

## Graduate Student Instructor Program: 398T Workshop Descriptions

Any 398T instructor may request **one** workshop each semester. Each workshop is approximately ninety minutes long. For more information or to schedule a workshop, contact **Mark Decker**, GSI Program Coordinator, at 232-1774 or [markl.decker@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:markl.decker@mail.utexas.edu).

### *Professional Development for Graduate Student Instructors*

- 1. Learning Theory:** We know a great deal about facilitating learning based on psychological theory and research. This workshop provides students with basic learning principles derived from current educational research and demonstrates how to translate those principles into teaching activities.
- 2. Crafting Successful Discussion Sections:** Leading discussions can be a bigger challenge than giving lectures, even for experienced instructors. We will provide guidelines for planning, implementing and evaluating successful discussions, and show you how to formulate effective questions, stimulate student interest and accomplish meaningful learning goals.
- 3. Lecturing Techniques:** Lecturing effectively is more than just standing in front of a class and talking. Effective lecturing takes students' learning needs into account. We will investigate how to make lectures more effective learning tools, and introduce interactive methods into the lecture.
- 4. Motivation in the College Classroom:** This workshop focuses on how to increase motivation in the classroom through the use of motivational and cognitive strategies. We will help instructors answer students' questions such as "Why should I learn this?" and "Can I learn this?" We will discuss specific strategies that promote both learning and motivation in the classroom.

### *Enhancing Your Instructional Effectiveness*

- 5. Interactive Teaching and Student Participation:** This workshop focuses on *why* and *how* to interact with students during instruction, and how to make lectures more interactive. The goal is to help GSIs understand that learning is an active process—when instructors don't interact with students, they won't know what students are learning or which topics need more coverage. We will discuss skills to increase positive forms of student participation and handle difficult student interactions, such as students who ask tough questions and students who don't participate.
- 6. Learning Styles and their Implications for Instruction:** This workshop focuses on different learning styles and how they influence teaching and learning. We will use the *Kolb Learning Styles Inventory* to discuss how your learning style might influence your teaching. We will discuss instructional activities that will benefit students in each of the four learning styles.
- 7. Individual Differences:** Learning styles, multiple intelligences and cultural diversity all affect individual students' ability to learn. How can an instructor address so many variables? This workshop will glean key findings from research in these areas, and suggest ways to help you modify your teaching strategies to promote effective learning for all students.

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### *Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning*

8. **Introduction to Blackboard:** Instructors can create and manage course Web sites in Blackboard without having to know HTML. Blackboard also offers course management tools and mechanisms for on-line discussion groups and other communication forums. This workshop will teach GSIs how to create a basic Blackboard course site.
9. **Building an Online Community:** Online courses require student participation to form an effective learning community. In this workshop, you will learn teaching strategies to increase participation and build learning communities online, and how to use Blackboard's online discussion boards and virtual classroom to increase collaboration, produce active learning, and foster student reflection.
10. **Teaching with PowerPoint:** PowerPoint is the standard presentation software used at UT Austin. Unfortunately, students often view PowerPoint presentations as boring. We will demonstrate effective uses of PowerPoint and provide techniques to gain students' attention, increase their participation, and enable student interaction through the concept of branching.
11. **e-Gradebook:** Customized for UT Austin, eGradebook allows instructors and designated proxies or designees to view and maintain class assignment grades online. Students may also view their own class assignment grades in eGradebook using their UTEID. Some advantages of using eGradebook are its integration of other campus services, including UTDirect, Online Grade Submission, and the Measurement and Evaluation Center's scanning services.
12. **Ongoing Course Assessment:** Instructors can get timely, anonymous student feedback about the class by using the Ongoing Course Assessment (OCA), a tool created at UT Austin. Instructors can custom design their own questionnaires, or choose from existing templates. You can send surveys at any time during the semester, and download the responses to Excel or Word.
13. **Teaching 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners:** Some instructors lament that today's students are coming to college less prepared than students of old. Does this mean that college instructors need to "stop teaching" and yield their roles to technology or to the students themselves? Certainly not, but it could imply that instructors should make deliberate attempts to change the way they teach students. This session will focus on the experiences and expectations that students bring to learning environments and how instructors can successfully meet those expectations to create opportunities for learning.