

Book Overview

Teaching Gradually will be an edited volume whose content will fill a crucial gap in the pedagogical literature – that is, a guide to teaching in higher education for graduate student instructors *written by* graduate students who have substantive teaching experience. This book will pull together strategies and tools from authors with immediate, relevant experience to help readers discover effective and more inclusive teaching techniques. Our goal is to encourage collaborative professionalization among graduate students as they transition into their careers as scholars and educators.

Existing teaching guides have primarily been written by established faculty who offer a great deal in terms of advice and hard-won expertise, but who are nonetheless far removed from their own pedagogical first steps and can therefore lack an intimate familiarity with the challenges faced by new instructors. Thus, this book will be the first of its kind to speak to graduate students as comrades-in-arms with voices from alongside them in the trenches, rather than from far behind the lines. Ultimately, *Teaching Gradually* will give scope to a newer, diverse generation of educators who are closer in experience and professional age to the book's intended audience.

Book Goals

Just as instructors design a set of learning outcomes to guide each of their classes, we have also crafted a set of learning outcomes for this book. As a result of engaging with *Teaching Gradually*, readers will be able to:

- 1.) Identify best teaching practices to enhance student learning
- 2.) Develop a plan to implement these strategies in their teaching
- 3.) Expand their conception of contexts in which teaching and learning can take place
- 4.) Evaluate and refine their approaches to fostering inclusion in and out of the classroom
- 5.) Assess student learning and the efficacy of their own teaching practices
- 6.) Practice professional self-reflection

Please note that your proposed essay does not need to touch on all of these learning outcomes -- these are merely goals that we expect our book will achieve as a whole. However, successful submissions will clearly appeal to at least one of the learning outcomes stated above.

The overall tone of this book will be one of encouragement. We hope to empower new educators to jump in and try novel ideas and techniques. And in that spirit, we want to encourage submissions from any graduate students who have know-how to share. We are not looking for established or formal expertise; we are interested in your innovation, your passion, and your recent experiences. Your perspective as a graduate student instructor is your expertise, and we believe that your relatable work will be invaluable to our readers. We want you to help new educators find their footing, and to inspire them to expand their craft just as you have.

Submission Proposals and Eligibility Criteria

We are seeking essays from current graduate student instructors with teaching experience in at least one of the following categories:

- Experience as an instructor in a classroom, lab, studio, or other teaching venue common in higher education
- Experience in a leadership role relevant to the pedagogical training of other graduate students (e.g., TA training, running teaching workshops, involvement with an institutional teaching center)

We welcome submissions from current graduate student instructors from all colleges and universities across the United States. We also welcome submissions from graduate student instructors based in Canada, as long as their graduate programs are structured similarly to those in the United States. By including the broadest possible spectrum of experiences, we hope to offer a text comprised of diverse voices that will serve as a ready reference to young educators as they grow in their craft.

Submissions should offer relevant pedagogical strategies and advice that addresses challenges typically faced by new graduate student instructors. Successful contributions will reflect on the learning curve inherent to early-career teaching, while presenting material that readers can leverage to address the dynamic teaching landscape they inhabit. Each submission should be focused on a single pedagogical issue (see outline below for topic suggestions), and should be both informative and reflective, yet ultimately rooted in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Authors of accepted submissions will be encouraged to include both a formal strategies section (focusing on pedagogical strategies and advice) and a more informal anecdotal section (where relevant) in their final essay.

Please note that, in order to be eligible to contribute to *Teaching Gradually*, **you must be enrolled as a graduate student at the time that you submit your proposal.** If you are simultaneously working in an academic position outside of your home university (i.e., as an Adjunct or Visiting Professor), **your proposal**

must be grounded in your experiences as an instructor in your graduate program.

You may submit as a single author or co-write a submission with one other graduate student instructor (who also fits the above criteria), but please limit authorship to no more than two individuals. Multiple submissions for different topics are welcome.

Additionally, submission contents are not strictly limited to the suggested subtopics outlined below. Please feel free to propose a novel topic.

Finally, we cannot accept work that has been formally published elsewhere and reworked for this publication, but we can accept work that has been presented at conferences. All decisions for acceptance will be made solely at the discretion of the editors.

Final essays will be limited to 3000 words.

Tentative Outline

We expect that accepted submissions will fall into the following organizational structure:

- **Section 1: The Science Behind Learning**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - What is learning?
 - Incorporating active learning strategies in the classroom
 - Teaching reading/study skills
- **Section 2: Navigating the Instructional Role of Graduate Student Instructors**
 - **Introduction: Teaching Identity**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Battling imposter syndrome (“jump in and get started”)
 - Professionalism/establishing authority
 - **Topic 1: Holding office hours**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Motivating students to attend office hours

- Clarifying course content in a way that is tailored to the individual
- **Topic 2: Leading recitation and discussion sections**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Stimulating student participation via the Socratic method
 - Effectively answering questions about the material
 - Capitalizing on diverse perspectives to foster deeper understanding of course content
- **Topic 3: Conducting lab sessions**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Creating a safe lab environment
 - Preparing experiments and assignments appropriate to the difficulty level of the course
 - Guiding students in a way that fosters independent thinking and problem solving
- **Topic 4: Teaching studio courses**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Clearly communicating expectations for work that is inherently abstract
 - Effectively utilizing and critiquing examples of artistic work
 - Motivating creative thought processes
- **Topic 5: Serving as an instructor of record**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Backward course design
 - Creating measurable learning outcomes
 - Effectively managing time
 - Incorporating technology in the classroom
- **Topic 6: Online teaching**
 - Suggested subtopics:

- Fundamental differences between traditional and online learning
 - Building a web-based learning community
 - Making course content accessible
- **Section 3: The Inclusive Classroom**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Motivating students of all backgrounds
 - Teaching across differences
 - Eliciting participation in a quiet classroom
 - Dealing with difficult situations
- **Section 4: Assessment of Teaching and Learning**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Developing grading criteria
 - Providing useful feedback on student work
 - Grading consistently, fairly, and efficiently
 - Designing teaching evaluations
 - Seeking feedback on teaching from peers, faculty, and teaching centers
 - Using feedback to foster personal growth as an instructor
- **Section 5: Teaching Research Skills**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Building on feedback loops between teaching and research
- **Section 6: Beyond the Classroom**
 - Suggested subtopics:
 - Incorporating campus resources into coursework
 - Promoting service-learning opportunities
 - Connecting coursework to student's lives and communities (in other words, making learning matter)
 - Mentoring students outside of the classroom
 - Policies addressing plagiarism and Title IX
- **Section 7: Professional Development and Reflection**
 - Suggested subtopics:

- Identifying multiple mentors in the teaching journey
 - Employing DBER/SoTL strategies
 - Developing a teaching identity and philosophy
 - Documenting and curating professional experiences
 - Crafting professional documents and artifacts, such as a teaching/tenure portfolio
 - Exploring institutional teaching and learning resources and communities
- (Please note: This section is *not* intended to be preparatory for the academic job market. Submissions on artifacts and documents, such as portfolios or teaching philosophy statements, will need to be aimed at helping readers become more reflective and professional teachers.)

Finally, we strongly believe in placing issues of diversity and inclusion at the fore of conversation about teaching in higher education, and so we ask all contributors to explore their given topic through this lens.

We are excited to hear your voice and your perspective.

Please direct any remaining inquiries to gradteaching@cornell.edu.

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