. Buoyed with a sense of some self-confidence, I prepared to present my second section with the same material, but it didn't go as smoothly. A few of the students began to question me about subtle nuances in the concepts which I had failed to consider. I began to feel incompetent. As they continued to probe, my answers became more and more contradictory and incoherent. My embarrassment increased because I realized that I, who had always been a student and therefore a passive receiver of definitions, didn't fully understand these basic concepts enough to answer others' questions. Because of this and my impression that a teacher should know everything, I kept muddling around getting myself and the students more confused. Finally I managed to change the subject, but as I left the classroom I felt that I had lost

"It ought always to be kept in mind that teaching is a high art as difficult as any other, with at least one great difference: it is not something for placing one's own stamp on the world but to make it possible for others to realize themselves."
MT

their respect. They would be intent on tricking or embarrassing me from then on.

I was apprehensive about that particular section the next week. During the week, I thought about my role in the classroom. I spent a long time preparing for the section and thoroughly re-prepared the concepts I'd tried to review before. Happily, the next week's section went much better. In fact, I enjoyed it. It became my favorite section. The change, of course, was entirely within me. I knew that I did have gaps in my knowledge of the subject. Why not admit that and let the students know that I was learning too? I saw that it would be ineffectual for me to place myself above them as some Omniscient Purveyor of Knowledge. How could I be when almost the only reason I was in front of the class was because I had had a few more courses in the subject than they had?

I had become defensive and hostile when asked questions I couldn't answer because I assumed the students were asking such questions to embarrass me. The next week I admitted my ignorance, apologized for trying to be something I wasn't, and re-explained the concepts. I encouraged them to ask questions. I promised that when I didn't know the answers I would say so and encourage the class to explore for the answer.

I learned from the experience the importance of honesty with yourself and your students. It's much more comfortable for you and for them to realize that even as you're discussing topics with them you're learning yourself.¹

One of the blessings of student-centered teaching and learning is the great relief in recognizing the responsibility of classroom dynamics as reciprocal. And this is something that can be affirmed from the first moment that we enter our first classroom. At the same time, we know that students have many concerns during the first class session, and realize that the course title and number are just a part of the picture. That first day, the teacher, the syllabus, and the other students, these will all finally determine whether or not to stay in this class. So, what we do and say matters a great deal and we should be prepared and comfortable with the plans that we have made. But it may help to remember that by focusing on the students, on what we know they need to hear and see and say that day, and attending less to how *we* are appearing and doing, we can begin the process of centering our focus, or focusing our center, differently.

It's a little like motherly advice before an important interview, "just be yourself, dear, and concentrate on the other person, and you'll do just fine" ...and yet conventional wisdom can sometimes identify what lies at the heart of the matter. Once we turn our attention away from ourselves we become involved in an unselfconscious manner with something outside ourselves.

It is the single teacher that must finally walk into that room alone that day, and like an actor walking across the stage to deliver the opening line of a performance, it helps to know what the line is, where the props are, and that the other actors are prepared to take their part.

¹ Ronkowski, S., Lorsch, N., Geiger, E. and Morrison, J. 1993. *TAs As Teachers: A Handbook for Teaching Assistants at UCSB*. Santa Barbara, CA: Regents of the University of California. Pp. 6-7, excerpts from "first days."

Give the students an honest view of the course as you see it

Be yourself (well, really...who else would you be?!)

Don't see the students as the enemy

**Communicate,
be accessible**

Rather than seeing students as a critical audience with front row seats to watch us stumble, we can see them as co-actors watching for what their parts will become. The script of the course has yet to be fully written, but it is within our province to establish the tone of the course from the outset. And to offer the students a full and honest vision of how we see the course unfolding.

I like to arrive early for my class, and make sure the seating arrangement is the way I want it. When I greet the students as they arrive, we both feel less anxious and sometimes little talks start to spring up. That way, the students who are still arriving feel they are entering a friendly environment. I tell them that I am going to be talking a lot on the first day so that they can get a good idea about whether or not this course or teacher is for them. I use the syllabus (which is extensive) to cover everything from my office hours to why I chose the particular texts I did. I even talk with them about how I see myself as a teacher, the ways that I think I am open as a teacher, and I tell them the kinds of things that I do not appreciate (in classroom behavior) and that I am likely to call them on those things. I tell them as much as I can, not as warnings but to give them as much information as I can. I make sure that the details of all this is very clear to me, so that it will be for them also. While I talk about all of this, they can get a pretty clear idea of what I'm like and how I think about things. They decide to stay in the course based on what they now know.²

**Using the
syllabus as
your script**

By constructing an extensive syllabus, or elaborating upon our supervising professor's, we will find that we have a fully developed script for the first day, and one that will make us appear both organized *and* open as we go through the many details and then speak extemporaneously on certain aspects (for example, the faculty above could go into why certain texts will work well, or why s/he is trying a new text). This is not as easy to do with a sparse syllabus; another good reason for a good strong syllabus.

**The first five
minutes..**

Reviewing your syllabus with your class is an opportunity to further present yourself to your students. This presentation began, of course, the minute you appeared in the room as the teacher. What students perceive visually and aurally conveys volumes of information. Within the first five minutes or less, students will process information and impressions of you, noticing if you are male or female, short or tall, whether you are from Hawai'i, the mainland or another country. They will begin to form approximations of age and race. Because appearances are not perceived in a neutral way—that is, to be young, short, Asian and female represents and confers something different than it does to be to be mature, tall, white and male—more subtle pieces of meaning are also being transmitted. By becoming aware that there are social meanings ascribed to physical characteristics, we can choose to some degree what messages we want to convey. We may also be able to mitigate the effects of those beyond our control. For example, because lack of height is sometimes translated into lack of stature, we may want to compensate for this through our style of dress or speech, demeanor or presence.

**How you
appear to
your students**

Your voice

In a way completely separate from the words we speak, our voices are also read by our students. Nervousness displays itself readily

²UH Mānoa faculty speaking about the first day of class.

Convey who you are

in voice, but so do sincerity and enthusiasm. The impact of *how* we speak can be much greater than what we actually we say. Speaking too softly, too quickly, or indistinctly are all signs of nervousness. They can also be read as disrespect. As new teachers, nervousness comes from a self-consciousness about ourselves, and so in a way that may not be intended or desired, there is an implicit form of disrespect for our students when we are so self-absorbed. If students sense that in some way, we don't care about them, how are we to expect them to care about what we teach? Be confident without being arrogant. Just smile! Students, as well as you, will be put at ease.

Students eagerly process these initial impressions because it matters to them. They have a vested interest in knowing who we are, what our expectations are, and what they can expect from us. If the syllabus is a map of the journey we are undertaking together, then they also need to know who is this guide who will be leading the tour and what kinds of rules and procedures (which also tell them much about the guide) govern the tour. Our policies on attendance, participation, late papers, and missed exams should be clearly spelled out in your syllabus. As you go over them with the class, elaborate on what you have written. For example, when discussing participation, let them also know the kinds of things that you consider to be poor participation. Many teachers are bothered when a student drifts off to sleep during a discussion, though many will ignore it. If sleeping bothers you, let them know and inform them of how you will handle it if it occurs. Even if it seems to you that students should already know that this is unacceptable, it is wise to be clear that *you* will request that the student go elsewhere to rest. By approaching such basic issues in this way, we are able to depersonalize an event when it does arise.

Don't take everything personally!

What is "personal" about a student sleeping? Is it necessarily a reflection upon our teaching or our course? Does it necessarily mean that s/he doesn't respect us and is displaying that through the insult of sleeping? It is so easy for us to think in terms of this, especially when we are new to teaching. And so when we respond only at that moment, we often respond out of a sense of personal insult. By stating at the outset that there are ways in which we are open, and ways that we are not, we are letting the students know that it is the *act* of sleeping that is disruptive, rather than any inscribed "intent".

Treat students with respect, even when its hard to do so

It becomes irrelevant whether they fell asleep because they have a newborn infant at home that woke them every two hours, or because they are being intolerably rude. Our decent treatment of a drowsy student will convey to all students that we will not assume the worst about them either. *At the outset* of the course, we must articulate that the facilitation of good teacher-student and student-student discussions are at the heart of our rules about participation. Later, if it is necessary to make the gesture to a sleeping student, it can be done without rancor, simply requesting them to rest elsewhere and thanking them for doing so.

Thinking about your policies

Actually, during your first teaching experience, it may not be entirely clear to you which issues really matter and which you can dismiss, since we often become aware of these only as they happen in our class. However, attaching a negative consequence to an action that our students have not been made aware of through the syllabus or class announcements is indefensible. In determining what policies will be set, it may be useful to err on the conservative side. For example,

**Offer reasons
for your
decisions**

your initial sense about papers may be that neatly handwritten essays will probably be acceptable because you recognize that those students without typing skills or access to a computer will have an added burden. However, you aren't sure you'll feel the same after you've read the fiftieth one. So, you may want to state in your syllabus that papers must be typewritten and also say to the class that if this creates a difficulty for anyone s/he should discuss it with you prior to the due date. As long as consistency is not your ultimate goal, exceptions can be made.

Respect

Explaining our reasons behind the rules we set tells our students something about ourselves. If you explain that you find it unacceptable when two students put their heads together to have a private conversation while a group discussion is taking place, it tells the class that you value the contributions that students make to discussions and that you expect them to treat each other with consideration.

**Creating
the Desired
Environment**

In all of these ways, we begin the arduous process of transforming ourselves in the eyes of our students from the role of teacher into a living, breathing human being, deserving of respect. As the model of *a'o* shows, respect conferred between two mutual participants engenders something very different than what passes for respect between people engaged in projecting (and protecting) their roles.

This process will be forestalled if the complicated issues of power (authority) and respect (fear) in the classroom are not addressed.

**Getting to
Know Your
Students**

Creating an environment in which students actively engage in their learning requires attitudes of mutuality and reciprocity. However, disparate hierarchical relationships of power between students and teachers are constructed in the institution prior to our individual entrance onto the stage as teachers. A certain degree of authority is imbedded in the role of teacher, if only the power to confer grades. As facilitators of student learning, it may be our goal to redistribute power more evenly and fruitfully throughout the class, but we would be less than honest if we didn't acknowledge this already existing, inherited imbalance. When we share information about ourselves with our students we begin to lay a foundation of mutuality, honesty, and trust upon which we can build a more reciprocal relationship.

You can begin this by asking for information about them on 5 X 8 cards, on which a series of answers can be written. Here is one example which is added to the end of the syllabus on one faculty's syllabus: Please answer these questions on a card that I will provide for you:

1. Your full name, including the name you like to be called.
- 2.. Your phone numbers. Not likely to be needed, but just in case.
3. Your year in school, and your major (or intended major).
4. What else do you do besides school? (work/play/family)
5. What other courses are you now taking?
6. What other related courses have you taken? Who taught?
7. Why did you take this course/this teacher? (schedule/interest/friends)
8. What would you like to see happen in this course?³

These cards provide, at the end of the first day, a series of pictures of the students in their class. By adding a couple of questions at the end that are very specific to the topics of the course, we can walk back into the class on the second day with a real sense of those with whom

³Excerpted from a syllabus from a UH Mānoa faculty.

Learn your students names by the end of the second week. Really!!!

Learn student's names!

Allow students to get to know you as a teacher

we'll be spending the semester. Here is how one University of Hawai'i faculty uses cards:

I take these cards home the first day and mark different kinds of interesting information with yellow marker. On the second day, I can begin to *learn their names* as I use them to conduct very informal "interviews" around the room, allowing everyone to hear each person speak about something important to them. Once each person starts doing this, others can also ask questions of each other. Of course, I try to be careful that I don't inadvertently ask about something that might be a little private. But these questions don't ask for really personal answers. I like this form of getting to know one another better than the one where everyone goes around and says something about themselves. Nobody really listens to one another because everybody is busy thinking self consciously, "Oh no, what should I say when its my turn?"⁴

Learning the names of your students must be one of your first priorities. *It is really very significant that you learn your students names beginning from the first day.* Use your cards and your classlist; let them watch you work on it and let them help you with it. If the diversity of names in Hawai'i is new to you, say so (it's going to be perfectly obvious to them anyway!), and tell them that you will be working very hard to learn to pronounce their names. Apologize when you mangle a name. Ask them to correct you, several times if they need to, so that you will learn.

Even more extensive uses of a 3 x 5 card can be made in future classes:

During any 10 to 15 of our 30 class meetings, I would ask students to write down their responses to assigned readings, speakers, movies, discussions, or just to state "I was here." I used these cards at various times during class, and collected them immediately...I intended that these cards encourage class attendance, active listening, and critical thinking. I thought they would help the students learn. However, they quickly became much more—a communication line between me and the 125 students sitting before me.

...They provided a quick feedback on whether students 1) grasped definitions of basic concepts that seem self-evident to me; 2) did the reading; listened critically to a speaker or were angry about a classmates' presentation; and 3) began to think about problems the way (those in the field) do (many did). This immediate input helped me modify my teaching and testing practices during the semester as well as between semesters—and catch my own biases, blind spots, and simplistic answers to complicated problems.

...These insights proved invaluable particularly when it was time to construct texts. The cards had clearly demonstrated three things: 1) the wide range of writing and thinking abilities; 2) the variety of ways a "straightforward question" could be interpreted; and 3) students' different conceptions of what "BE SPECIFIC" means.⁵

As students get to know us, what matters most to them? When students are asked what characteristics they value most in their

⁴UH Mānoa faculty

⁵Dowdy, B. P. 4.

The unbearable lightness of being a teacher

teachers, *enthusiasm* for the subject matter and *for teaching* rate very highly, as well as subject area knowledge. When new to teaching, we may find that our enthusiasm for our field of study is tempered by the existential insecurity of knowing how much more there is to know. This common academic angst is most dramatically evoked during the early days of teaching and the first day is an emblematic moment for this drama. We must find ways of releasing ourselves and our students from the effects of this angst from the outset.

Students have no constitutional right to an all-knowing teacher, but they can properly demand intellectual honesty. Being straightforward about what you do not know—even when it is something you should know—is not only morally preferable to a dismissive or obfuscating response to a question you cannot answer, but it is likely to increase students’ respect for the teacher. It is absurd to place upon yourself the burden of knowing all the (knowable) answers. The appropriate response to an unanticipated question engages the students and the teacher together in finding answers.⁶

Part of what students will get to know about us, and part of what we have to face as teachers, is that we do not know everything about which we speak. Perhaps part of the “unbearable lightness of being”⁷...

Create a Welcoming Environment for ALL Students

Eight points to guide instructors in working with students with disabilities.

1. The KOKUA Program is the designated campus office to determine appropriate accommodations and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities. The determination is based on the disability documentation provided by the student and the functional limitations presented by the disability. Students must provide the KOKUA Program this documentation before services are initiated. The person who documents a disability must be a qualified professional. The purpose of the accommodations and auxiliary aids is to give the student an equal opportunity to participate in the academic environment.
2. Students with disabilities have a right to meet with you privately regarding disability matters, and their confidentiality must be maintained. Treat all disability-related information as confidential medical information. Conduct disability-related meetings in a private location. Provide plenty of opportunities for students to meet with you to describe their disability-related needs, to arrange test accommodations, to ask for clarification about what was presented in class, to get help with in-class note taking, etc.
3. Students with disabilities need access to course materials and information presented in your classroom at the same time as all other students. As an instructor, you play a vital role in ensuring that materials are available in alternative format in a timely manner. Converting print materials to alternate formats—whether to

⁶Eisenberg, P. 20.

⁷Kundera, M. 1984. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Harper and Row. New York.

Braille, audio tapes, electronic format, or enlargements-is both labor and time intensive. Therefore, it is critical that you inform KOKUA Program about the textbooks you plan to use and all other print materials as soon as you are requested to do so either by a student or KOKUA Program.

4. Students have the responsibility for making their disability-related accommodation needs known to you in a timely fashion so that appropriate arrangements can be made (they are not, however, required to discuss their disability)-your syllabus statement welcomes students to do so.

5. If a student with a disability does not request accommodations, you are under no obligation to provide academic assistance. In other words, you are not asked to guess or predetermine what a student may need. Students may choose not to use accommodations.

6. Accommodations should not be provided to a student who has not provided appropriate documentation to KOKUA Program. The KOKUA Program is the only office designated to review documentation of a disability and determine eligibility for specific accommodations.

7. Individual accommodation needs vary from student to student because a disability, even the same disability, may result in different functional limitations. Compensation skills and strategies vary from one student to another, just as instructional methods vary from one instructor to another.

8. KOKUA Program provides reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and support services that are individualized and based upon disability documentation, functional limitations, and a collaborative

⁸This list was adapted from the following website: <http://www.ods.ohiostate.edu/ods/textonly/faculty/handbook/page03.htm> and page 04.htm.

The Honest Classroom

The longer you put off student participation in your class, the more difficult it will be to create an active learning environment.

It would be pleasant to think that all our students are engaged actively and enthusiastically in the pursuit of learning for learning's sake. In this idealized vision, a worthy quest regardless of its rarity, students' work benefits only themselves and, consequently anything less than honest effort harms only themselves. Value is internalized and the idea of teacher as enforcer and judge is irrelevant. However, in our classes some students do perceive their education as a means to an end. Nor can all of them afford the luxury and privilege of educating themselves for themselves. Simple expediency may be the basis for students to take a shortcut. Some degree of fear and desperation could invite students to leave our guided tour and strike out on their own. It is as if without an added advantage, they cannot possibly reach the end. Dishonest behavior by students, then, must always also be viewed as a red flag signaling us to step back and evaluate our teaching strategies.

The question regarding dishonorable behavior by students is not "How do we as teachers penalize it?" but "How do we as teachers organize our classes so that no benefits accrue from such behavior and students are confident that they can be successful?"

Actor Jeff Goldblum has said that the best life advice he ever got was from his 3rd grade teacher who told him to keep his eyes on his own paper. At the heart of his story is the relation of honesty to creativity. In a student, this marks the distinction between one who is in the process of becoming oneself, and one who is not. Encountering cheating or plagiarism in our class can be one of those moments when we feel a sense of personal insult. Resist that response. It's *not about you* and feeling insulted will confuse the issue, which is really very straightforward. It is not always perfectly clear if someone has, in fact, cheated or plagiarized. But the issue of cheating and of plagiarism itself is straightforward. It is not acceptable. It's not good for you. It keeps you from something important; that is, yourself. Beyond that, there are many kinds of ethical considerations, and those are outlined very clearly in the Student Conduct Code, from the Office of Student Affairs:

1. Cheating includes but is not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination; obtaining unauthorized information about an examination before it is given; submitting another's work as one's own; using prohibited sources of information during an examination; fabricating or falsifying data in experiments and other research; altering the record of any grade; altering answers after an examination has been submitted; falsifying any official University record; or misrepresenting of facts in order to obtain exemptions from course requirements.
2. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors

involved; or “drylabbing,” which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.¹

Reading this to your class at the beginning of the semester would be a very poor way to begin. Most students consider cheating to be out of the question, and would be appalled by the implication. On the other hand, some students will not have identified certain actions as plagiarism. Even some acts of cheating are not recognized as such. As evident as the Conduct Code may seem to you, do not assume that your students are aware or understand all the permutations. Let students know what constitutes plagiarism *in your classroom*. As you go over your syllabus, and discuss how you would like them to do the readings, write the papers, do the projects, attend and participate, you will also be conveying to them all the possibilities that exist for them within your course. Then, within that context, explain to them what they need to know that is not acceptable. Be friendly and communicative while also being precise and clear. Do this in a non-accusatory way, as if you were simply informing students about something new to them.² Then, as they begin to research papers, or study for exams, put in writing your words of guidance regarding the open possibilities and the closed ones. Don't make warnings, just give clear guidance.

Let students know what constitutes plagiarism in your classroom

Give clear guidance

When you do encounter a case of cheating or plagiarism, the disciplinary sanctions in the Conduct Code are also very clear, beginning with a warning and extending to expulsion. Maybe your student didn't have Jeff Goldblum's 3rd grade teacher. Maybe no one ever said “Keep your eyes on your own paper”. Maybe it just never “took”. So, we recommend that you start with a warning. In cases where you aren't completely sure, be careful not to accuse; ask and talk about it.

The Warning

Simply identifying a case of plagiarism can be difficult. It would be impossible for the overworked teacher to run off to the library and check sources every time a paper seems suspicious; the use of a paper from a previous [semester] is also next to impossible to spot. The best way to determine a case of plagiarism is to compare the student's paper to other recent work, and even then your case is still one of conjecture. The difficulty of proof is then one good reason to take things slowly, to discuss the problem with the student...³

Since websites are highly used by students, it is possible for us to locate sources that may have been copied.

It is more useful to think of cheating and plagiarism as an *act*, rather than thinking of “The Cheater” as an identity or a profession. There is a myth that “the smart student” wouldn't cheat or plagiarize, because s/he “wouldn't need to”. And since we often find ourselves appreciating “the smart student” because they help us do our teaching well, it can be very difficult to realize and handle this possibility. So, don't create

The Myth

¹Student Conduct Code. July 1992. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa: Office of Student Affairs. Pp. 5-6.

²Halversen, M. 1992. *Mentor: A Handbook for New Teaching Assistants*, 5th ed. Seattle, WA: Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington. P. 12.

³Halversen. P12.

Don't create "types" of students who would cheat

"types" or "kinds" of students who would and wouldn't cheat. Look at the conditions that prevail that produce the possibility and look at the actions that indicate it.

The best way to prevent episodes of plagiarism in your classroom is to establish an atmosphere of trust, open communication, and consistency. Since panic is often a precondition of plagiarism, you should offer as much help as possible (reading rough drafts, setting [times] for different stages of the paper(s), identifying library resources, etc.). Accepting works-in-progress during the [semester] helps in two ways: it gets the students off and running on their papers, and it provides you with a good sense of the development of the students' ideas and writing abilities.⁴

It is never acceptable to assume and assert that the prose of a paper or the thought processes involved are simply "too advanced" for a particular student unless you have good knowledge of recent work by them.

Cheating can be structured out of a class by reducing the conditions that encourage it.

Provide plenty of opportunity for reviews and consultations before exams...provide study questions. Cheating often comes out of desperation and lack of preparation ...you can help by making the examination less mysterious and thus less threatening.⁵

Scheduling exams

Scheduling exams during times when students are already burdened with many other exams and papers is antithetical to reducing conditions that encourage cheating and plagiarism. Seriously reconsider your chosen due dates and envision a possibility of lightening the load in your class while others are growing more intense. Your class and material will benefit from this, as well as your students' performance and grades. Consider possibilities where students can design their own due date schedule and watch the increase in the level of knowledge a commitment on their part can make.

Stealing Exams

The idea of theft is bound up with ideas of value because of scarcity. Stealing a copy of an exam, then, is worthless if copies of them are in abundance or at least readily available. For multiple choice exams, this can be achieved by either allowing students to keep the exams or by having a file of previous exams available for students to review. This will require, at minimum, that you change the order of the answers on current exams and/or make minor revisions to wording. Realistically, it is doubtful that your course will remain unchanged from semester to semester; therefore, your exams will need to reflect that.

The Wandering Eye

If you are a TA for a supervising professor in a large lecture section, you and other TA colleagues will be expected to attend to the room during test-taking. Your presence represents two things at once; assistance (to all) and warning (to those with wandering eyes). In the case of the wandering eyes, ask the student whose answers are being sought to move if possible, rather than the one seeking the answers. Or, remind that student to make it more difficult for anyone to see their answer sheet. Apologize to them for the inconvenience.

⁴Halversen. P12.

⁵Halversen. P12.

We suggest this, because asking the *suspected* student to move may cause disruption during the test, and has the disadvantage of singling out a student who might be innocent. Trying to avoid conflict with a suspected student by making generalized announcements to a whole class as reminders to keep their eyes on their own papers is also problematic, because it can have the effect of making innocent students *feel* as if they have been suspected. This is a disruption during an exam that ought to be avoided on behalf of the many serious students. By asking the student whose answers are being sought to cover their paper and by standing nearby, you will probably be able to warn without confronting or wrongly accusing. If you are a TA in a large lecture section, with a supervising professor, we recommend that any direct confrontation with the suspected student be done by that professor rather than by the TA.

The supervising professor should handle direct confrontations

If your writing assignments have been constructed to allow students the greatest opportunity possible to develop and speak in their own voice, a different voice is often readily apparent. Let them know that you will be able to tell the difference. And in truth, you will be. Still, you might well find yourself faced with a paper that seems oddly familiar to you...or the student may be writing in a markedly different style from earlier work.⁶ A common form of plagiarism is turning in a paper that has been written for another class, previous or concurrent. When topics are closely related, it can be difficult to tell. So write on the paper that it *reads* to you as if it was written for another class and ask them to see you.

Plagiarism

In most cases, a frank...discussion will suffice, and then the two of you can work out an equitable solution...Some students do not know what plagiarism is, and others pretend not to know, but all must be given the benefit of the doubt unless you can produce evidence to confirm your suspicion.⁷

Late papers/ missed exams

Be clear on what your policies are regarding late papers and/or missed exams and your reasons for setting such policies. Whatever you decide your policy is, be consistent. Being consistent *might* mean that you make exceptions, but that the exceptions apply across the board. This student is given as much, or as little leeway as that one. We recommend *not* involving oneself in the many possible reasons for lateness or for missing tests. Into your syllabus, the grading system, and class policies, build options which may be exercised (or not), but which allow for each and every student to legitimately adjust their course work. By building in creative options, you are released from at least two problems: having to listen to life histories that justify the reason for lateness; and, having to sit in judgement as to whether a reason is legitimate or not. Allow the same options to all, and students will use it as they need it. Many will not use it at all. In this way, it will be apparent to all that there are no special privileges for one student, or a group of students—for example athletes—over others.

⁶Halversen. P12.

⁷Halversen. P12.



I think the most common problem facing rookie teaching assistants is the prospect of facing a room full of students for the first time - an emotion somewhat akin to stage fright takes hold of your senses. As I walked across campus to my first class, a room full of students I had never seen before, the tempting thought flashed across my mind that I could just keep walking, stop over at Mānoa Gardens and have coffee. No one would find out. Tomorrow was another day and I might not be so terrified then. Yeah, sure. Somehow I resisted the temptation to escape and walked into the classroom - light-headed, heart-pounding, sweaty, and voice quavering. A strange thing happened then. As soon as I turned to face the class to speak, the butterflies melted away rapidly. My nerves returned to as near to normal as possible given the circumstances and it was as though I had done this many times before!

One suggestion I would have for a beginning teacher is to make pretty specific plans for things to do in your first few class meetings. This is important for at least two reasons. One is that it makes sure you can fill the time with something useful. The second is to let the students know right at the beginning they are going to have work to pass the course and that they must take the lab section of the course seriously. For example, to help the students get acquainted, on the first day I like to have them spend 20 minutes or so writing a short essay, no more than a page. The subject might be an imaginary dinner to which they can invite any three historical personages they wish. Ask them who they would invite and why. Then they share their dinner plans with the rest of the class. Many of the answers will be surprising and entertaining to everyone and you may well learn something you did not know. It really helps to break the ice.

After a few weeks, as you become more confident and comfortable in your role, it will become less important to have a scripted routine. You should *vary what you do in the class*. It makes it more interesting for the students and helps avoid complacency for you. Putting your students in groups is a good tactic, although not to be overused. Giving them a list of questions to evaluate in the group and then report back to the class is one approach.

That brings me to another point - the nature of the students here in Hawai'i. To new teachers from the mainland it may appear that there is less willingness to enter discussions in class and make thoughts or opinions heard. There is a strong value in not standing out in a crowd, not drawing attention to your self. It is not unusual for two or three mainland students in a class of 25 to do all the talking in a discussion. Though there are always exceptions to this, the worst aspect of this is a general dampening of discussion. White students who have been here for some time have told me that they have learned to say less in class discussions so as to not fulfill the unfortunate stereotype of the "loud-mouth haole." They don't want to alienate their friends and classmates. For the teacher, the job is to strive to create an atmosphere where *everyone* feels comfortable talking and learns how

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who no longer pauses to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.”
Einstein 1951

to listen. As you learn more about local forms of formal and informal communication, you will become better able to facilitate the discussion sessions. Make sure that you demonstrate genuine interest in what the students have to say. Tell them when they have a good point. Be diplomatic when you correct or clarify information. You are not hired to be a stand up comic but there is no reason why your class can't be pleasant for them to attend.

On the bright side, while discussions can be a challenge at first, the UH Mānoa students are very bright, pleasant, and have a good sense of humor. It is very important not to mistake what initially appears to you to be a lack of expression for a lack of intelligence. It is not uncommon to receive a sparkling essay from someone who has been so quiet and unobtrusive in the back row that you hardly recognize their name. Also, remember that many of the students are bilingual and have first-hand experience with another culture. Often these students are able to add a tremendously valuable personal perspective on issues we discuss in the course.

Finally, every teacher needs to keep in mind that the purpose of their position is to allow them to obtain a graduate degree. That is, after all, what we are here for and you need to be careful not to lose sight of that objective. At the same time you have an obligation to do an effective job for the students who are depending on you. This is a constant balancing act.

Office Hours¹

Scheduling Office Hours

As a faculty or TA, you are expected to hold office hours for your students. Each department must provide an office space for this purpose. Generally, schedule between two to four hours per week for student consultations. If you are a TA, it is likely that you will be asked to share a space with at least one other TA in a rather small office, so it is advisable for office mates to get together early in the semester to arrange non-conflicting office hours. It will be more effective and comfortable for you and your students if the office feels a bit more private. Even when others are obviously working quietly on their own, it can feel as if the conversation is subject to another's scrutiny. And in fact, it is. For this reason, if you and your office mates are not able to arrange non-conflicting schedules, make agreements about how to accommodate one another when students come by.

Students may find it very difficult to come to see their professors. Often, the TA is the only person they would consider visiting. Whether faculty or TA, we must be careful to make the arrival of the student to our office one that is not intimidating. Some require students to make at least one office visit early in the semester. If students find the experience friendly and useful, it is more likely that you'll be seeing them regularly during your office hours. Realistically, visits are likely to be cyclical. You can expect more students at your door right before and after exams and as deadlines approach for papers or assignments.

¹ The general flow of this section, and some partial and modified quotes, with credit to: Ronkowski. 1993. et al.

Vary your hours. Rather than scheduling MWF 1-2:00, you might set up hours like M 1-2:00, TU 10:00-11:00, and F 11:00-12:00. That way, you avoid having to schedule individual appointments with students whose schedules conflict with your 1-2:00 time slot. Through experience, you may find that certain kinds of meeting times don't suit you. For example, if the time directly before class is when you take time to focus yourself, don't encourage students to drop by at that time. *And yet*, you will find that this is a natural time for students to do so.

**Discussions
With
Students**

Commonly, there are two prime times when students will feel compelled to speak with you; directly before and just after class. *Don't pass up this opportunity!* On the one hand, you may wish to walk into class fully composed, and therefore a half-hour meeting just prior to class would disrupt you. On the other, it is far more likely that you will get to know more about your students, about how they are doing and therefore how you are doing as a teacher, how the course is going, just before and after class. You will come to know who arrives early and who stays after, and they will come to anticipate that this is when they can exchange thoughts with you. If it is possible for you to complete class preparation well before classtime, then you can arrive at the classroom 5-10 minutes before it is scheduled to begin. If you don't schedule things to do directly after class, and can take your time to collect your materials and chat with students informally, they will come to anticipate that here is another informal opportunity for them to ask some questions, and perhaps begin to exchange some ideas. The times on either end of the class period can be seen as a very informal "office hour" opportunity, which will serve you *and* your students well. The rapport that you establish with students during these informal times will carry over into your class, as well as making it more likely that they will visit you in your office.

**The best
"office"
hours are
the informal
ones**

Office hours can be used to peruse mistakes on papers and tests, to discuss strategies for future assignments, to clarify confusing points in last week's lecture, to demystify a demonstration given in class, or to help you get to know your students better. During times when you do not have students visiting, you can always use that time for other course related tasks.

**Always be
there for
your office
hours!**

However, *once office hours are set, do not fail to meet them*, even when students have not been coming by. If it takes a student a lot of courage to finally arrive at your door, to find it closed and locked may discourage them from trying again. In an emergency, of course, you should leave a note on the door apologizing for having to leave, and asking visitors to leave a message for you.

Students with disabilities should have every opportunity to meet with you privately regarding disability matters, and their confidentiality must be maintained. Treat all disability related information as confidential medical information. Conduct disability related meeting in a private location. Provide plenty of opportunities for students to meet with you to describe their disability related needs, to arrange for test accommodations, to ask for clarification about what was presented in class, to get help with in class note taking, etc. ²

² <http://www.ods.ohiostate.edu/ods/textonly/faculty/handbook/page03.htm> and page 04.htm.

Learning/Teaching Styles

Teaching is more than telling. Learning is more than listening

The way we think about teaching influences the way we teach. Teaching is more than telling and learning is more than listening; teaching and learning is sharing and creating meaning, engaging students with the material so that they can construct their own meanings and understandings, and engaging ourselves so that our teaching enlivens our own intellectual experiences. We have been successful in teaching when students are empowered to construct and deconstruct meanings and understandings on the terms that we offer them, and on their own terms.¹

Theories of Learning

Teachers in the act of learning

We vary greatly in the ways we learn and think. Numerous and elaborate categories have been designed as a way to differentiate ways of learning: concrete vs. abstract, random vs. sequential, connected vs. separate, subjective vs. objective.² One way identifies two extreme types of learning styles: the “deep” or global approach and the “surface” or atomistic approach.³ These are considered to be at the extreme ends of a spectrum, with the global as a holistic, integrative style and the atomistic as concentrated on the parts without interrelating. Still another way to characterize learning styles is to organize modes of learning around auditory, visual or kinesthetic methods. Here the significant factor in a person’s learning style is related to the preference for one of several senses for perceiving, experiencing, and organizing information.

Make your class periods a bit unpredictable... make the flow of classes vary.

Rather than looking towards any of these as the way to categorize ourselves or others as learners, they might serve as reminders that because we learn in many different ways, it is essential that as learning teachers, we become multi-versed in our teaching repertoire. Some of us love to debate abstractly, others ground concepts in experience; some work creatively in groups and others find solitary work more meaningful; some are articulate in their speech, others in their writing, and still others find their voice in visual or physical expression. Beyond that, none of us, nor the complex dynamic of learning / teaching can be captured by any of these categories. Still, the questionnaire included here can give a limited indication of what it might mean for students with one set of scores to take a course taught by methods that privilege entirely different preferences.

You might consider answering the questionnaire along with the students in your class, as a way of looking at the different kinds of learning styles that exist in the class. In a very informal way, it might help you identify why using one style of teaching over another doesn’t have the effect that you expected in the class.

¹Taylor, M. 1991. *Teaching Assistant Development Workshop Series*, Cornell University, Office of Instructional Support. This is an edited version of a part of the introduction, P. 3.

²Goroff, et al.

³Trey, M., Zhuang, J., Myers, K. 1986. *The International Teaching Assistant Handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: Regents of the University of California. Pp. 8, 10, 11.

Learning Styles Questionnaire⁴

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
1. I will learn new information better if I read it silently.	_____	_____	_____
2. I learn new material better by looking at diagrams, illustrations, pictures, charts, etc.	_____	_____	_____
3. I like to write things down and take lots of notes for visual review.	_____	_____	_____
4. Talking about a subject to someone helps me to clarify my own ideas.	_____	_____	_____
5. I enjoy working with tools or equipment.	_____	_____	_____
6. I prefer to read the newspaper rather than listen to the news on the radio.	_____	_____	_____
7. I will learn new material better if I listen to a verbal explanation or lecture.	_____	_____	_____
8. I learn best if I picture things in my head.	_____	_____	_____
9. I follow written directions better than oral directions.	_____	_____	_____
10. I am skilled with and enjoy making graphs and charts.	_____	_____	_____
11. I prefer to listen to the news on the radio rather than read the newspaper.	_____	_____	_____
12. I like to use a map when locating a new place or street.	_____	_____	_____
13. Reading aloud usually increases my comprehension.	_____	_____	_____
14. I read notes many times before a test for visual review.	_____	_____	_____
15. I like to "doodle" during meetings or lectures.	_____	_____	_____
16. Before making something, I usually picture the completed object in my mind.	_____	_____	_____
17. I like to use flashcards when studying to remember new terminology.	_____	_____	_____
18. When unsure of how to spell a word, I write it different ways to see what looks right.	_____	_____	_____
19. I remember landmarks or scenery when driving.	_____	_____	_____
20. I remember best by listening to tapes or lectures.	_____	_____	_____
21. I can usually tell if a word is spelled correctly by looking at it.	_____	_____	_____
22. I find it easy to manipulate images in my mind and change their size, shape, position, or direction.	_____	_____	_____
23. I require explanations of diagrams, graphs, or visual directions.	_____	_____	_____
24. I learn new material better if I can have "hands on" experience, manipulating models or doing labs.	_____	_____	_____

Scoring Procedures:

Point Values: Often=5, Sometimes=3, Seldom=1. Record the point value for each item number.

Add the points to give preference scores under each heading.

Visual/Verbal		Visual/Nonverbal		Auditory		Visual/Tactile	
No.	Pts.	No.	Pts.	No.	Pts.	No.	Pts.
1. _____		2. _____		4. _____		3. _____	
6. _____		8. _____		7. _____		5. _____	

⁴Taylor, M. P. 108-9. Adapted from Stein/Niknazy (1988). Los Medanos College. CA.

Visual/Verbal		Visual/Nonverbal		Auditory		Visual/Tactile	
No.	Pts.	No.	Pts.	No.	Pts.	No.	Pts.
9.	_____	12.	_____	11.	_____	10.	_____
14.	_____	16.	_____	13.	_____	15.	_____
17.	_____	19.	_____	20.	_____	18.	_____
21.	_____	22.	_____	23.	_____	24.	_____

Visual/Verbal Preference Score _____

Visual/Nonverbal Preference Score _____

Auditory Preference Score _____

Tactile/Kinesthetic Preference Score _____

The following are summaries of the various perceptual styles, along with strategies that are effective with each style.

Visual/Verbal: You learn best through reading and writing. Programs that simultaneously present visual and verbal information are quite useful to you. Read new information in order to gain the most meaning. Write down directions; summarize material in your own words. You may find flash cards to be useful. Visually review your notes several times before tests. Picture what things mean.

Visual/Nonverbal: You learn best by looking at pictures, diagrams, charts, illustrations. Picture things you are trying to learn. Draw diagrams or other representations of new material or problems you are trying to solve. Visualize new material.

Auditory: You learn best from verbal instructions from others or from yourself. Talk to yourself when you are trying to learn new information. Discuss material with others; ask for verbal explanations for diagrams or charts, or try teaching to someone else. Make audio tapes of what you are trying to learn and play them on a walk-man as you cross campus. Talk and listen your way through new material.

Tactile/Kinesthetic: You learn best by doing things yourself, direct involvement in “hands-on” activities. Write down all the steps to solving problems; take copious notes; “think” on paper. Make graphs, diagrams, models; manipulate materials whenever you can to help you learn. Study while moving about; act out problems and solutions. Wrestle with the material.

What happens when all those learning styles “sit down together”

“Teaching” does not take place unless “learning” does

Essay on Teaching at UH Mānoa

Ultimately, teachers and students all can be enriched by developing more than one way of learning/teaching within ourselves and within the classroom. Historically, the organization of educational methods has privileged a very limiting view of what constitutes teaching and learning. By dichotomizing these as separate activities, and then assigning one activity to one of the actors and the other to another, the great range of human creativity and human kinetics has been submerged. The most expansive meaning to be taken from the many different theories on styles of learning is to consider what it means that all those learning styles are present and in play at the same time in any classroom, *whether privileged or not*. If there is to be any credence to the styles and types at all, it must mean that the possibilities become infinite when one imagines what it means for all of them to “sit down together”.

This may be the most coherent way to approach the diversity of culture and gender, and of learning/teaching styles, particularly as a new teacher in a new university culture. If teaching was no more than telling and learning was no more than listening, then there would be no alchemy in any of it. But teaching/learning is more than “the sum of its parts.” And “teaching” does not take place *unless* “learning” does. So, this alchemy cannot be attributed to a mere alternating of styles, as important as that may be as a strategy to open the possibilities to everyone to take part in the way that best suits them. The alchemy of *a’o*, as Hawaiians know it, lies in the reciprocal and singular activity of all involved. In *a’o* is the recognition that what we call “teaching” is meaningless, even non-existent, as a concept and as a practice, until and unless it is honored by a lively, reciprocal responsive being.



Masahide Kato

Political Science

To anyone who took time to pick up this handbook and read through until s/he hits this piece of mine...You! You must be very committed to teaching. I mean, I didn’t even try to make this kind of effort you are doing right now when I first began teaching. I am sure you are going to be a compassionate and dedicated teacher. But if you want to add one more episode to your list so that you can have some pleasure of identifying it later (ah huh, this is what that guy was talking about...), my story may not be a bad idea.

As soon as I began teaching, I encountered a dilemma: can I just “hang out” or should I do some hard-core lecture oriented classes? The first semester I allotted a very limited amount of time for lecturing. The students seemed to enjoy that but I did not think they got much out of the class. I began to see what is important is not so much the transmission of knowledge as the transmission of the fascination with knowing. I began to realize: “That’s what I am supposed to do! I can show my students how fascinating it can be to know and to learn.” In order to facilitate that “knowledge is fun” I myself must be excited about knowing. Soon I began to notice how focused the students become whenever I talked about something that I found exciting. There is nothing mysterious about this, because on such occasions my voice becomes energized, my use of metaphor

becomes effective and I can even afford to crack some jokes here and there spontaneously. The message is simply, "It is fun to know."

Another important component about which I am still learning is how to bring the subject matter to the student's life. Knowing is fun, all right. But if the students cannot relate to the process of knowing, the pleasure of knowing stops right there. This requires a lot of "homework" and reflection. In this context, learning Hawaiian language and history gave me a powerful device for illuminating this university, my students, and my relationship with both. But if I abuse this type of knowledge and turn it into an expert knowledge like, "Yes, I know Hawai'i because I studied Hawaiian even though I am a foreigner," it becomes a mere ego trip and I am sure students will be turned off by that kind of attitude. So what I try to do is to use the knowledge as something "subliminal" and subtle, a way of feeling or sensing my floating presence on this island. With this knowledge I will be able to do my "homework": to look for examples that I can use to connect the subject matter to the students' life and reality.

Adult Students Defined¹

The 21st century brings a new and unique kind of student to higher education. Over the last 20 years, the percentage of older students on campuses has increased dramatically. From one-third to one-half of all college students are classified as nontraditional and more than 50% of all graduate students are over 30 years of age (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). "Adults are the fastest-growing segment of all the population groups in higher education" (Brazziel, 1989, p. 116) and this trend is expected to continue. Cross (1980) defines the adult student as an adult who returns to school full- or part-time while maintaining responsibilities such as employment, family, and other responsibilities of adult life. Because developmental needs, issues, and stressors for adults differ considerably from those faced by younger, "traditional-age" students, all aspects of the college environment must be reconsidered (and often reconfigured) to respond to this growing student population (Benshoff, 1991).

A number of factors characteristically separate adult students from younger college students. Adult learners tend to be achievement oriented, highly motivated, and relatively independent with special needs for flexible schedules and instruction appropriate for their developmental level (Cross, 1980). Adults generally prefer more active approaches to learning and value opportunities to integrate academic learning with their life and work experiences (Benshoff, 1991). Financial and family concerns are two of the biggest considerations that impact on the adult student experience. Additional factors (Richter-Antion, 1986) which distinguish nontraditional students from traditional students include:

Why Adults Return To School

Many adult students come back to school to complete educational pursuits they began years before as traditional-age students. They may have dropped out of education for a number of reasons, including financial considerations, competing responsibilities, and lack of focus, motivation, and maturity. Changing job requirements or career changes often force adults to get additional education to survive or

¹ <http://ericae.net/edo/ED347483.htm>

advance in the job market (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). According to Brazziel (1989), “the ever upward progression of an educated adult population and workforce and increased educational requirements for high-paying jobs—might be the single most powerful factor” (p. 129) in the continued influx of adult students on college campuses. Other major reasons that adults return to college include family life transitions (marriage, divorce, death), changes in leisure patterns, and self-fulfillment (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980).

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) proposed a “triggers and transitions” theory that relates the adult’s decision to return to school to developmental issues and crises faced during midlife. Transitions (the movement from one status to another) require new knowledge, skills, and/or credentials that often lead people back to college. Triggers are events that precipitate the timing of an adult’s decision to return to school, most frequently career events and family changes.

Needs Of Adult Students

Adult students need many different kinds of support and assistance from family, friends, and institutions of higher learning. Research evidence suggests that “both sexes have difficulties juggling the roles of student, worker, and family member” (Muench, 1987, p. 10). Adult students need help in building their self-confidence as students, in acquiring or refreshing study skills, and in managing their time and other resources while in school. In addition, adult students benefit from opportunities to interact with their peers and need to be actively involved in the educational process through sharing their relevant work and life experiences (Muench, 1987).

Principles of Adult Learning²

7 Steps to “Treat Learners Like Adults”

1. Adults are people with years of experience and a wealth of information. Focus on the strengths learners bring to the classroom. Provide opportunities for dialogue within the group. Tap their experience as a major source of enrichment to the class. Students can be resources to you and to each other.
2. Adults have established values, beliefs and opinions. Demonstrate respect for differing beliefs, religions, value systems and lifestyles. Allow debate and challenge of ideas.
3. Adults are people whose style and pace of learning has probably changed. Use a variety of teaching strategies such as small group problem solving and discussion. Use auditory, visual, tactile and participatory teaching methods.
4. Adults relate new knowledge and information to previously learned information and experiences. Assess the specific learning needs of your audience before your class or at the beginning of the class.
5. Adults have pride. Allow people to admit confusion, ignorance, fears, biases and different opinions. Acknowledge or thank students for their responses and questions. Treat all questions and comments with respect. Avoid saying “I just covered that” when someone asks a repetitive question. Remember, the only foolish question is the unasked question.

² <http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtio/adults-1.htm>

6. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing. Engage the students in a process of mutual inquiry. Avoid merely transmitting knowledge or expecting total agreement. Don't "spoon-feed" the participants.

7. Adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning. Emphasize how learning can be applied in a practical setting. Use case studies, problem solving groups, and participatory activities to enhance learning. Adults generally want to immediately apply new information or skills to current problems or situations.

Note: New information and skills must be relevant and meaningful to the concerns and desires of the students. Know what the needs are of individuals in your class. Students do not wish to learn what they will never use. The learning environment must be physically and psychologically comfortable.

Lighting the Fire

*Education is not the filling of a pail;
it is the lighting of a fire.*

William Butler Yeats

Strike a Match

There are some basic necessities we need in order to build a fire: fuel, oxygen, a favorable environment. Additionally, we need to help maintain the fire, adding fuel as needed, shielding it from too strong gusts of wind. Creating classes where our students can actively participate in their learning is much like building a good fire. If we have provided the class with appropriate fuel and a comfortable climate, we need only light the match and enjoy its warmth. Indeed, the hardest job is not getting the fire going, the greatest danger lies in inadvertently stamping it out.

Fires burn brightest in places where there are multiple openings and opportunities, where variety is not merely tolerated but encouraged and how you go is infinitely more valuable than where you end up. They flicker most feebly in the Land of the (one and only) Right Answer. The Land of the Right Answer is a dangerous place, full of unseen traps and pitfalls, harsh gales and sudden downpours. Each question posed is a test, each creating tiny spasms of performance anxiety. The one constructive learning activity which may be supported by asking questions with one (and only one) right answer and that is to provide us instant feedback on our own job performance.

The strategies we utilize as teachers are determined by factors over which we have varying amounts of control, from personal style to professorial requirements. If, however, we can see ourselves as tenders of the fire, the ones who add another log at just the right time in just the right place or shield it from the wind and rain, then our students learn not just facts and figures. They learn to make fires.

Teaching Strategies

...teacher and student [are] co-investigators...The teacher learns on two levels: (1) learning how the students approach the task of learning, and (2) learning from the insights and observations of every-

In the Land of The (One and Only) Right Answer

We are the tenders of the fire

one. For the course to succeed, the teacher must maintain constant awareness of how the students react. *David Ashworth, East Asian Languages and Literature*

The key to success, for me as a teacher, is adaptability, particularly here in Hawai'i. Adaptability has a lot to do with attitude—toward teaching, toward the students, toward myself as a teacher. Each class, each group of students, each individual is different; as I become aware of these differences, I can use different strategies to reach my goals as a teacher. *Karen Jolly, Department of History*¹

Mixing it up

Our teaching strategies are determined by a number of factors: individual student learning styles, the student mix in a particular class, our particular academic disciplines or course materials, as well as those formats with which we feel most comfortable. With so many variables, it is unlikely that any one strategy is going to be successful all the time for all classes. Paying attention to our students tells us (sometimes instantaneously!) what is and what is not working. We can then make adjustments, throw out the ineffective and try something new.

What I find so fascinating about teaching is that I'm still learning how to do it. *Ann Bayer, Department of Curriculum and Instruction*²

It is imperative that we learn to risk, not just once, but over and over again

There are no hard and fast rules; no words written in stone. A course structured primarily around class discussions has room for a lecture now and then. Students might even appreciate the variation from the exchange of ideas. Question and answer sessions in lectures allow for discussions where the instructor acts as a kind of conduit through which the discussion flows. The following are some guidelines for various teaching strategies—discussion, problem-solving, and lectures. The emphasis is on *the creation of favorable conditions* in which these strategies are most likely to be successful.

The Discussion

Class discussions are a vital way for students to create their own learning. While a lecture format may depend most on students *being* there, discussions require students *doing*. A discussion format allows students to literally think out loud with the mutual support of others engaged in the same struggle to make meaning. Students benefit not only from the opportunity to express their own insights and confusion but to listen to each other. When students learn from students, the *a'o hele* and *a'o mai* are experienced almost simultaneously; the student sharing an understanding with the class is also gaining confidence in her or his own knowledge and discovering a place from which s/he can speak.

Our fundamental responsibility facilitating in-class discussions is to create an environment in which students feel comfortable speaking. Of course, students should be informed ahead of time that they will be expected to participate in class. Springing something on them without warning can only heighten student anxiety and probably generate some resentment. If class discussions are going to be the primary

¹Kane K. 1991. In *Celebration of Teaching: Reflections of University of Hawai'i Professors*. Center for Teaching Excellence, Office of Faculty Development and Academic Support: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Pp. 12, 30.

²Kane. P. 16.

When you ask a question, wait 15 seconds before speaking again. Someone will nearly always answer if you can stand the silence!

strategy for the course, this would be emphasized in the syllabus and participation would probably account for a significant portion of their grade. If it is a strategy you choose to use in conjunction with other practices, let students know during the preceding class period that they should be prepared to talk about their next reading assignment. You might have them prepare two or three questions about the reading to bring to class. This is quite different from giving students “study questions” to answer in preparation for a class discussion. If students are to participate actively in their learning, they must also be given the opportunity to direct that learning as much as possible.

There are a number of things we can do to foster a comfortable speaking environment:

1. Listen without interruption. Make eye contact with the speaker but also take this opportunity to observe other students’ reactions to what is being said. This helps to encourage students to speak to each other, and not just the teacher.
2. Use students’ *names* and credit them for their contributions, e.g., “Susan raised a related issue earlier.” Open classes by drawing upon student’s experiences and opinions.
3. Pay attention to nonverbal cues. Many students will not volunteer to speak but are willing to participate if asked or even just noticed and given a non-verbal acknowledgment.
4. Be respectful of all student’s responses. When others see that you are willing to show respect for all students, even those they may find irritating, they will realize that they can expect the same respectful treatment.
5. Follow up on students’ responses. Teachers can elicit longer and more meaningful responses by simply maintaining a “deliberative silence” after an initial response. (Dillon, 1984)
6. Don’t assume even if the discussion is going well that everyone has been able to follow it. Remark that there seems to be a general sort of agreement about things, but that perhaps there are other points of view, or some doubts.³
7. Be sensitive to student who, for disability-related reasons such as dyslexia or low vision, may be unable to read aloud or answer questions when called on. If students make you aware of these difficulties, you and the student can discuss other ways they can meaningfully participate in class sessions: for example, volunteering comments or making short presentations.⁴

As discussion facilitators, the questions we ask are not nearly as important as the ones we do not ask. A closed (as opposed to open-ended) question is not merely one that requires a yes/no or a recitation of facts. It is any question to which you already possess *the* answer. If student responses begin with “Well, I’m not sure this is what you mean/ want/ are asking...” we can be pretty sure we are asking closed questions. Instead of asking “What does Marx perceive as the primary determinant of social order?” to begin a discussion on relations of production, give the class the starting point. Don’t create unnecessary

³This list is a distillation and elaboration of similar lists in *many* of the TA handbooks we studied.

⁴<http://dsp.berkeley.edu/TeachStudentsWithDisab.html>

Ask open-ended questions

hurdles and hoops. A simple “what did you like about the article?” (and sometimes better yet “what did you hate?”) is often all that’s needed to jump start the class. And then, *wait...*

Wait Time

Give students time to think when responding. The single most important action a teacher can take after asking a question is simply to keep quiet. An analysis of the patterns of interactions between teachers and students in hundreds of classrooms found that teachers averaged *less than one second of silence* before repeating or reemphasizing material, or asking a second question (Rowe 1974). Under such circumstances, it is no wonder that students remain silent. Training teachers to wait silently for three to five seconds after asking a question achieved significant benefits: The length of student’s responses, the number of appropriate but unsolicited responses, exchanges between students, questions from students, and higher level responses all increased, and the number of students’ failures to respond decreased. Waiting three to five seconds, however, can seem like an eternity.

Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool?

That is the time it takes...to chant “*Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool?*” while seeing [whether] the student has any more to offer. If you hold out for the full three seconds, the student will hand over “*three bags full*” (Dillon 1987, p. 63).⁵

Classes with less than 40 students are best suited for a discussion format. However, even in a class of 20, some students will still be hesitant about speaking to the whole group. Breaking up into smaller groups of 3 to 4 students gives everyone the time and a place to speak. Students do not have to worry that their speaking will mean that someone “smarter” will not be able to speak and they also are aware that in a small group they have a responsibility to speak. If there are areas outside the classroom available (a vacant room, nearby benches, a shady tree), encourage groups to spread out. And stay away. You may want to be accessible for questions, but you shouldn’t be able to eavesdrop, as tempting as it may be!

Initially, you may want to assign students to groups, randomly or by other criteria you may feel appropriate to the topic. Later, students may feel comfortable enough with each other to self-select groups by whom they know best or by subject/interests. If your class period is long enough, small group discussions immediately after viewing a video are often especially lively. For the last five or ten minutes of the period, you may want to reconvene the whole class so that the groups can share their thoughts with each other. Alternatively, you can have each student write for five minutes any reactions or additional thoughts they may have. This exercise often has surprising results for both students and teacher. Those who thought they had nothing to contribute or who usually experienced “I don’t know what to write about” anxiety find that five minutes isn’t long enough!

Problem Solving

Problem solving as a teaching strategy often conjures up memories of those challenging or dreaded (depending on your point of view) math word problems in the fourth grade. Selecting the *right* facts and inserting them into the *right* formula would inevitably lead one

⁵Bonwell, C. and Eison, J.A. 1991. *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports. Pp. 28-29.

**The criteria
of “The
Good
Problem”**

to the *right* answer. Problem solving in an active learning context, however, is not intended to imply there even exists a unique correct solution method or answer. Accordingly, students and teachers need to be willing to examine their own tendencies to expect a single solution and their willingness (or lack thereof) to be open to multiple interpretations, approaches, and solutions to problems.

Good problems meet all or many of the following criteria:

1. Multiple interpretations and points of view are allowed. In effect, students construct the “problem” by defining objectives and assumptions. In generating objectives and making assumptions, students’ value systems are brought into play.
2. Superfluous or missing data do not constrain but rather promote multiple solutions.
3. Multiple representations (graphical, algebraic, tabular, narrative, etc.) of solutions are possible.⁶

The following is an example of problem-solving in the context of the medical school, one that could be reproduced within the context of other kinds of courses in other departments:

One of the tests we give [medical students] is called a “triple jump exercise.” It tests problem-solving skills and the ability to gain and integrate information quickly. Students are given a patient problem and spend 30 minutes acquiring background data by questioning a faculty tutor and deciding what information they need to handle this problem. Then they have two hours to find that information and work out the answers to their questions. They return to the tutor and report on their study techniques, what they have learned and what they now see as the solution.⁷ *Marita Nelson, John Burns School of Medicine*

Problem-Posing

It is possible to take the problem-solving method further, beyond the “fire-tending” dimensions of teaching and into the realm of teaching the students to “make their own fires.” This means to extend the problem-solving skills into enabling problem-*posing*.

...problem-posing method does not dichotomize the activity of the teacher (from that of the) student...The students—no longer docile listeners—are critical co-investigators in a dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers his earlier considerations as the students express their own. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by...knowledge, at the level of the *logos*.⁸

Implicit to problem-posing is the ability to name the question, and in so doing, to reconstruct the possibilities. As long as that ability stays within the province of those called teachers, as long as that torch is not continually passed on to those called students, active learning

⁶ This list is an elaboration of one found in: Taylor, M., Waller, A., and Payne, K. 1991. *Teaching Assistant Development Workshop Series*. Ithica, NY: Office of Instructional Support. Pp. 32.

⁷ Kane. Pp. 37-38.

⁸ Freire. P. 68.

After a film or slides, take a short break, if only to stand and stretch. Try to have time for discussion of what was viewed during the class it was viewed. If not, use the remaining few minutes for students to write some ungraded written responses to what they saw. Use those responses to begin the discussion next class period.

How we think about what we teach

means only that students have a sense of the classroom as a mental gymnasium with more activity. But if we only enable them to problem-solve that which *we* find significant, then we haven't enabled them to take themselves and their questions outside that context to reshape their own lived worlds.

The Lecture

Before the proliferation of the printed word, the lecture was an instrument of disseminating ideas and works to larger numbers of people than could have been reached otherwise. It was a powerful instrument then, and perhaps in a world of declining literacy, it still has a place. However, it is not the most effective technique for teaching and learning even though it may still be among the most widely practiced. It does have its advantages:

ADVANTAGES

- conveys large amounts of information to many listeners at one time
- communicates teacher's personal interest in the subject
- maximum teacher control

...and its disadvantages:

DISADVANTAGES

- passive learning style (attention wanes quickly information is not retained)
- minimal feedback to instructor
- presumes all students are learning at the same pace and level of understanding
- not well suited for higher cognitive functions (critical thinking) nor complex, abstract material
- requires an effective speaker

This is not to say that lecturing as a principle teaching strategy cannot be a successful learning experience. When students are asked "what did you like about this lecturer?" or "what makes an effective lecturer?" there are a number of responses that occur repeatedly.

Knowledgeable	Personable	Enthusiastic
Interested	Attentive	At Ease
Prepared	Clear	Articulate

These attributes are all inter-related: we cannot be knowledgeable if we are not prepared, nor can we display our enthusiasm if we are not at ease with ourselves or our students. As emphasized earlier, what we do before we enter the classroom, how we think about how and what we teach, is critical to what we actually do once we are there. As a lecturer, a majority of the control of the course environment lies in our hands; therefore, it is also our responsibility to make it as comfortable and alive as possible. Having respect for and taking an interest in our students helps us do this.

If we assume that our students are empty vessels into which we will pour our superior knowledge, then their questions may appear threatening to our carefully organized lecture. If we assume in advance that we know what they need to know, any interest outside what we

have mapped out is annoying. However, students are active, sentient beings when they walk into our classes. Usually, they are laughing and chatting until we walk in and lean on the lectern expecting their attention. Lecturing demands that we pacify our students. Because of this we must make an extra effort to provide opportunities in which they can participate in their learning and reward their efforts when they try to do so.

Overhead equipment allows you to face your students while you speak with them. You can also prepare your overheads before class.

Attentiveness During Lecture⁹

The lecture is not an effective way of communicating information when conducted exclusively for more than 15-20 minutes. We fool ourselves into thinking we're "covering the material" and don't have time for other alternative teaching strategies. The difference between lecturing for 50 minutes and lecturing for half that time with other processing strategies interspersed may be that the same amount of material is retained, but other skills (critical thinking and communication) are fostered in the latter situation. When planning a lecture, consider the following results from classic studies done on effectiveness of the lecture:

Lecture and Retention of Material (Verner and Dickson, 1967)

- Listeners remember material at beginning more than at middle or end.
- Listeners remember facts better if presented in short sentences rather than long.
- Effectiveness of a lecture varies inversely with the difficulty of the material.
- It's better to change the pitch and intensity of one's voice.
- Speaking extemporaneously is more effective than reading from lecture notes.

Limited Window of Opportunity (D.H. Lloyd cited in Penner, 1984)

- 5 minutes for students to settle in.
- Peak attentiveness for the next 5 minutes.
- Waning attention for the next 10 minutes.
- Low level of attention until the end of the lecture is near.

Audience Reaction (Verner and Dickinson, 1967)

- 15 minutes: 10% display signs of inattention.
- 18 minutes: 33 % of audience and 10 % of platform guests fidgeting.
- 35 minutes: everyone inattentive.
- 45 minutes: a trance-state is more noticeable than fidgeting.
- 47 minutes: 1 person reading and some are asleep.
- 24 hours later: audience recalled only insignificant details which were generally wrong.

% of Content Recorded in Notes During a 50-Minute Lecture (Penner, 1984)

- 1st 15 minutes: 41 % of content presented
- After 30 minutes: 25 % of content to that point
- After 45 minutes: 20 % of the total content

Overheads: Do not put too much information on an overhead, and do not uncover it all at once.

⁹This section has been excerpted directly from a handout used by William Burke, Center for Teaching Excellence, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, in his active learning workshops and seminars. The handout is based on material in Bonwell and Eisen.

Active lecturing

To be an effective teacher, particularly in the lecture format, we must integrate methods into our lecturing that allow for interaction between student and teacher. Being a noncompetitive attentively listening teacher will help to create a rapport that makes it possible for students to interact during the lecture. As we become comfortable with our students, at ease in the classroom and with teaching, we become better able to create more actively involving lectures. And yet, it is by the use of these teaching strategies that we become more comfortable with our teaching. Remember to stop the narrative lecture every 10-15 minutes to ask for, and *wait* for, questions. Alternately, you can ask the audience questions and take their responses as opportunities to elaborate or clarify aspects of the course. The use of good audio-visual material and equipment is a powerful way to illuminate abstractions of the lecture. The use of overhead equipment can illustrate to students the main points of the lecture for notetaking. Perhaps better yet, prepared lecture notes for students to pick up on their way into class or a course website available for print out before coming to class, can free them up to listen to what is being said. Start developing your lecture strategies by beginning with three assumptions¹⁰:

- a teacher should use a variety of instructional strategies on different days and within any given class period;
- visual reinforcements are necessary to focus students' attention and to reinforce material; and,
- students learn best when they are asked to provide personal insights and interpretations.

A question you cannot answer is a good question

Strategies involving active learning can be used to modify the traditional lecture in a classroom of any size. And remember, don't be afraid of the opening for questions. A question you cannot answer is a good question. The student who asks it is not merely taking notes passively, but thinking (!) about what is being said. A tangential question is the result of a student processing information so that it has meaning to her or him. And finally, taking an honest interest in our

¹⁰ Bonwell and Eisen. P. 17.

Writing in the Classroom

The guidelines of The Mānoa Writing Program ask that instructors integrate writing in the learning process rather than to teach writing. Whether or not your course is designated as Writing Intensive (WI), you should consider the many highly effective approaches to using writing within the classroom. At the heart of all of these practices, there are three common elements that appear repeatedly¹:

- Writing is integrated with other modes of learning.
....Students write before they talk; they talk before they write; they read and they write; they write, discuss, read, discuss, and write some more...Much of the writing [used in the classroom setting] is transitory [and] has the powerful advantage of being something you can return to. Writing is a record of itself...[and] a way of reinforcing other types of learning as well as stimulating new learning.
- The emphasis is more on the processes of learning and applying what is learned than it is on the content of what is learned.
....Emphasis is not on “facts” or “truths” which students are expected to memorize, but rather on modes of discovery, modes of inquiry, and modes of analysis which students can use to come to a better understanding of the world in which they live and, at times, to better that world. Students use a discipline to experience what the tools of that discipline offer.
- The activities occur within collaborative settings.
....the use [of] peer feedback and the comments and questions [of the teachers]...help students to come to a better understanding of what they are trying to learn...Learning is encouraged not only in the isolation of a student’s study room, but also in the societies of the classroom and the student’s larger life.

The use of writing within the classroom can involve two broad areas of activities; freewriting and feedback groups. Freewriting can be used to generate discussion or as a way to follow discussion with reflection. It may precede reading, and it may open or close a class period.

Freewriting is writing for the writer

Freewriting is writing for the writer, and is not generally shared with other readers, although sometimes it is used as a shared reading within a group. Freewriting is fast writing; it is a technique for getting onto paper what s/he already knows.

A freewriting session typically lasts from three to twelve minutes. Very often freewriting begins with a focus — sometimes a topic, such as “senior citizens,” or sometimes an assertion (“Senior citizens affect the economy in several positive ways”). Focusing on the topic or assertion, student writers then write with the guidance of three don’ts: *don’t stop*; *don’t censor*; and *don’t go back*....since freewriting is writing for the writer, writers are encouraged not to edit, not to worry about spelling, not to worry about “mistakes” — in other words, not to go back and “fix” their writing - because it is not intended for others to read.²

¹Hilgers, T. and Cole, R. 1991. *Writing Intensive Activities in Classes Across the Curriculum*, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa. Pp. 1-2.

²Hilgers and Cole. P. 3

“Joy in looking and comprehending is nature’s most beautiful gift.”
Einstein
1946

Other freewriting activities³

- Ask students to write three words which they thought were of special importance to the day’s assignment or discussion. Then, ask them to do some free-writing for three minutes based on any of the words. Next have them spend ten minutes in groups of three, sharing what they’ve written and generating some questions to ask in class.
- Ask students to write down three words which they thought were of importance to the day’s assignment or discussion. Have them form groups of three to share for ten minutes the words they chose and why they chose them. Then have them do a three-minute “free-flow” based on their discussion. The papers can be used for further class discussions or could be handed in for you to read (but not to grade or “mark up”).
- Have students do three to five minutes of free-writing prior to class discussion. The topic could be as general or as specific as you wish to make it. For example, in a math class a general topic might be: What do graphs do that formulas don’t? A more specific topic might be: What prevents an asymptote from reaching an axis? The discussion could continue or expand on what they’ve written.
- Have students do five or ten minutes of free-writing on a question or a topic, then have them choose partners, exchange papers, and read each others’ papers. If you feel that they need help in focusing their responses, the following “seed sentences” can be used to formulate their responses to what they’ve read:
 - The way you approached a topic...
 - Something you might have mentioned is...
 - One point you raised which I hadn’t considered before was...
 - I was surprised to find that...
 - You’re good at...
- At the end of a class, have students do five minutes of free-writing based on the preceding class session. For example: “Write for five or ten minutes about the class [or visitor, or film] we had today: what you learned or re-learned, what was boring, interesting, confusing, or surprising...anything you want, but write about the class.” These essays can be read through to assess the class in general, the teaching, the student’s understanding.
- After the students have done some free writing and are in groups of three to six, have them read their *own* papers to the group before they discuss the topic.

In order for us to see how activities such as these will alter the learning and teaching experience, we must be prepared to change our own expectations about what is “supposed to happen” in a math or music, geology or anthropology class. Offer these activities on a regular basis, so that students can begin to change their expectations as well. When we, and they, begin to see that the teacher doesn’t need to monitor students work at every turn, and that making a mistake is not always at issue, we will see other changes. We see that when teachers don’t read all that the students write, students *do* keep

³Ronkowski. et al. Pp.31-33. Excerpts, direct and modified, are used throughout this section.

Feedback groups give writers the opportunity to take their writing from a solitary to a community activity

on writing. Writing on exams show more intellectual liveliness and confidence than other classes, and the discussions are more focused, informed, and compelling.

Feedback groups, which may or may not meet during classtime, provide students a structure for feedback and advice from one another. The group gives writers, often engaged in a solitary task, an opportunity to get a sense of the impact of their words on others. The typical peer-response group includes three or four student writers.

First, the author reads from a work in progress for four minutes. The other two people in the group listen very carefully. Then, for one minute the listeners jot down all of the words, images, and ideas which really “stuck out”, either because they were very good, or because they seem to not fit, or because they provoked questions. At the end of that one minute, the listeners should write a single sentence which seems best to sum up the point which the author was making.

Then the author reads the same passage, again for four minutes. This time through, the listeners make notes of what they are hearing, fleshing out the jottings which they made during the first reading. Once more, there is a minute of silence, during which listeners polish their notes and perhaps modify their one-sentence summary of the author’s main idea.

During the remaining five minutes, the listeners each in turn provide the author with a summary of what they noted, emphasizing what worked, using their summary sentence to allow the author to see whether or not his or her central idea was clear, and perhaps pointing to areas in which the writer’s might make the reader’s task easier. The author during this time is allowed to say only “thank you”; he or she may not defend or otherwise try to prove that what he or she wrote was not what people heard.⁴

By seeing how these two activities are formally structured, you can try them out and modify them to be appropriate to your situation. These writing and learning strategies are used in very diverse areas of study on our campus, from music to business economics, from mathematics to art. Don’t hesitate to use them in your classes and labs!

⁴Hilgers and Cole. Pp. 3-4.

A New Way to Teach: Universal Design of Instruction¹

Pre-college and college students come from a wide variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. For some, English is not their first language. Represented in most classes are many types of learning styles, including visual or auditory learners. In addition, increasing numbers of students with disabilities are included in regular pre-college and post-secondary education courses. Their disabilities include blindness, low vision, hearing impairments, learning disabilities, and health impairments.

Students want to learn and instructors share this goal. How can you design instruction to maximize the learning of all students? The field of universal design can provide a starting point for developing an inclusive model for instruction. You can apply this body of knowledge to create courses where lectures, discussions, visual aids, videotapes, printed materials, labs, and fieldwork are accessible to all students.

Making a product accessible to people with disabilities often benefits others. For example, sidewalk curb cuts, designed to make sidewalks and streets accessible to those using wheelchairs, are today often used by kids on skateboards, parents with baby strollers, and delivery staff with rolling carts. When television displays in noisy areas of airports and restaurants are captioned, they are more accessible to people who are deaf and everyone else.

Universal Design of Instruction

In terms of learning, universal design means the design of instructional materials and activities that makes the learning goals achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember. Universal design for learning is achieved by means of flexible curricular materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with differing abilities. These alternatives are built into the instructional design and operating systems of educational materials—they are not added on after-the-fact. (Council for Exceptional Children p.2)

Universal design principles can apply to lectures, classroom discussions, group work, handout, Web-based instruction, labs, field work, and other academic activities and materials. They give each student meaningful access to the curriculum by assuring access to the environment as well as multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement (<http://www.cast.org/>). Listed below are examples of instructional methods that employ principles of universal design. They make course content and activities accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, ethnic backgrounds, language skills, and learning styles.

1. **Inclusiveness.** Create a classroom environment that respects and values diversity. Avoid segregation or stigmatizing any student. Respect the privacy of all students.
2. **Physical Access.** Assure that classrooms, labs, and field work are accessible to individuals with a wide range of physical abilities and

¹ Excerpts of Universal Design of Instruction by Sheryl Burgstahler, Ph.D.
<http://www.washington.edu/doi/>

disabilities. Make sure equipment and activities minimize sustained physical effort, provide options for operation, and accommodate right- and left-handed students as well as those with limited physical abilities. Assure the safety of all students.

3. **Delivery Methods.** Alternate delivery methods, including lecture, discussion, hands-on activities, Internet-based interaction, and field work. Make sure each is accessible to students with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, interests, and previous experiences. Face the class and speak clearly in an environment that is comfortable and free from distractions. Use multiple modes to deliver content. Provide printed materials that summarize content that is delivered orally.
4. **Information Access.** Use captioned videotapes. Make printed materials available in electronic format. Provide text descriptions of graphics presented on Web pages. Provide printed materials early to allow students to prepare for the topic to be presented. Create printed and Web-based materials in simple, intuitive, and consistent formats. Arrange content in order of importance.
5. **Interaction.** Encourage different ways for students to interact with each other and with you. These methods may include in-class questions and discussion, group work, and Internet-based communications. Strive to make them accessible to everyone, without accommodation.
6. **Feedback.** Provide effective prompting during an activity and feedback after the assignment is complete.
7. **Demonstration of Knowledge.** Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate knowledge. For example, besides traditional tests and papers, consider group work, demonstrations, portfolios, and presentations as options for demonstrating knowledge.

Employing universal design principles in instruction does not eliminate the need for specific accommodations for students with disabilities. For example, you may need to provide a sign language interpreter for a student who is deaf. However, applying universal design concepts in course planning will assure full access to the content for most students and minimize the need for special accommodations. For example, designing Web resources in accessible format as they are developed means that no redevelopment is necessary if a blind student enrolls in the class. Letting all students have access to your class notes and assignments on an accessible Web site can eliminate the need for providing material in alternative formats.

Universal design can also generate unanticipated benefits for others. For example, captioning course videotapes, which provides access to deaf students, is also a benefit to students for whom English is a second language, to some students with learning disabilities, and to those watching the tape in a noisy environment. Delivering content in redundant ways can improve instruction for everyone, including students with a variety of learning styles and cultural backgrounds.

Teaching Science Labs*

There are few teaching situations where the opportunity exists to help students as individually and effectively as in the lab. Show your students respect and cooperation, and they will return the same. Relax and enjoy yourself. Labs are usually noisy and creatively chaotic. Start on time, be patient, and let yourself discover how enjoyable teaching a lab can be.¹

Laboratory sections are offered in conjunction with a large lecture class in order to illustrate the application of concepts presented in class through hands-on experience. This type of setting enables the student to develop their critical thinking skills and to begin to understand the scientific method.

This section contains some general across-the-board guidelines and considerations that arise throughout most scientific laboratories. However, teaching a science lab varies greatly from department to department, from professor to professor. In one lab, you may find yourself entirely responsible for the preparation of the laboratory (even down to ordering equipment/chemicals); in other, this may all be provided for you. Usually, a TA meeting with the supervising professor and other TAs is held before the start of the semester. This opportunity to meet with the instructor and ask him/her any questions you have about the lab is also an opportunity for a clear definition of your responsibilities as a TA for this particular course. TAs who have taught the course before are often your best resource! Use them! Discussions with the supervising professor and/or experienced TAs within your field can help to fill the voids or answer the questions that are not addressed in this general discussion on scientific laboratories.

**Previous TAs
are your best
resource**

Safety

In teaching a laboratory section it is essential to realize that you are responsible for the health and well being of as many as 30 students in one lab. While earth shattering explosions are usually quite rare in this setting, there are many accidents that commonly occur. It is quite easy for a student to drop a beaker of concentrated acid or base, cut themselves while inserting a thermometer or glass rod into a rubber stopper, or ignite their lab book with a Bunsen burner. Therefore, it is important that you familiarize yourself and students with your department's laboratory safety procedures and regulations. Usually, the professor in charge or the department stockroom personnel can be of assistance in providing you with all necessary safety information. It is critical that you are certain you know and understand your department's procedures for what to do in case one of your students is injured.

**Know and
understand
your
department's
procedures**

The beginning of the semester is the time to set the tone for safety in your lab by exhibiting behavior consistent with these procedures and enforcing that in all your students from the outset. You need to demonstrate proper techniques to be used in the lab and the use of personal protection like goggles and covered shoes. Although some of these cautions may seem trivial or they may be tasks that you perform unconsciously, it is important that you make them explicit to the students and reinforce them throughout the course.

* Throughout this section, we drew from (with modifications and additions) three handbooks already cited: Halvorsen, M. Ronkowski, S. et al. Wright, W. and Herteis, E.

¹ Goroff, D. P. 34.

Planning for Lab Sections

Prior to the beginning of the semester, you will want to locate the stock room, and identify where the first aid kit is kept. Familiarize yourself with both the safety and emergency assistance procedures. The importance of being prepared for a lab section cannot be overemphasized.

Planning the weekly sessions

In planning for each weekly session, consider the following list of preparations:

1. The purpose of the lab. Know exactly what the students are to learn from this lab, and why. Be sure to communicate this to the students; it should not be mystery.
2. Check out the experiment. Have these experiments been performed before? If so, consult the experienced TAs. What sections have problems? Should anything be omitted? What types of answers are you going to get? If they have not been performed before, do them! That way you will be able to answer these questions.
3. Read and study the theory on which the experiments are based. If you are going to teach it to others, you need to know it yourself. You will then be able to field most of the questions by students.
4. Determine the relevance of the experiment and communicate it to the students. When is this used in real life? What is it used for, and why?
5. Decide how to introduce the lab. If the lab requires a 10-15 minute mini lecture of the material, refer to the lecture section of this handbook. Will the students be able to perform the procedures or do they need a demonstration? Will they be able to operate the instrument?

Preparing the students for the semester

On the first class meeting, there are several aspects of the lab that need to be discussed with the students in order to prepare them for the coming semester.

1. Discuss the safety procedures and laboratory rules with your students. Tell them what is expected and what the consequences are for not adhering to the procedures. For example, not having safety glasses means they will not be allowed to work in the lab, and therefore must take a "0" for the experiment.
2. Familiarize your students with the location of the first aid kit, emergency shower, eye wash, fire extinguisher, etc.
3. Explain how their lab performance is going to be graded. Refer to the syllabus section for more information.
4. Explain what preparation is expected of them prior to coming to lab. For example: reading lab manual; completion of prelabs; and, being prepared for quizzes.
5. Explain how attendance will be handled and policies on make up labs.
6. Explain fully what kind of reports are expected. This should include the expected format, grading scheme, due dates and any late penalties.
7. Explain the policy of cheating and plagiarism. While most sections encourage group discussion, they often require individual reports. Discuss with the students the distinction and the particular style of reference expected. Do not assume that students fully comprehend plagiarism.

The experiment is usually preceded by a brief introduction of the current experiment. The introduction should include: the purpose and relevance; examples of difficult calculations; illustrations of detailed apparatus; demonstrations of new techniques; and, specific safety precautions where applicable. It is extremely important to keep this part short! Allow students 10-15 minutes to interact and ask questions when they arise. If that particular lab seems to require a longer introduction, it may be more effective to break the students up into groups and work with them that way.

**Conducting
Specific Labs**

Some students may need assistance for laboratory courses. These students may need to be paired with an abled-bodied student or teaching assistant. Consult KOKUA if you need assistance in making these arrangements. A student using a wheelchair may need a lower lab table to accommodate the wheelchair, for example.²

Once the experiment is underway you are now able to engage in the most important aspect of your teaching; guiding the student's development. Try and talk with each student during the experiment at least once. See how the experiment is going. Check their data. Is that what you expect? Technical and procedural matters can usually be handled very quickly, but your primary role here is to help the students develop their critical thinking skills, to begin to understand the scientific method, and to enjoy the process.

**The primary
role of the
TA**

There are a variety of ways to help students answer questions for themselves. Resist the temptation of giving them outright answers. You may choose to guide their thinking by asking them open-ended questions. By using questions to lead them to the answer you are illustrating the type of critical thinking skills used in your field and are enabling them to problem solve. In the end, they will become able to overcome obstacles for themselves and "think through" difficult portions of the experiments. As the students are finishing the lab, ask them to show you their data. If it is not as expected, encourage students to speculate about possible reasons for the deviations.

**After lab
ends**

Double check their work areas to insure that they have been cleaned up and that all equipment has been stored properly. Do a routine check to make sure the lights are off, the equipment is locked up, the air and gas are off, and the lab is secured.

² <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/ods/textonly/faculty/handbook/page12.htm>

A Senior TA Speaks About Teaching Labs

Kathryn Mitchell, *Senior TA in Chemistry*

As a product of “Free-School” education, based on the philosophies of A. S. Neil and John Dewey, I suppose my approach to teaching is from the start very different than others.

To begin with, I believe learning is a natural function, as natural as breathing. Learning stems simply from our curiosity of our surroundings, rather than from a process which we must continue to work at. Therefore, all one needs to “*learn*” is a comfortable environment containing ample tools and accurate information accompanied by a facilitator. I say *facilitator* rather than *teacher*, because the delivery of information need not be *force-fed* or *taught*, to the students in the standard front-of-the-room lecture. Rather, the information can be left at the hands of the students, available for assimilation at their own pace. To be successful however, it requires that the students take responsibility for their own learning. (But hey, this is college!) The role of the facilitator is to then anticipate the next step of learning for each student and guide them through the information or task. This way, the students may come to their own conclusions based on the information, which then leads to a more global understanding of the material, rather than being given a simple statement of facts. Skeptics may view this as a lazy teaching technique. True facilitating however, is much more strenuous than standard lecturing because much care must be taken in order to create an environment in which the structure of the class or presentation of the material clearly illustrates the goals and objectives to each student. In addition, this environment must allow a flexibility for each student to freely engage, to the best of their ability, via their own particular learning style.

Given this perspective, it is not hard to see why I prefer teaching a class in which there are 3-5 groups of 2-3 students working on different tasks at the same time, rather than 24 individuals completing the same task concurrently. This class is a 5 hr. lab that accompanies a large lecture. The students rotate through a series of experiments throughout the semester. For their two intensive writing credits, each student submits their own type-written report presenting the theory, results and conclusions reached each week. In addition, the students are highly encouraged to discuss the experiments with their classmates and to instruct those in the rotation behind them. This type of organization requires the students to go beyond the experiment and be able to communicate it to others verbally, as well as to organize and present the task in a written form. Through these three aspects, the students are allowed a more interactive and complete learning experience that appeals to all major learning styles: those who learn best when they physically get their hands on it, those who learn best when they sit and focus their thoughts through writing, and those who learn best through an aural process. When these styles are combined, it helps to reinforce and globalize the concepts under study.

My job as the facilitator of this class is to first and foremost ensure that it is a safe and comfortable environment for all students participating. Then, because each group will be tackling a new task each week, I travel between groups and give them enough information for them to work independently on that day’s experiment. This



process usually takes about two hours. After everyone is actively participating, I can then go back to each group and through the use of questions, try to point out the significant aspects of that week's experiment and to help guide them towards their conclusions. In this way, they can learn the type of reasoning applied in the field at the same time as they learn to develop their *own* critical thinking skills. While most of the students participating in this class grumble that it is a lot of hard work, when asked if they enjoy it, the answer is always YES! To me this means that the class is not only challenging on an individual level, but that it is a pleasurable learning experience.

Unfortunately, the organization of a large university often times prohibits small student to teacher ratios, thus forcing the facilitator to be heavily dependent on lecturing as their primary teaching mode. Often times, this leads to an environment in which the instructor is completely detached from the students and presents his/her material in a very non-interactive fashion.

I believe approaching lecturing as a *facilitator* rather than as a *teacher* circumvents the student-teacher detachment associated with lecturing. The interaction and subsequent attachment between student and instructor will inevitably arise through the facilitator's anticipation of the next learning step.

Evaluating

Evaluating Your Students

“First, do no harm”.
Hippocrates

Grading

Introduction

If the scholar fails, s/he can tear up the manuscript and start over. If the sculptor fails, s/he can throw the stone away and find another one. If the teacher fails, the human beings who were his or her students carries that failure as a part of their burden - their handicap - for the rest of their lives.

Murray Turnbull, *Professor Emeritus*

Principles of grading are based upon philosophies of teaching and learning that have become archaic. The power of the lecture, historically, was contextualized by the inability for texts to be disseminated to large numbers of readers. The lecture, then, had its own form of alchemy, because it made accessible aurally what was otherwise out of reach. The academic lecture formed the center of the educational enterprise, with the library offering a constellation of printed sources. Within that context the notion that testing, like knowledge, could be “objective”, that is, lacking subjectivity, was seen as credible. As the academy moves toward an understanding of teaching/learning styles that expand the capacities for both teachers and students, we who teach must begin to reflect upon the meaning and value of the grade within a new context.

Grading has always been problematic. The anxiety that we felt with the grading system as students is echoed in the discomfort we now feel with it as teachers. TAs may be autonomous in their grading methods, or we may be expected to administer grading methods of a supervising professor. In any case, all faculty and TAs face our students with methods of evaluating them that range from fair to unfair, from coherent to incoherent, but not from objective to subjective. The discourse of testing and grading lags behind current pedagogical theory and practice. Our students have been educated and evaluated as we have been, through a different set of practices than those that are now emerging in the academy. We are inventing it as much as we are apprenticing to it. We are its creators as much as we have been created by it. And now, we are about to educate and evaluate “our” students... and our dilemma is (as it has always been), by what logic, what values?

If we approach the question of evaluation from its “conclusion”, that is, the grade, we can begin to ask important questions about testing. For example, do we test in order to give a grade? Is the test a demand to perform, to exhibit mastery? Is it an opportunity to check student and teacher progress? All of these possibilities fall within the range of what is conventionally considered “fair” and reasonable testing.

The thematic coherence of this handbook is derived from its being situated at this time. We have to think about teaching and grading in ways that have not hitherto been available to us.

Attendance

Attendance in large lectures and in small labs

“Don’t play God - that takes rather more advanced study than you have had.” MT

Attendance and Participation

The underlying premise of this handbook has been to make central the theme of reciprocity and respect. If teaching and learning depend upon a reciprocal relationship between and among those in the classroom, then *attendance and participation must be taken to matter quite a bit*. If we seriously wish to engender in students the desire to be fully present in their learning processes, then the amount of credit we assign for attendance and participation must reflect that.

Because taking attendance in large lecture halls is considered unwieldy, many lecturers opt for not taking attendance. However, a sheet of paper can be passed for sign-ins, and this can affirm to the students that it *does* matter if they are there or not. TAs can be helpful in conducting this during a lecture.

It does not work to the advantage of TAs of lab sections when students do not attend the large lecture, because in teaching we are expanding upon those lectures. Quizzes are often used to open the lab section in order to check on just what the students have absorbed from the lecture. Of course, quiz scores are also fodder for grading as well. So, here’s the picture: students either do or don’t attend lecture regularly, but in order to check up on it, and to provide fodder for grading, 10 minutes of a 50 minute lab section is occupied with quiz taking. This arrangement may be institutionalized by your department or by a supervising professor. But there is nothing lively, in intent or in practice, about beginning a class this way. What’s a TA to do? Probably nothing in your first semester, but as a TA works with a supervising professor, it is important that the professor begins to find ways to integrate the TA’s way of organizing aspects of the course that affect the lab. The following is taken from the syllabus of a professor of art history:

Lectures -As an enrolled student *you have been allotted forty (40) points* - each time you are absent, one (1) point will be deducted from that total. Attendance will be taken by means of a signature sheet to be passed around each day.

I am aware that attending lectures is not the only and may not be one of the best ways to learn, but lectures *can* provide access to a range and variety of ideas and stimuli which would otherwise require from you very extensive resources of time and energy - they are not to be found by reading a text.

Regardless of the number of points otherwise earned:

- No grade of *A* will be granted for attendance at fewer than 35 lectures.
- No grade of *B*, *C*, or *CR* will be granted for attendance at fewer than 30 lectures.
- No grade of *D* (passing) will be granted for attendance at fewer than 25 lectures.

This is not to assure the instructor of an audience, but because with a system which encourages and permits you to select your own area of interest for study, there is no other way to ensure that you at least have contact with the substantive materials of the course (other than assigning texts and giving exams) and upon receiving credit can be said to have been at least confronted with the content of the course.

This professor has established the lecture (attended by between 250-300 students) as the visual and aural *text* of the course, and has made it very clear how important their attendance is, not only to their grade, but to *their learning*. No quizzes or exams would be given in this class, although projects or papers would be evaluated. The principle underlying these teaching and grading strategies is that no one (professor, TAs, students) engage in any form of activity that does not forward the process of learning. The lecture forms a core of the learning process, and grading of attendance confirms that.

**In our own
classes or
labs**

Within our own labs or classes, we convey the importance of attendance and participation by ascribing to them a higher value in the grading. It is not uncommon to hear that a teacher expects a lot of participation and excellent attendance, but to find that both count very little in the grading scale. The old adage, “put your money where your mouth is”, would seem to apply here. If you say that something matters, then show that it does.

**Attendance
is a straight-
forward
matter**

Attendance can be treated in a rather straightforward manner, as it was in the above example. Of all the aspects of grading, attendance most appropriately fits a numerical system. In our section on late papers and missed exams, we recommend that teachers remove themselves from the position of having to listen to life histories as justification for missed exams or late papers, and from sitting in judgement about whether one reason is as legitimate as another. We recommend the same concerning attendance. Make a certain number of absences acceptable, given the grading system, and make it irrelevant *why* those absences occurred. If you do this, students will still sometimes want to explain to you the reason why they missed, or press an excuse from the doctor on you. There are many reasons for this. Other teachers may require it, the student may want you to know that they had a “real” reason, they may be worried about their grade and want reassurance, or they may want you to know that they have some problems. We suggest disassociating attendance from these things in order to concentrate your energies and theirs upon other matters. In the whole scheme of things, does it matter that the student missed because they had to pick up someone at the airport, or that they were sick with the flu, or that they just slept in? Do you really want to think about these kinds of things from day to day?

**In serious
cases**

A serious case can be one where the situation itself is very serious, or it can be a matter of the student being in a state of serious anxiety about it. An attendance problem will become a problem in other aspects of the course as well. In the case where a student’s attendance and grade is being affected by problems with health, family, work or in other ways that seem to be out of their control, you may want to evoke “the exception to the rule”. Often, all it needs is for someone with some authority to offer some practical options to the problem of their being overwhelmed. The many details of their situation are not at issue. Focus on the ways in which their attendance and grade is being affected and work with them on a practical level to alleviate that problem. Beyond them stating the initial reason for missing classes and coursework, keep focused on *solving the problem they are having within the course*. That will be of enormous relief for them and it is what you can do best for them. There are many places on campus that can assist them with other kinds of counseling and information, and you should be willing and able to refer them to those with some knowledge.

Know ahead of time what options you are able to offer

Ask students to let you know ahead of time when a situation arises. Know ahead of time what sorts of options you would be willing to offer to a student in a bind. And which you are not. Or consider asking them what they would like to do in order to alleviate the problem. Sometimes their suggestions will mean that you will have to do extra work and you may not actually have the time or the desire to do it. Other times, their suggestion may seem very suitable, and you can accept it magnanimously.

Many students work off-campus, and it can happen that their place of employment puts unreasonable pressure on them to work more or different hours than originally agreed upon. You will rightly feel that this is not your problem; nevertheless, if a student comes to you with this situation, you can show empathy for the situation in which they find themselves. Family and work problems *do* interfere with academic work, and students cope with very complex balancing acts. At those times when their normal coping strategies are not available to them, or are not working, you will want to have the capacity to respond to them in a way that is helpful to them, and reasonable to you.

Don't agree to options that feel uncomfortable to you

However you decide to handle exceptions, including evoking the "no exceptions" rule, pay attention to how comfortable you are with the kinds of decisions you are making. If in the process of talking with a student about options, you find yourself feeling unsure about some aspect of it, tell them that you'd like to consider it and get back to them as soon as possible. That way, you can speak to someone else that you trust about what is bothering you or see how they might handle it.

Participation in the multi-cultural classroom

We highly recommend that any new UH Mānoa faculty or TA read *In Celebration of Students: Reflections on Learning at the University of Hawai'i* before devising a grading scale on participation. One of the most fervently chanted myths to be heard on this campus is that "students here don't talk". You will hear it on your first day and any day thereafter in which a group of teachers are gathered to commiserate about their difficulties. Participation in the classroom in Hawai'i is complicated by very diverse forms of social codes of meaning and behavior. You, new to the classroom here at UH Mānoa and new to Hawai'i, cannot possibly know what that means yet. What you can do is to recognize immediately is that there are many things about your classroom dynamics that you have yet to understand. And so, a more honest statement than "students here don't talk" would be to say "I do not yet know how to encourage my students to participate".

In Celebration of Learning identifies two broad areas of experience and understanding that you will begin to gain and build upon. One is the distinct non-verbal communication that exists in social settings in Hawai'i. The other is a consideration of the meanings of silence in the classroom at UH. It has wrongly been interpreted as evidence of a lack of inquisitiveness or creativity. A new teacher in Hawai'i may be confused about whether it signifies acquiescence or disinterest, assent or intelligibility. Because *In Celebration of Learning* takes deep consideration of these questions, we urge you to read what is there. Our recommendations throughout this handbook are based on the themes in that publication.

The significance of participation to learning must be evident by now. As teachers, as evaluators of student performance, we must demonstrate that participation is a true value, both by *the weight it is given in grading*, and by *the on-going presence of it in our classes*.

Reading Assignments

To teach or to police

We know how hard our own teachers tried to be sure that we would read the assignments: pop quizzes; threats; tests designed to investigate whether we had actually read the book or just gone to the movie; and finally, temper tantrums. Most of these “techniques” run closer to policing strategies than teaching ones.

As you will read in *In Celebration of Students*, there are many demands on students at the University of Hawai‘i that are not always shared by many students on the mainland. The ideal of attending school, supported by parents, and enjoying an extended and contemplative entry into adult life is a fantasy for most students at UH. It may very well have become a fantasy for many students throughout the United States over the last 10 years.

There will be many reasons why reading is not done or completed, and most of them have nothing at all to do with you. But some have everything to do with you. In planning a reading schedule for the course, there are many reasons to think of it as revisable.

Reasonable amounts of reading

Overwhelming students with unreasonable amounts of reading can happen to any new teacher. In our concern that we be taken seriously, we may hope that a serious reading list will infer something about how we want to be treated. And for us, the course is the center of our teaching universe; for students, it is only one of many. *Even if it is their favorite one*, they will have to conserve their time and energy, often dividing it between 5 courses, 2 jobs, and serious family obligations. Remember that their not reading is not a personal insult to you, even though it may feel like it when you are trying to get a discussion going. In many ways, we find ourselves competing for their attention. The question is, how to best do that? Although fear and anxiety are considered organizing principles in some quarters, even within the academy, we will be recommending other strategies.

Choose interesting texts! Think about it...

Are you the one who chooses the texts? If so, are you choosing the texts that you think “they need to read”, or the ones that you yourself have found most illuminating and compelling. Are you putting the students through the same dry readings at the introductory level that you were subjected to?...when, voila!, here is finally a really good use for a mini-lecture. Give a lively lecture on the dreary but historically significant writings of Thomas Hobbes. Then, use the *themes* of his work as points of departure for full-class or small group discussions. And make the reading assignment one that will tie in with those themes, but by a writer and on a topic that you *know* will make them want to read it. That way, if some students failed to read the assignment (for whatever reason) *it will be the ensuing discussion that will compel* them towards their book again, and not some points taken off their “participation grade for the day”. Make it so that participation in an active and engaging class period is a logical extension of the reading. In other words, their active enjoyment of the class period itself

is the reason that compels them to do their level best to complete that reading.

Students must relearn what it means to read for oneself

If as a TA you are not the one to choose the text, what can you do to engender interest in your students to take on a book, an article, a chapter in a text? You can tell them some particular reasons why you like the reading. This is not the same thing as saying what you think they “should be getting out of it”. It is very common to hear students say, “I don’t know if this is what you wanted, but...”. When the meaning of the text is continually and completely contextualized by “what the teacher wants”, the act of reading ceases to be one primarily of pleasure and involvement. It loses its liveliness and the student loses theirs. However, when reading in unfamiliar territory, it is helpful to know why someone else liked “being there”, or what signposts might be of interest to them. But we must enable students to relearn what it means to read for oneself and not “for us”, so that between their reading and the text is an interpretive space where thoughts and images are lively. When students discover that their private reading of a text can take its place as a credible contribution to the class, they will continue to take their place there again and again.

Of course, in order for them to discover that, it is up to us to make sure that it actually exists for them. It is within our province to listen well and respectfully to their thoughts and then to use them as the stepping stones to the next idea, to the next moment. We must override our compulsion to clarify and correct every and all misconception that we perceive in their thinking. It is simply too constraining, and it leads nowhere. Use the best of the ideas to construct a way or an opening to the next contribution.

Avoid assigning reading and then presenting the same material in class

Avoid assigning reading on a text and then presenting the same material through a mini-lecture. Students soon learn that reading for the class carries no benefit for them. Or worse, that having read it, why come to class? Use the readings as a departure point rather than as a ball and chain to link everyone to for the duration of the course. Be lively in your own use of the readings, and be willing to openly reevaluate your own interpretations of the readings!

Do a reality check!

You have prepared a very creative way to open the discussion of a reading. Before you begin, find out from your students if they were able to complete the reading and do it in such a way that does not infer punitive action from you. When new to teaching, we may not have experience at anticipating how long it will take students to read different kinds of material, or how much they will be realistically able to complete. Also, it is *very* disappointing for us to discover that we have brilliantly launched into a discussion only to find it lying on fallow ground. And, there are those days when everyone, even our most faithful readers, will be behind schedule. Then, we have to go about reconstructing a way to conduct the discussion given the situation. And our very grand opening has been used up for no good reason! Assume the best, but begin by asking, “I want to do a reality check; how did the reading go?”, or, “Before we begin the discussion, I want to find out how many were able to complete the reading?”. Of course, on shorter readings, this may be less necessary, but on any complex or lengthy reading that you have grand plans to explore through discussion, be sure to find out how far you can expect to go with it at that time. Since students are unused to being asked this question without getting the horrid “brownie points” or its dreaded

opposite, “in trouble”, they may need to see evidence of this honest inquiry before they will fully offer information.

Mid-term times try everyone. Until the tradition of overwhelming students with as much stress and as little learning as possible is relinquished for a more humane and rational practice, we would like to recommend a way to keep your class working successfully throughout the semester. *Seriously* consider lightening your student’s reading in your class during the period when many other classes are intensifying their demands. Not just so that they’ll regard you with great favor, but because it will benefit *everyone*. You will not be frustrated, and when those couple of weeks pass, they will be refreshed and ready to take on more again. This engages the empathic value of “putting yourself in their shoes”, but it goes even deeper than that. It shows them that you regard them with respect, that you want them to do well in all their endeavors. And it creates your class as a continual point of reciprocity.

Lighten the work when everyone else is intensifying



Essay on Teaching at UH Mānoa

Carmen Wickramagamage

TA
English Department

Foreign, female, teaching assistant: the odds, it appears now in hindsight, were stacked against me, as I embarked on my first experience in teaching in the U.S. at UH Mānoa. “Foreigner” meant that I was also a non-native speaker of English; “female” automatically earned me a spot in the ranks of the ‘second sex’; “TA” deprived me of those professorial credentials that constitute a power differential between teacher and student in the student’s eye, if not always the professor’s. I was further disadvantaged; I was there to teach English—an assumption of expertise in the language on my part that the students were very reluctant to concede to a person of my color and accent. Only I wasn’t sufficiently prepared for these national/gender/linguistic/professional status pit-falls that spelt disadvantage to the teacher in the classroom situation. But the students knew, and quite a few of them lost no time in letting me know that they knew!

I had turned to teaching with a sense of relief after several years of learning, and of cramming for exams. I had taught for three years before I came to UH as a graduate student, and was looking forward to going back to teaching since I now had more knowledge, and confidence, in my subject area than before. The cultural dynamics in Hawai’i (as anywhere else), impinge on teaching and learning. Consequently, my effort at teaching in Hawai’i became a learning experience as well, as I began to realize that teaching and learning, as every other social interaction, did not occur in a politics-free environment. I had thought, for instance, that I would be able to relate to the students better because most of them were of Asian origin. I should have anticipated that in the hybrid “local” culture of Hawai’i, students would be neither particularly Asian in temperament, nor mainstream American. In fact, the distinction is made between “local” and “non-local” or, more accurately perhaps, between “local” and “haole.” As a “non-local” and a “non-haole,” I must have appeared

“You can make a better form than the student - you don’t have to prove it. Better his or her clumsy effort than your more capable one - do your creative work elsewhere, not on the student’s work.” MT

somewhat of an anomaly in the students’ eyes—especially since, in most English department classrooms if not in most UH classrooms, the more usual sight is “haole” teachers instructing predominantly “local” student populations. Perhaps, the students too had a question: where does she fit into this more conventional scenario?

It was a rude awakening. I was hurt that a stereotypical image of the foreign TA interfered with the students’ ability to recognize me for what I was: someone who was eager to teach them what she knew. I resented the fact that I had to first prove that I was someone from whom they could learn something before they would really listen to what I had to say. I didn’t appreciate the fact that I had to work twice as hard as the other teachers in order to overcome this “handicap.” I felt sometimes that the students were testing the extent of my authority, and my ability to maintain discipline in class; I suspected that my initial efforts to be friendly were taken as a sign of weakness. I wondered whether a certain student’s unabating discontent with my grading system had as much to do with a disrespect towards my authority that she shared with the other students as with her own abrasive temperament. There were days when I wished I was doing any other job than teaching; the long hours, the continuous tension and challenge of teaching, I felt, was not worth the meager TA salary.

But I survived what, at that time, seemed an ordeal. In the end-of-the-semester course evaluation form, one student wrote, somewhat patronizingly perhaps, that “she comes across as extremely intelligent and impressive in her knowledge of this particular area of British literature.” I take it as a compliment; at least, I managed to convince the students that my status as a foreign female TA has nothing whatsoever to do with my capabilities as a teacher. Perhaps a greater compliment to my teaching skills is to be found in the increased confidence with which many of my students began to respond to literary texts and participated in the discussions as the semester progressed. I might say, in fact, there were not many examples of that proverbially silent “local” in my classes that many mainland UH faculty complain about; perhaps the lack of inhibition in my students signified disrespect, but I like to think that I created a classroom environment which the “local” students did not find inhibiting. Was the experience worth it? I think so. In a situation where I expected to teach, I have learned more about cultural diversity, the power of stereotypes, and the need to compromise.

“Applaud surprising results, but do not punish common ones - they may be revelations to the student even if old stuff to you.” MT

Writing Assignments

(Refer also to “Writing in the Classroom”, in the section Lighting the Fire)

I think I write fairly well, but I must revise alot. In one exam the professor wrote “seems a bit unfocused.” Although some students might think this is insulting, that comment made me respect the professor more because I knew he was right (and it was unfocused for a very good reason—my knowledge for that test item was fuzzy!). I really liked his discernment because I felt that if he recognized bad answers, then perhaps my good answers were really appreciated. If instructors provide some appropriate negative feedback, the student knows his work is being read critically...

In contrast, I have another professor who, in my opinion, can't tell trash from gems. I get excellent grades from him but there is no discernment. I don't deliberately write trash but sometimes I do because of time constraints. For that professor, as long as my trash is written with good grammar, the paper is judged good. College writing has to be more than good grammar!¹

Writing is deemed difficult, even by good writers. And if writing is difficult, how much worse is the critique and the grade. The truth is, as students few of us have experienced writing as a friendly activity. The comparisons are so daunting, the judgements so harsh. Most of us compare our own writing to those writers we hold in highest regard. How can we possibly live up to that? And when we read a student's writing, we may feel that we don't hold unrealistic expectations. But we may not recognize how our own unrealistic expectations for ourselves can become manifested in our critiques and our comments of our student's works. The Hippocratic Oath begins, “First, do no harm”. How well it applies to the work we hold in our hands, another human being's budding, clumsy, noble efforts. We must be aware that we do harm when we respond to student's written work as if it is a personal insult to us that the student arrives at our classroom unable to write.

Essay exams and term papers²

Even though writing is seen as difficult and is even dreaded by many, students consistently find essays and term papers to be the most purposeful and productive features of a course, rating them much higher than multiple choice exams as a learning experience. And yet, as active learning strategies, essays and term papers leave many possibilities unrealized. For one, term papers and essay exams tend to ask for a comprehensive performance instead of offering a focus on the subsets of learning in a course. For another, the teacher typically sees the product of the student's work on these tasks, but not the work itself, i.e., the student's process of engaging with the problem. Also, any interaction among students they bring about, if any, is accidental and unstructured. The possibility of active learning in group work that exists every time students meet in class is probably the most obvious

¹ Anonymous student. Spring 1992. *From The Pen of a Student*. The Mānoa Writing Program Progress Report.

² Goroff. et al. P. 24. Much of this section on essays and term papers is excerpted directly.

Schedule a number of shorter written assignments rather than one long one

Peer editing

Return papers and tests within a week.

and important one that these exercises leave untouched.

Scheduling at least two, and preferably more, shorter writing assignments, or using journal writing in weekly installments, or assigning a series of essays, will alleviate the limitations of the single term paper. In a course in which the term paper *is* used, assign it early so that there is an opportunity to submit a proposal as well as drafts. Commenting on drafts takes no more time than commenting on final papers. Peer editing, in which students serve as one another's editors, will facilitate the *process* of writing. Peer editors provide reader response and assist one another with problems of clarity, definition, and structure. This frees the teacher to concentrate in their reading of the paper on other concerns of writing.

A dozen pointers on responding to student writing³

The first thing to remember is how important to the students are our comments back to them on their writing. We know this when we make the mistake of returning papers at the beginning of class and then attempt to get their attention! *What we say and how we say it matters*. The Mānoa Writing Program has developed the following recommendations on responding to student writing:

1. The more explanation you give about the assignment prior to commenting on student drafts, the less work you will have to do when its time to comment.
2. Commenting on a student paper is only *one* way you have of responding to writing. Usually it is thought of as the only way.
3. Comments on writing should first of all be to the *message* in the writing.
4. By involving students in the evaluation process, you make them less fearful of evaluation, and operate in a way that is characteristic of the real world. Through practice in evaluation, you give students opportunity to use the language of your discipline's discourse. You also help them learn what makes writing good. With your students, generate a rubric for evaluating writing. Or, alternatively, provide them with one by which you will judge them. Students tend to think of professor responses to their writing as idiosyncratic and without consistency; to the extent that they become involved in evaluation, they see "standards" as a product of a community.
5. Let your students do as much preliminary work for you as possible by setting up peer group response activities. A collaborative approach to your class material will make it easy to involve students in response activities.
6. Remember that students, especially in introductory courses, are novices. In commenting on writing, use language they are familiar with. If you fail to, the time you spend responding to their writing will be wasted. Make certain your marginalia are legible and understandable. Translate any codes or abbreviations you use that are not easily recognizable. Just because they are familiar to you doesn't mean they will be to your students.

³ "A Dozen Pointers on Responding to Student Writing". 1991. The Mānoa Writing Program: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

“The use of grades as a measuring tool in any field is like using a very elastic rubber band to measure distances.”
MT

7. Emphasize what works rather than denigrate what doesn't. When you find yourself getting snide or nasty, stop commenting. When responding to writing, less is more. You needn't feel guilty about not giving papers the "treatment." Usually, one suggestion for improvement is all students can absorb at a time.
8. Refer to your responses as *responses* or *comments*; don't say, "I've 'corrected' your papers." Remember you are engaged in an interaction with students to encourage them to become proficient in your field. Students are most likely to feel encouraged if they feel they can enter into dialog with you. The word "correcting" suggests a one-way street and lessens the opportunity for discovery that the act of writing inspires.
9. Responses to *form* are helpful when made in reference to a discipline's needs and customary practices. Students who are novices do not necessarily understand the discipline's protocols regarding writing. Their awkwardness is often a result of trying to invent the protocol. By framing your explanations of form within the needs of the discipline, you help the novice understand how discourse forms vary across disciplines.
10. There is little point in commenting at length on a piece of writing when the student has nowhere to go with the suggestions. Frame your responses so they are useful on the next piece of writing, whether it be a revision of the present piece, a follow-up to it, or a totally different assignment. Make certain your responses are consistent. Don't annotate a section in detail, for example, and then recommend its deletion. Such an activity sends the student mixed messages.
11. In responding to writing, remember who owns the text. In making your responses to it, don't move in and take ownership, treating it as your own. Writing your responses in pencil, especially your marginalia, seems less obtrusive, more deferent. Furthermore, if you make mistakes as you write, you can erase them. Remember, your response is a form of discourse which the student will evaluate too.
12. If you are reading all the writing your students are doing, they aren't writing enough. Teach them to value writing as writing, and to shape their own judgements of its worth. Find ways to acknowledge their writing, or to use it to further their learning, without responding to it personally.

In addition, we recommend that writing assignments be designed by the student, or selected by them from a list of possibilities. This will have a positive effect on their ability to carry out their writing assignments creatively and with care. It will also *greatly* improve your experience of reading many pages of writing over a semester's time. Assigning the same paper to all students in one class, under the illusion that it will make your evaluation of them easier is sheer folly. It's based on the assumption that writing can be evaluated "objectively". Your students will enter your class prepared differently to do their work there. Respect for diversity involves cultural, ethnic, and gendered differences, and the diverse writing of students must be taken as students are; as in the state of becoming.

When you find yourself getting cranky while reading papers... STOP!

There are many reasons why you may become tired and cranky reading students papers. Begin by first looking at your own teaching and grading strategies, not because you are the cause of all problems in a course, but because there is where you have the direct and immediate ability to make changes and improvements.

There are places that you can send students for assistance that goes beyond your capacities, or which deal with skills that students have not yet acquired but need to in order to do college level writing:

For students who need a writing assistance service

-The Writing Workshop, is staffed by students from the English Department and the Department of Second Language Studies, ranging from experienced undergraduates to PhD candidates. In the Workshop, students receive help getting started, developing and clarifying their ideas, and revising their drafts. Kuykendall 415. Students may sign up in Kuykendall 402 or phone 956-7619 for one half-hour session per week. Website: <http://maven.english.hawaii.edu/workshop>

-The Learning Assistance Center can help students whose writing problems may be related to problems with time-management, studying, or reading. Students may call the center to arrange for an appointment.

You might visit these centers to see how they work, so that you can confidently refer students to them.

The reading of students' papers

The reading of students' papers can become one of our *own* most rewarding teaching moments. Some students will come to our courses already fully prepared to think and write creatively, academically, intellectually, and in a strong voice. With these students, our rewards are derived from the ease with which we are able to go to the heart of their thinking because it is carried within such fine writing. It can feel as if their work validates our course and our teaching, and in some ways it does. Other students arrive less prepared and with less articulated skills. Our rewards will then come from seeing through inexperienced writing, identifying the heart of their thinking, and then finding ways to help students recognize and articulate those kernels of knowledge and insight. We must not let students struggle entirely alone with their writing. We can offer them what we can, and purposefully refer them to others who can work with them on aspects that we cannot. Nevertheless, what is possible to do within one semester can be quite dramatic. By starting with an acceptance of each student from the point at which they arrive and creating situations in which they can keep seeing themselves succeed, we will begin to see students taking pleasure in writing.

There is no single right way to grade writing

Perhaps the only "rule" would be to lay out criteria and the process for grading at the beginning. Getting students themselves to articulate criteria can be an effective teaching device. It usually works best at about the mid-point of a course. You can set criteria yourself at the beginning, and then *renegotiate the criteria* after students have been writing for a while. Even the Supreme Court sanctions "community standards."⁴ One reason why this "rule" can be so effective is because as a new teacher, and perhaps new to Hawai'i as well, you will be learning much about the composition of the university as a part of the community that surrounds it. You, like your students, are also in

⁴Hilgers. P. 5.

the process of becoming. *Listen* to your students' writing, as well as mentoring them as they write.

Remember this:

1. Most UH Mānoa students enter with good basic writing skills.
2. Each discipline demands very different expectations regarding what constitutes capable writing.
3. Research has shown that when students enter different disciplines that their writing skills suffer until they have gained a degree of understanding in a given perspective.
4. Once the basic concepts and discourse of the discipline has grown familiar to them, their writing in that field grows more

Presentations and Projects

Presentations

Presentations by students to the class can be very effective in a number of ways: creating greater interaction between students, particularly when the topics are chosen or designed by them; introducing a richer body of curriculum into the course work; and, as a way to expand the possibilities in grading for participation.

"The Presentation" in the minds of most students brings forth humiliating memories of having put oneself on display. For that reason, we recommend that presentations be informal, except in cases where performance is at the heart of the course, as in acting or speech classes. You can set the stage for this by making sure throughout discussions in class that student contributions are regarded with respect and good will, even when there are dissenting opinions. When it comes time for student presentations, students accustomed to informal participation will see the presentation as an extension of what had gone before. If class discussion has been centered around a discussion circle or a seminar table, then students can stay in their normal seats during the presentations. Emphasize that the presenter bears only *part* of the responsibility for the presentation; s/he is the facilitator of a discussion on a topic, *but it is up to the rest of the class to respond to what is introduced*. In that respect, all presentations are "group projects".

It is not necessary to wait until the end of the course to schedule presentations. In fact, it will probably work better to begin them as soon as it is possible for students to have synthesized some of the themes and materials of the course, and to schedule them throughout an extended period rather than all at one period. Inevitably, an event occurring at the end of the semester suggests the idea of a finished product. By arranging them at other times, you will de-emphasize the performance aspect of the presentation, and establish the value of process.

Take an informal approach to presentations

Schedule presentations throughout the semester

Choice of topics

The tension of anticipating the presentation can be alleviated by encouraging students to propose topics which are in keeping with the course topics and themes, or by presenting them with lists of possibilities from which they can choose. Again, we suggest the more open option, because it will bring forth greater creative participation. You can always veto a proposed idea if it doesn't appear appropriate. When students select something in which they already feel somewhat conversant, and integrate and develop it according to the themes of the course, the presentations will be far livelier and will enrich the existing course materials. There will be a degree of competence about this kind of presentation, as well as a degree of exploration into new areas. In lower-division courses, a five-to-ten minute presentation, followed by discussion will work well.

Length of time**Clustering around themes or topics**

If students' interests cluster around certain themes or topics, whether selected from a list or proposed entirely by students, groups can form around these interests and these presentations can be given together during the same period of time. Then, the collective discussions from each presentation can take place at one time, weaving aspects of each together. The presentations can be choreographed together, or allowed to stand separately but in conjunction with others. Students who prefer to work alone as well as those who prefer to work in groups will benefit from this.

Evaluate this kind of presentation as a part of the participation grade**Reciprocity**

The informal classroom presentation, as opposed to the more formalized performance, lends itself to a different kind of evaluation. The presenter plays the role of catalyst, drawing upon his or her understandings of the course and using them as a lens through which to present something further to the class. The format of the presentation may be open and informal, but their thinking about the topic must show a level of serious reflection. It is like saying, "be yourself, at your best". This kind of reciprocal presentation, in which the class understands itself to bear as much responsibility for the success of the ensuing discussion, fits naturally within the evaluation of participation. Therefore, we recommend that you do not grade this type of presentation the way a presentation in an acting or speech class might be, as a polished performance. Those standards would be quite precise, focusing on concerns such as style and content, openings and closings, and so forth. We suggest that you look at the willingness of the students to take the course and its ideas seriously, and to use those ideas to think further about something perhaps outside the class. Look at how they are able to take the meanings of the course, and to use that to give meaning to something else. Then, observe how that presentation is able to enlarge the perimeters of the course as you have defined it, and has involved other students in ideas not presented by the teacher, but by another student. And, finally, look at how each presentation builds on the next one to bring to life the voice of the next student. Ultimately, these kind of presentations cannot be taken alone, because they each contribute to the articulation of the other.

For that reason, we recommend that full credit be given to each student who brings himself to the difficult task of standing alone with one's ideas, and asking others to consider them seriously. To the student who is unable or unwilling to do that, a lower participation grade can be ascribed. Or, an alternative project, one that is less public, may be negotiated.

“No touch of slavery ought mix with the education of the freeborn.”
Plato

Projects¹

Whether you are working with student projects in a studio, working on drafts of writing projects, going over the planning stages of a research project, or working with students putting together a business presentation, you may very well find that you need to spend time in critique conferences with students. Critiques must not discourage student effort or reduce students' ability to evaluate their own work constructively; indeed, your critique must provide a model for students to use in evaluating their own work and others'.

A critique is not to enable you to demonstrate how much you know, but to provide a means for each student to carry on and to grow - it is not a matter of criticism or correction, but of *stimulation and encouragement*, of finding and emphasizing those things which can be built on - and which the students can build on...not you.²

Students will have different ways of working, just as they have different ways of learning

Some students will work from discreet parts towards a larger whole; others will be able to conceptualize an image of the finished project but need guidance to plot their way to it. Giving guidance and critique to students, whose work processes are different than our own can be very challenging. Even if they are attempting to meet our requirements for their project, the project belongs to them. At the heart of the critique is the ability to put ourselves in the place of the student and to assist them with all the skill and knowledge that we can bring to it, to the place that *they* wish to go. That process implies not that they must already know where they want to go with their idea, but that they must become able to define it as they work. When we put ourselves in their place, we don't lose our ability to think, see or critique. We can bring to their vision abilities that they do not yet have in their repertoire. This process is the antithesis of taking the student's work and using the critique as an opportunity to assert one's own vision or work.

You can make a better form than the student - you don't have to prove it. Better his or her clumsy first effort than your more capable one - do your creative work elsewhere, not on the student's work.³

Whether you are working with the fundamentals of composition, or how to order space, or how to synthesize a set of articles, you can begin by initiating discussion, asking questions, and brainstorming with the student(s). Be sure to ask questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Assist them in moving through the stages of their project by asking non-judgemental, expansive questions that will encourage students to move forward in their project from conceptualization to design to production.

The following are some guidelines for you as you go through the critique process with your students⁴:

- Acknowledge differences in students' backgrounds and preparations. Different students require different levels of assistance; where you stop with some is where you start with others.

¹Halvorsen. P. 29.

²This quote is excerpted from private written reflections on teaching and learning by Murray Turnbull and are used with his permission.

³Turnbull, slightly modified.

⁴Halvorsen. P. 30.

- Be sure that throughout the critique process that you refer to the criteria used to evaluate students' work. There should be no major surprises at the final critique, for either student or teacher, if you have been working with the student throughout.
- Assist students in coming up with their own solutions rather than being directed to one by you. If you have helped them articulate and sharpen their concepts, and discussed alternatives with them, then you have completed a major portion of your job. Students should not come away thinking there is one "right" answer - yours - to a problem, essay organization, experiment, or presentation.
- Try to begin and end each critique on a positive note. Summarize and emphasize specific revisions or areas requiring elaboration or additional attention but also single out those elements that show promise, even when they are limited to graphics or organization.

The final evaluation

In the final evaluation, be sure that students know what to expect as a format for the critique. Be descriptive rather than evaluative in talking about projects. One way is to describe your own reactions to the project. Another is to be aware of the language that you and other students use during the critique. It is more constructive to talk about "strengths" and "concepts that worked" or "areas for improvement" or "points for further consideration". Be very specific about what you like and give reasons why. A good guideline for constructive critique is to provide the amount of information that the students can use rather than the amount you would like to give.

Be authentic

Finally, be authentic in providing the critique. Students can and will sense false praise or vague positive reinforcement. We all want our work to be appreciated, but a balanced critique is far more respectful than false praise, which can be deeply humiliating.

Exams

When we review our syllabus on the first day of class, we make sure that students understand the means by which they will be evaluated and their grades computed. Prior to exams, we can review this again and provide more details to the students on what they can expect on the exam. In addition to reviewing for the exam, it is also important for students to know the format of the exam. An exam with 100 multiple choice questions will require a different study strategy (more attention to detail) than an essay exam. Similarly, if we let students know that identification or short answer questions will be included with an essay exam, they will know that they will also be required to recall key concepts and/or facts.

Implicit to designing certain types of exams is the presumption that we have determined what it is students need to know. This is not information to be guarded secretly so that students have to struggle to find it out. On the contrary, we should work hard to make sure this information is communicated clearly and accurately to the students.

Multiple Choice

The primary, and perhaps only, advantage to multiple choice exams is facility in scoring. Each question has only one correct answer and answer sheets which can be scanned by computer may be used. They

Good, fair multiple choice questions are difficult to construct

are best suited, then, for large (100+ students) classes wherein most of the learning that students will be required to do is fact-oriented. They are not, however, easy to write. Good, fair multiple choice questions are difficult to construct. Teachers who write the tests worry that it will be too easy; this leads to students' anxieties about trick questions. A question should be presented as a clear, definite statement to be completed or answered by one of several given choices. The correct answer should be clearly traceable to either the lectures or reading material assigned. Similarly, the disqualification of an incorrect response choice should be unambiguous. A multiple choice exam can be made more difficult by making it longer or by making obscure the questions or the information being tested for. However, we should ask how these tactics further our teaching objectives. If we would like students to engage in higher order thinking, then this is better fulfilled through a writing assignment.

Grading multiple choice exams

As a teaching assistant, you are not always responsible for writing exams but are often expected to grade exams. Whether you are scoring the exam by hand or by computer, check the exam and the answer key *prior* to giving the exam. The easiest way to do this is to take the exam yourself. If you have written the exam get another TA to check it. Making absolutely sure that the answer key is accurate can save hours of time spent rescoring exams.

Essay Exams

Essay questions are particularly useful in allowing students to utilize critical and analytical thinking skills. They also allow us to evaluate the processes by which students reach an answer, rather than the answer itself. As in all evaluation tools, we need to be clear beforehand what objectives a particular essay exam seeks to achieve. Is it the application of a particular methodology or a synthesis of various models? Is the exam a "performance" for students to demonstrate understanding or is it an opportunity for students to continue developing ideas generated through readings, lectures, or class discussions? When we are clear on what it is we expect from students, then we can design our exams which facilitate those expectations, and clearly convey that to students.

Writing the Essay Exam Questions

Essay questions can be designed with varying degrees of openness; more openness reflects less teacher control. A closed question is one where the student is expected to demonstrate knowledge of specific information or methodology and you will be able to write an answer key against which you can evaluate student responses.

Designing [these types of] essay questions requires that you specify the main intellectual task or tasks you want students to perform as well as the relative importance you'll assign to each task...Consider the following essay question:

"To Smothers, the corporation does not fit into democratic theory and vision. Explain and comment on this view."

...If you want to ask a complex question such as this one, a way to clarify the question is to tell the students how much time you expect them to spend on each part of the essay question and how much weight you will assign to each part. For example, you could say:

"To Smothers, the corporation does not fit into democratic theory

and vision. Explain and comment on this view. Plan to spend about 10 minutes summarizing Smothers' conception of the corporation and of democratic theory and vision and then spend 20 minutes explaining and commenting on her view. Your summary will count for 25% of the grade on this question and your explanation and comment will count 75%.¹

A slightly more open version of this question might read:

Compare and contrast Smothers' and Brothers' views of the corporation as a means of social organization.

In this version, students have a little more flexibility in choosing which points they wish to discuss. Although still in a relatively fixed framework, there exists the possibility of a variety of correct responses.

Opening the question up further, might result in something like this:

To Smothers, the corporation is inconsistent with democratic theory and vision. Create an economic model which would fit Smothers' requirements for democracy. Select a current public policy issue and hypothesize what ramifications such an economic model would have.

Here students are required to utilize course material and apply it to an area which is of interest to them. The class provides a jumping off point from which students can continue their journey, rather than it being the destination.

According to University of Hawai'i regulations, all final exams must be given on the date and time listed in the Schedule of Courses

Take Home or In-Class

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to take home or in-class exams that you may want to consider. From the student's perspective, a take home exam may relieve the anxiety of working under the pressure of the time limit imposed by the length of the class period as well as being able to utilize texts from the class.

Additionally, a take home exam gives the student the opportunity to bring in other materials and experiences and, therefore, construct an essay which is more meaningful to the student. If you choose to give a take-home exam, you might want to consider imposing a limitation on the number of pages. This can help students stay focused and also gives the security of some structure.

On the other hand, some students prefer the limitations imposed by an in-class exam. Given a limited time frame, the nature of the questions must generally be more concrete and the responses more brief. Frankly, in-class exams are considered easier.

You may also choose to combine aspects of take home and in-class exams by giving students the exam questions ahead of time but requiring them to write their responses in class. Students can then formulate and organize their ideas more thoroughly. As teachers, we need to reflect upon the real advantage to allowing students the opportunity for the kind of preparation and performance that this allows them.

Give students a variety of questions from which to choose. You may want to have a list of six questions from which students must select two. By recognizing that students have different learning

Give students a variety of questions from which to choose

¹ Halvorsen. P. 35

styles, we also need to vary the types of questions asked. Although this requires a larger initial time investment, the benefit of being able to read a variety of responses will easily outweigh this. Reading rote responses to the same question(s) over and over again is extremely difficult and exhausting. It depletes the ability to read freshly each paper, and puts us in the position of dreading the task of reading students' work. It begins to feel as if it is their work that is dreary, rather than our way of constructing both their work *and* our own. Reading responses written by students who have chosen a topic or question that compels them...this is one of the great pleasures of teaching.

Student-directed essays

For an even more expansive teaching/learning experience, consider that the student would construct the question to be reflected upon. Following the problem-posing method, each essay would reflect two important analytic skills; constructing the significant question and then examining it. For students who have never been expected to consider the significant question(s), you will want to give many opportunities throughout the semester. You can facilitate problem-solving in discussion, as well as in short writing assignments. In this way, you enable them to formulate a stunning array of questions. This process produces the most astonishing results. At its best, it can be like standing in the middle of a gallery of fine works and being struck by the richness of another's inner life. In whose province does it lie, if not our own, to raise the level of experience of learning and teaching in every way we can?

Quizzes

Know your reason for the quiz

There are a number of reasons for giving quizzes:

1. to provide quantitative data from which grades can be (partially) calculated;
2. to provide positive and negative consequences for completing assignments on a timely basis and for attendance;
3. to provide feedback on both teacher and student progress.

If the major course objective is mastery and recall of concepts, regular (weekly) quizzes can be a fairly straightforward measure of student progress. Additionally, in courses where a large portion of the final grade is calculated on multiple choice midterm and final exams, students who do not perform well on these types of exams because of different learning styles are disadvantaged. Short answer quiz questions which require more analysis or synthesis of concepts rather than recall can help balance out the student evaluation process. The cumulative number of quiz points over a semester can, for example, equal one midterm exam. It is also a way to acknowledge the effort that students make towards their learning. It is simply not the case that those students who never miss a class and diligently take notes will score highest on an exam. Quizzes can be used to recognize the daily work students do and not just the intensive studying prior to exams.

Quizzes can be quick sources of feedback. If the course is designed in a progressive manner, where mastery of one concept must precede the next, a short five minute quiz will let us know if our students are ready to proceed. More importantly, it lets us know how well we are communicating with our students. When students perform poorly on

“Art, like life, like teaching, is mostly a matter of qualities - what kind of experience, not how much, how many or how large. The major part of your task is to direct your students’ attention to qualities - this is no easy matter because they are all products of a society which places emphasis on quantities.”
MT

a quiz on material presented just minutes beforehand, we can be fairly certain that the manner in which it was presented could be improved.

The topic of the day in our large lecture course was basic cell division, or mitosis. First, the professor drew the various stages of mitosis using colored pens on an overhead projector while explaining the processes of each stage. Next, she went over the stages again, this time writing them out in outline form, again using overheads. A three question quiz at the end of the class later showed that a significant portion of the class did not adequately grasp the concept. The next class period, the professor laid out on the overhead projector models of chromosomes cut out of colored, transparent plastic. Each “chromosome” was unfolded to demonstrate its duplication; then the professor took out a pair of scissors and cut each pair to make two separate chromosomes. A collective “Oh...” went up as the students “got it.”

Whether or not quizzes count towards the calculation of a grade depends on what our objectives are. If quiz scores are part of a final grade, keep in mind what proportion of the grade this should be and schedule quizzes accordingly. If, on the other hand, we are primarily concerned with attendance and/or feedback, then a check or short written comments would be more appropriate. If we feel that we must give quizzes in order to “encourage” students to complete assignments and/or attend class, it would probably benefit all concerned if we looked elsewhere for causes and solutions.

Evaluating Your Teaching

Teaching is a Learning Process¹

Teaching is a learning process...Teaching requires careful attention to the students and skillful responses to what they express. Experience enables teachers to observe their students with accuracy and insight... Learning to do this is an essential part of learning to teach...[It] is not something to put off until you get your feet on the ground. It is the...ground.²

Expressed in the opening essay on *a'o* by Pua Hopkins is the notion of teaching and learning as a reciprocal cycle rather than a one way transmission of information with student "feedback" arising only during exams and the end of the semester teaching evaluations. Even within a formal lecture format, some sense of the cycle of teaching and learning can be maintained by "reading" your students. In this teaching practice, reading expressions and body language are some of the most available and apparent forms of student "feedback". While this occurs on a moment-to-moment basis, it is not specific to, and does not necessarily emphasize, which aspects of your teaching are effective and which are not. Further, learning to interpret student response in the classroom is a challenge to newly arrived teachers to the University of Hawai'i, because of the specifically cultural dimensions to non-verbal communication. Our companion volume *In Celebration of Students: Reflections on Learning at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*, devotes a section to this important dimension of the classroom culture.

On-going, In-class Evaluation Techniques

Open the Agenda

Taking three initiatives will help you encourage your students to take an active part in improving the quality of their own learning: open the agenda, set the example, and spare the students.³

Invite students to participate in setting the class agenda, by setting the expectation that they tell you what interests them, what difficulties they are having, what they would like to discuss. Tell them how you propose to spend the class time, and ask them to comment on those plans, make additions, and help you to set priorities. Ask them to suggest discussion questions or single out concepts for review. Even if you are using a particular class period to cover new material, leave time throughout to ask students what they want you to clarify. The more students feel they participate in the process, the more willing they will be to say how well it is working for them.

Set the Example

By setting a positive example in your own responses to their work by being supportive, responsive, and open, you will find that their willingness to offer candid feedback will increase.

- ~ Acknowledge their efforts even when the results are poor.
- ~ Let them know that you expect that their continued efforts will lead to success.
- ~ Enable students to correct their own mistakes before passing the question to others.

¹ This title as well as portions of this section are drawn from: Goroff. et al. P. 37.

² UH Mānoa Teaching Assistant

³ Goroff. et al. Pp. 37-38.

- ~ When answers to factual questions are wrong, explain why, and help them to understand the difficulties. Focus on the strengths of their work and assist with the difficulties.
- ~ When interpretations, or the focus of a discussion is askew, illuminate what you can from what they have said, then find ways to refocus or reinterpret away from that point.
- ~ Set a climate of respect for learning and for one another rather than making a virtue of being right.
- ~ Respond genuinely to students who take part in discussions; ask for further clarification, and pursue their ideas as respectfully as you would your own professor's ideas.
- ~ Give students credit for their thinking, and give *all your students* your thoughtful attention as to how they can further expand upon it. Show them that your attention, whether you support or dissent from their thoughts, is respectful.
- ~ Avoid the assumption that you always know what they mean, or what something means to them. Test your *own* understanding, and foster an atmosphere of open inquiry.

We must allow students to see that we are open to learning

We must allow students to see that we are open to learning; their willingness to take the risks that learning requires will rest heavily upon our own attitudes toward the uncertainty inherent in the pursuit of knowledge. Because students respect and trust those teachers who permit their own inner processes to be revealed, they will respond in kind. It is as if all students had read and taken to heart the advice of the French diarist, Andre Gide:

Believe those who are seeking the truth, but doubt those who find it.

Comment on the work that students do rather than on the students themselves. Students and teachers both identify strongly with their performance and read significance about self-worth into the grades and evaluations they receive. You can be very supportive of your students and still be rigorous with their work. If you avoid blaming them for unsuccessful work, show them your confidence that they can improve it, and give clear responses about what they might consider changing, *they will have every good reason to do the same for you* when the time comes.

Anonymity

Evaluations *must be done anonymously*. If every precaution is not taken as well as implied in every aspect of these processes, then a potential for communication turns into one of intimidation. Further, all communication from the students to us about our course, our teaching, and their experience in the class, *must be taken very seriously and with good humor*. Otherwise, we have managed only to put them in an unconscionable position. The rare exception would be a case in which you might want to tack onto the end of a quiz some questions about which parts of the current section of work was difficult or successful, from the perspective of the student. Here, it is important that the students know that their grade is not related to their responses; in order for them to know that, it has to be true. In all cases, we must be capable of keeping the grading process distinct from the evaluation process.

In-class Occasional Techniques for Evaluation of Class

To get occasional, informal responses from students regarding specific classes, end the class five minutes early from time to time and ask your students to write the answers to a few questions about the class. For responses on specific content, you can ask:

- What are the main points of today's class?
- What points are confusing or unclear?
- What might help to clear up the confusion?

To get more a more general response on your teaching, you might ask:

- What do you like most about today's class (or, this section of the course)?
- What do you like least about today's class (or this section of the course)?
- What recommendations do you have for me?

A variation on these techniques is to ask people to work in diads or triads for a few minutes to summarize what you have been presenting. The responses of these small groups will give you insights about how to directly and specifically improve your teaching. Make it *clear* in either case that the purpose of the exercise is not to evaluate the students, but for them to help you think about your teaching.

Students Tests and Papers

Yes. How students in our classes take tests and write papers carries an important message to us about our teaching. Everytime we say that "students are unprepared for college level writing and test taking"... followed by, "and they have to learn someday", we do nothing but assert our right to fail them, and to fail them doubly. That is to say, it relieves us from the responsibility of learning to teach and to teach *well*, and it permits us to assign a failing grade and call it theirs. Some failures are earned and some are assigned. If we are incapable of recognizing our own inability to seek and to find ways to teach that expands the possibilities that lie dormant in another person, in that group called "students", then we belong outside the classroom. If we believe that a whole class of students couldn't possibly earn A's, if we believe that there will always be failures, then we have already pre-assigned to as yet nameless and faceless students the act of failure. To whom does failure belong, when it is clearly organized in such a way, through such beliefs, and with such certainty?

We *know* that grades aren't "the truth" about very much, that they are at best contextualized forms of information, but we behave as if they are. Well, if they are to be meaningful at all, then they must be seen as the truth about more than about one student's work; about whether we succeeded with that to help one student to create meaning, whether we succeeded with the entire class, with the whole *idea* of our course. How students take our tests and write papers for our classes have everything to do with how we teach, and our desire to not recognize that burden relinquishes one of the great pleasures, or blessings, of teaching...to raise the level of self-expectation for all, including for *ourselves*.

**To whom
does failure
belong?**

“Desire for approval and recognition is a healthy motive; but desire to be acknowledged as better, stronger or more intelligent than a fellow being or fellow scholar easily leads to an excessively egotistic psychological adjustment, which may become injurious to the individual and the community.”
Einstein
1946

Mid-Semester Evaluations

Services designed to identify precisely the problems students might be experiencing, as well as highlight instructional techniques students find helpful, are available to all UH Mānoa teaching staff. We are including brief descriptions of the services offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence and strongly urge all new teachers to contact the Center for Teaching Excellence for more information and to make arrangements for your own class.

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis: Available during the mid-point of each semester

A consultant from the UH Mānoa Center for Teaching Excellence visits the class for 50 minutes and, without the instructor being present, asks the students three questions about the class: 1) what has helped them learn, 2) what has made it difficult for them to learn, and 3) what suggestions do they have for change. Small groups of students discuss and answer these questions. The consultant meets with the instructor and passes on this information.

Paper and Pencil Assessment: Available during the midpoint of each semester

CTE will provide a master copy of comment forms which can be duplicated and distributed to your class. Students anonymously answer questions on what is going well with the course or what may need clarification or improvement. Comments may either be picked up by the instructor or delivered to CTE for global analysis of results. A follow-up session may be scheduled with a CTE consultant to discuss the results.

Classroom Observation: Available at anytime during the semester

Upon request, a CTE staff member will visit a class session to observe the teaching process and conduct a peer review. A follow-up session is scheduled with the CTE consultant to discuss the observations and recommendations.

Video Assessment: Available at anytime during the semester

Upon request, the instructor is videotaped by a trained technician during a lecture or discussion section. The tape is given to the instructor, who may view and assess the tape privately, or with the assistance of an CTE consultant.

Mid-semester evaluations enrich communication between TAs and students

Among these services offered by the Center, there is a common value articulated; if we take seriously the experience of the students within the classroom, as well as their performance on papers and tests, attendance and participation, then it is essential that we stay connected with that experience. These mid-semester evaluations are done in the spirit of enriching the communication between teachers and students. They are initiated by the teacher, and they are communicated back to the teacher. These are *not* performed as a service for departments to evaluate TAs and faculty; rather they provide a direct communication between the teacher and the students, whereby the facilitator from the Center acts as a conduit, through which the information and some insights are relayed *from* students *to* teacher.

While the communication between you and your students is critical, it involves some issues—authority, responsibility, knowledge, power—that can inhibit everyone. [Teachers] often express both a desire to know what their students think of the class and a belief that they will not be candid about it. The belief has some foundation. Students assume that teachers will evaluate them. They do not...consider it natural, or find it comfortable, to evaluate their teachers, at least in ways that involve direct, forthright communication. Asking them to confront you with summary judgements of your teaching probably will not yield much candid or useful information.⁴

Mid-semester visits provide at least two very powerful opportunities: the students realize that what they have to say about their course (even one that is taught actively and openly) is seen as significant while the course is still in process, and the teacher has the opportunity of re-evaluating, to eliminate or change that which is possible or desirable. The anonymity of the communication enables these possibilities, and provides the new teacher in the first year a powerful tool for their own development as well as a great deal of credibility and respect from students who appreciate that their teacher values their participation.

There is another blessing for the new teacher in working with their students in this process:

Many teachers report a strong sense of isolation in doing their jobs. In part this comes from an absence of common enterprise...In part their isolation also manifests the ...boundary between teacher and students that is a function of their complementary but separate perspectives...Teachers need to acknowledge and respect [this], and find ways to communicate across it.⁵

Working with our students towards a better teaching and learning environment is one of our powerful opportunities within the teach-erly province. We must enable our students to teach us what they know about what engages them, and what does not. What we find happens in this process is that students respond with great honesty and insight when they recognize that this desire to understand teaching and learning is not a just a teacher-centered prospect, but one that holds the student at its heart as well.

End of the Semester Evaluations

Many of the departments on the University of Hawai'i campus participate in some form of end of the semester teaching evaluations. These can be effective at soliciting student response from one point in time and can provide information and comment to you as an instructor about what types of changes might be made in subsequent semesters. The limitations of this are evident. The course has ended, the students are no longer "ours", and as with cumulative testing practices, these evaluations will elicit more strongly from that which has occurred most recently. This form of evaluation has come to represent a kind of exchange with the teacher. If the student has been miserable throughout the course, here (finally) is the opportunity to have their say. If the student has done well but the course failed their

⁴Ibid., p. 37.

⁵Ibid., p. 37.

Anonymity

We must enable our students to teach us what they know about what engages them and what does not.

expectations, they may if they wish to take the time, explicate their disappointments. But for the most part, it seems that those who have done well will be willing to say that we have done well also. And so it goes. But if we wish the value of the courses that we teach to reside not just in the grade that marks the end but in the process that marks the experience of learning, it seems that that same value should find expression in the ways in which *we* are evaluated.

There are two ways to ensure that the end of semester evaluation is a powerful tool; if it is used in conjunction with other forms of evaluation discussed above, and, if the format of the evaluation reflects a coherence with the format of the course. Many departments are utilizing the campus-wide C.A.F.E. (Course and Faculty Evaluation) instrument which is available to any member of the teaching staff. The website address for this is <http://www.cafe.hawaii.edu/> and paper copies of the menu selection is available from the Office of Faculty Development and Academic Support (956-8075) and the Center for Teaching Excellence (956-6978) (cte@hawaii.edu). This menu provides approximately 250 questions from which to choose, and the forms and computerized results are returned to you in your department.

Other forms used differ greatly from department to department, from course to course. Shown are two examples; one from the Department of Chemistry, and one used in several classes in two departments in the Social Sciences.

Examples of End-of-the-Semester Evaluations

The following is an example of an end of semester evaluation tool currently in use:

Many departments are utilizing the campus-wide C.A.F.E. (Course and Faculty Evaluation) instrument which is available to any member of the teaching staff.

The Quantitative Evaluation

TEACHING ASSISTANT EVALUATION SCALE

Department of Chemistry
University of Hawaii at Manoa

The attached scale provides an opportunity for you to help us improve the quality of teaching in chemistry, as well as to recognize and reward superior teachers. Please respond frankly to the statements and add any written comments you wish on the back of the computer card.

The individual answer sheets will not be made available to your instructor; only the class averages for each item. Written comments will be typed before being given to the T.A. In any case, this will not be done until after the final course grades have been reported to the Records Office.

Instructions. Fill in the corresponding blank on the answer card which most closely matches your opinion, as follows:

- 1 — Very poor, among the worst
- 2 — Below average, improvement necessary
- 3 — Average, generally O.K.
- 4 — Good, definitely above average
- 5 — Excellent, among the best

-
- (1) Is generally available when assistance is needed; provides requested assistance willingly
 - (2) Gives good pre-lab presentations of the day's experiments
 - (3) Appears to have a good overall knowledge of the subject
 - (4) Has a good command of spoken English

- (5) Distributes time fairly among students
- (6) Explains course objectives, grading procedures, and work expected of each student
- (7) Is fair and impartial in assigning grades
- (8) Grading of lab reports is thorough and helpful
- (9) Is prompt in returning lab notebooks or reports
- (10) Maintains good morale
- (11) Has a sense of responsibility, for example, in replenishing supplies promptly and keeping the lab running smoothly
- (12) Has good knowledge and consciousness of laboratory safety — sets a good example
- (13) Encourages you to help yourself, rather than merely giving you the answers
- (14) Treats you as a mature individual; not condescending or overly critical
- (15) Is poised and self-confident
- (16) Has good rapport with you; easy to talk with
- (17) Inspires confidence; handles accidents and emergencies well; good leadership qualities
- (18) Seems to enjoy teaching
- (19) My overall rating of his teaching effectiveness on the following scale: 5 = Excellent; 4 = Above average or superior; 3 = Average or good; 2 = Below average, should work to improve; 1 = Poor
- (20) If you were taking another lab course, would you prefer this T.A. or some other? (1) Other T.A.; (2) Unsure/neutral; (3) This T.A.
- (21) What else did you like/dislike about your teaching assistant? Write this on the back of the computer card.

**Open
Narrative
Evaluation**

*** Evaluation form ***

Evaluation for (course # and title):

Semester/Year

Teacher

Most evaluation forms are constructed in such a way that the teacher and the courses are central to your attention. For that reason, I would like you to add to the already existing evaluation form a narrative of your own about the course that would place you at the center. Not in the sense of you evaluating yourself, but rather to comment on your experience within the course, to what extent and in what ways was it meaningful to you. And, of course, please frame your narrative in whatever way suits you. This is the part of the evaluation that I will pay closest attention to. Thank you for the extra time you give to this.

~~~~~The rest of the page is left blank for the students writing~~~~~

The teacher-centered evaluation is an extremely important tool that can offer two significant readings. It tell us if the strategies we intentionally employed towards good teaching were successful and that the students saw and appreciated the efforts and found them to be effective. We also learn about unintended, unconscious aspects of our course and our teaching . These can be aspects that we would like to discontinue or change because our students disliked them or because they brought unintended effects. It is also possible that we learn from

our students that we have some skills and abilities that we had not recognized in ourselves.

The value of open-ended, student-centered questions is that we are able to inquire into the inner processes of the students to see the extent to which the course has been meaningful to them. We learn how the course may have changed their perspectives as well as made them more knowledgeable. Our tests and written assignments do not necessarily measure that. We can tell whether and in what ways the course has succeeded for students of different learning styles, because we find in their answers a discussion about themselves within the context of the course. As teachers, we often find that even those students in whom we had failed to recognize success, change, or movement, that the students themselves are able to tell us in just what ways they found the course to be of significance to them. Without the open-ended dimension to our evaluations, we may *never* discover the extent to which our efforts have been successful and appreciated, because the standard kinds of evaluations don't elicit that kind of information. While the opportunity to write a bit about the course from a student-centered perspective offers the student a moment's reflection on some aspects that had not previously been considered, it is finally our own loss that we do not ask our students to speak to us in such a way. At any point in our teaching careers, we will need such



*Scenes from Jeanne  
Wiig's Introduction to  
2-D Design class.*



response, but *certainly* as we begin, when we have no real perspective on how *well* we do!

**Evaluations  
as a part  
of your  
teaching  
portfolio**

If your department does not participate in any end of the semester evaluation process, we recommend that you borrow from these models or better yet, construct something of your own to help your students assist you in assessing your teaching. Some departments may use them to determine whether or not to renew faculty, TAs, and lecturers yearly contracts. The evaluations will normally form just one aspect of that decision, but it can be a very important one, particularly if the responses are very strong and positive. It is to your advantage to collect and to keep these available for this purpose. It is perfectly normal to have some dissenting voices even in a very good course, so do not even think of removing any of them from your file. And it will bode well for you if any negative responses of a first semester begin to transform in the second one. If you have read them carefully and seriously, and gone past the disappointment or hurt that certain things did not go as you had hoped or thought, these responses can guide you towards important transformations in your teaching.

We recommend that in the evaluation section of your syllabus that you include a discussion of your plans to do evaluations of the course and teaching at various times, and explain that these will be student-centered in nature. Many students have *never been asked* to do evaluations for teachers and are surprised at the end of the course by the request. Those who have taken part in evaluating a course are more familiar with the end of the semester written evaluation which is very teacher and course oriented, and will be pleasantly surprised to learn how different it is to take part in these other methods. By including this in your syllabus, you signal to your students that evaluations are not indicators of problems, but of the desire to listen to them.

Evaluations can be used in even more extensive ways. Evaluations of our classes can be put on file, either at the library or on a computer in the department. At the beginning of a new semester, new students can be directed to read these evaluations in order to help them decide about the course. At the end of the semester, those students can then be asked to write honest evaluations, both for the benefit of the teacher and for the future students.

**Many  
students  
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a course or  
teacher!**

## **In Closing: Thoughts on the Nature of Teaching and Teachers**

I feel very strongly about the extraordinary privilege and responsibility of teaching. In my mind, the efficacy of teaching lies in its charge upon the teacher to recognize within her/his work the realm of both the spiritual and of the material; and, to be able to simultaneously reside in both. In this regard, teaching is among the most demanding, creative and important of human endeavors. What makes teaching challenging is not that we are not all gifted and wise, but that teaching is a social act that involves complex human kinetics. And for all the effort, knowledge, and skill that any of us are able to muster, we tread always on uncertain and extremely fertile terrain. This engenders a sense of humility about knowledge, rather than one of grandiosity, a sense of mystery about what we call teaching and learning, rather than certitude.

### **The Alchemy of Teaching and Learning**

Water is H<sub>2</sub>O, hydrogen two parts, oxygen one,  
but there is also a third thing, that makes it water  
and nobody knows that is...

D. H. Lawrence, 1982  
*Birds, Bees, and the Third Thing*

The metaphor of water permits any reader to take their own meaning; I find these passages particularly meaningful when contemplating the human practice of teaching and of learning. In the human kinetics of communication, it is difficult to articulate the act by which, or identify the moment when, exchange becomes something we call teaching and learning—possibly because we may learn something from every exchange, but more probably because we are by nature learners. But we who are involved as teachers and learners know there is something powerful that does occur within the confines of the educational enterprise, something that does transform us as human beings. We know it when we feel it; indeed, it is so powerful that we can see it happening before us. Necessarily built upon hours of preparation and years of teaching practice, it is as if something magical makes a breakthrough, in departure from well-laid plans and dearly held intents. Those moments in the classroom, or in those spaces nearby into which these powerful exchanges spill over, are crystallized moments. An already existing environment becomes as if more intimate in size and configuration, and more full with fresh, expressive formations, of relationships among students and between students and their teacher, all circulating around the power of critical thought and mindful action and the ideas that drive these.

There is an alchemy that occurs in these situations such that, against dictates of reason, the normal passing of time, and constraints of space, an enriched form of teaching and learning occurs. In a spirit of the early alchemists concerned with the transmutation of metals into gold, astonishing and amazing things are possible. This is teaching and learning at its best, most joyful, useful and successful, because it goes beyond “the lure of teaching for many...(as) the desire



to re/invoke the transformational experience, their own experience of growth and change, for others..."<sup>1</sup> It goes beyond because it takes account of the continual transformation of teacher *as well as* student, because alchemy requires that *both* transform. I believe that teaching in Hawai'i offers the richest environment possible for that transformation. Many who teach here at UH Mānoa arrive from far-removed, dramatically different places than Hawai'i and have a great deal to offer and, I know from experience, even more to learn about teaching within these classrooms at Mānoa.

### **"I am your well-wisher."**

Caring about one's teaching and teaching well are not necessarily equivalent. Those teachers who care about, contemplate, and continually fine-tune and revise their teaching, range from being exemplary professionals in the classroom to being ill-at-ease in their role, out-of-touch with students, and uncertain about their current knowledge of their field. This is the spectrum against which notions of "good teaching" must be understood. That, and the absolute knowledge that working ever towards this social event, this art, this form of courage, and this act of faith that we call teaching is not only challenging, it is necessary for all who enter the classroom. Before beginning each period, Professor Dulal Borthakur—Molecular Bioscience and Biosystems, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR)—prepares to enter the classroom by spending a few moments with himself focused on his students and saying to them in his own thoughts, "I am your well-wisher." In these moments of honor and commitment, and situated in these locations, our teaching practices *do* have the power to change our world(s), our students and ourselves. Our classrooms are the spaces where we work our way towards the ever-present potentialities in every course, knowing they can never be replicated again. In so doing, education ceases to be the road through a sacred grove<sup>2</sup> and becomes the articulation of that which is to be attained; that is, a liberation of the mind and spirit in conjunction with others.

And so, I too am *your* well-wisher as you leave the sanctum or chaos of your private office or home, library or computer, to walk into a classroom which is a stage for the human drama of teaching and learning as collaborative enablement and empowerment. In that space where teacher and student join in "a rigorous and willful desire to labor in the field of knowledge together."<sup>3</sup>

Kathleen Kane  
*Faculty Specialist*  
UH Mānoa Center for Teaching Excellence  
Office of Faculty Development & Academic  
Support

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<sup>1</sup> Aisenberg, N. and Harrington, M. 1988. *Women of Academe: Outsiders in The Sacred Grove*. University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst. P. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Aisenberg & Harrington. From their title.

<sup>3</sup> Hooks, B. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge. New York. P40, paraphrased.