

Certificate Topics and Associated Sessions

Assessment

- Assessing Your Instruction
- Using Rubrics to Grade Student Performance
- Evaluating Student Learning in Large Classes: Designing the Multiple-Choice Exam

Leading Discussions

- Designing Effective Discussions
- Promoting Active Learning
- Assessing Classroom Discussion

Lecturing

- Effective Public Speaking Techniques
- Designing Effective Lectures for Learning
- Interactive Techniques for Large Classes

Teaching Research Skills

- Improve Your Research Assignments
- Web Savvy Students
- Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism

Teaching with Technology

- Blackboard: Enhancing Communication
- Blackboard: Getting Started with your Course Content
- Blackboard: Increasing Feedback
- Teaching with PowerPoint

Teaching through Writing

- Incorporating a Substantial Writing Component into the Syllabus and Assignments
- Conventions of Standard, Edited English
- Assessment versus Evaluation: Formative Responding Supporting Summative Grading

Understanding Your Students

- Motivating Students to Learn
- Learning Styles and Implications for Instruction
- Helping Your Students Become More Effective Learners

Assessment Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Assessment certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to appropriately use multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning objectives to assess student learning before, during, and after instruction.

Sessions Offered in the Assessment Series:

- Assessing Your Instruction
- Using Rubrics to Grade Student Performance
- Evaluating Student Learning in Large Classes: Designing the Multiple-Choice Exam

Recommended Sequence:

- We recommend you enroll in the Assessing Your Instruction session before taking either of the other two sessions.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Assessing Your Instruction

In this workshop we will discuss the reasons for assessing classroom instruction, the assessment process, the integration of assessment into regular instruction, commonly used assessment methods, and the use of assessment results. Specifically, you will learn ways to integrate assessment into instruction using on-line surveys, feedback devices, and classroom observation and how to use assessment results to improve instruction. You will also develop an assessment plan for a course.

After completing this session you will be able to

- explain the relationship between assessment and instructional best practices
- explain the assessment process
- describe three common ways to assess classroom instruction (e.g., surveys, feedback devices, and observation)
- use assessment results to improve instruction and learning
- create an assessment plan for a course

Using Rubrics to Grade Student Performance

When grading subjective assignments such as essays, projects, and portfolios, students often complain that grading standards are vague, inconsistent, or unfair. We will explore ways to make grading more objective by using a rubric, a systematic scoring guideline, through discussion covering three areas: the essential components of various types of rubrics, how to choose among pre-made rubrics, and how to create a rubric. You will conclude the session by developing a sample rubric on your own.

After completing this session you will be able to

- describe rubrics and what questions they can answer
- describe the advantages of using rubrics
- describe the essential parts of a rubric
- distinguish among the various types of rubrics and determine when each is appropriate to use
- create your own rubric and apply it to your course

Evaluating Student Learning in Large Classes: Designing the Multiple-Choice Exam

In large classes it's often necessary to use multiple-choice exams to assess student learning, but it's a challenge to write good items that require students to do more than memorize facts and details. We will explore how to create effective classroom multiple-choice exams based on sound learning objectives and how you can use exam results to improve your teaching.

After completing this session you will be able to

- describe various levels of learning objectives
- explain the strengths and weaknesses of multiple-choice exams
- identify common errors when writing multiple-choice items
- create multiple-choice items that assess various levels of learning
- use exam results for feedback and to evaluate instructional effectiveness

Leading Discussions Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Leading Discussions certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to design, implement, and evaluate effective discussion.

Sessions Offered in the Leading Discussions Series:

- Designing Effective Discussions
- Promoting Active Learning
- Assessing Classroom Discussion

Recommended Sequence:

- We recommend you take the three sessions sequentially, beginning with Designing Effective Discussions, following with Promoting Active Learning, and ending with Assessing Classroom Discussion.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Designing Effective Discussions

As a GSI, you'll frequently be responsible for leading discussions, which requires considerable advance planning to identify content objectives, develop questions to promote critical thinking, and choose classroom management techniques to elicit high-quality student contributions. We will help you develop successful planning techniques, discuss ways to overcome discussion barriers, and find alternative discussion activities to promote learning.

After completing this session you will be able to

- explain the process of choosing discussion over other teaching methods
- list five steps in the planning process
 - Articulate content learning objectives.
 - Generate discussion questions to support learning objectives.
 - Consider the type of interaction for questions and answers: T-S, S-T, S-S, Ss-Ss.
 - Anticipate and troubleshoot problems (e.g., students not prepared, unsuitable room arrangement).
- explain Bloom's Taxonomy and its role in generating questions
- explain the elements of a successful discussion section
- write three discussion questions at different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

Promoting Active Learning

By using discussions, instructors can promote their students' active participation in class, thereby addressing students' poor content retention, weak conceptual understanding, and inability to transfer knowledge to authentic situations. When students actively engage instructional material, they process information more deeply and engage higher level thinking skills, which generally translates into better grades and greater motivation for learning. After we examine three techniques for promoting classroom discussion, you'll experience them for yourself and consider the instructional situations in which each would be most effective.

After completing this session you will be able to

- define *active learning* and explain how discussions fit within that concept
- design appropriate discussion sessions based on three active learning techniques:
 - brainstorming
 - guided lecture
 - error-prone lecture, incorporating Blackboard's discussion board
- explain how one or more of these techniques could be used in a classroom
- explain the criteria for choosing which active-learning techniques to use in various instructional settings and subject areas
- apply appropriate active-learning techniques in various instructional settings and subject areas

Assessing Classroom Discussion

While discussion is an excellent way to promote active learning, it may be difficult to tell whether students are learning essential information in this less structured format, unless you conduct systematic assessment. We will discuss reasons for assessing classroom discussion and two easy-to-use assessment methods, with specific attention to using simple feedback devices. You'll create your own classroom discussion feedback device to use in your courses.

After completing this session you will be able to

- explain the relationship between assessment and instructional best practices
- describe the advantages of using assessment
- describe two common ways to assess classroom discussion (e.g., OCA surveys and feedback devices)
- distinguish among various types of feedback devices and determine when each is appropriate to use
- explain how you can use assessment techniques to improve instruction and learning
- create your own feedback device and apply it to your courses

Lecturing Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Lecturing certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to design lectures that are based on key communication skills and learning theory, address the needs of students, and increase students' understanding by incorporating active learning techniques.

Sessions Offered in the Lecturing Series:

- Effective Public Speaking Techniques
- Designing Effective Lectures for Learning
- Interactive Techniques for Large Classes

Recommended Sequence:

- We recommend you take the three sessions sequentially, beginning with Effective Public Speaking Techniques, following with Designing Effective Lectures for Learning, and ending with Interactive Techniques for Large Classes.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Effective Public Speaking Techniques

The difference between sharing academic knowledge in writing and in speech is that lectures and public speaking occur with the audience present. Just as writing can be learned, you can learn to speak publicly. We will discuss how to plan what you will say and how to make your message clear, while avoiding becoming a bundle of nerves!

After completing this session you will be able to

- illustrate the communication process
- clarify the purpose for an oral presentation
- organize an oral presentation to aid listener comprehension
- use a unifying introductory and concluding statement
- practice multiple methods of preparation
- use several approaches to quiet presentation nerves and butterflies

Designing Effective Lectures for Learning

It is easy to forget that the purpose of a lecture is not simply to deliver information, but more importantly to help students understand information. We will explore the ways students learn from lectures and how you can help that process occur. By analyzing lectures from a student perspective, we'll generate strategies to turn any lecture from a passive to an active learning experience.

After completing this session you will be able to

- describe the learning processes that should be happening during a lecture and how your delivery supports or hinders those processes
- design a lecture-based class session, considering the amount of content, the types of objectives, and the strategies required to reflect a commitment to active learning
- describe ways you can teach students to learn more effectively from a lecture

Interactive Techniques for Large Classes

Even the most enthusiastic instructor is challenged by the responsibility of teaching classes of 100 students or more. Keeping students attentive in large classes requires more than being the sage on the stage. We will analyze the dynamics of group learning to generate strategies and techniques for promoting community, participation, and learning in classes of any size.

After completing this session you will be able to

- describe and create an environment in which students feel that they are an integral part of the learning process in a large class
- describe the group dynamics required to promote students' participation and learning in large classes
- encourage and promote small learning communities in a large class setting
- generate strategies to foster active learning and participation in large classes

Teaching Research Skills Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Teaching Research Skills certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to apply best practices in designing library research assignments intended to teach students how to find, evaluate, and synthesize information effectively and ethically while avoiding plagiarism.

Sessions Offered in the Teaching Research Skills Series:

- Improve Your Research Assignments
- Web Savvy Students
- Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism

Recommended Sequence:

We recommend you take the three sessions sequentially, beginning with Improve Your Research Assignments, following with Web Savvy Students, and ending with Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Improve Your Research Assignments

We will discuss how to integrate library research into assignments designed to address course objectives, covering common pitfalls and best practices. You will leave the session with a number of examples of effective research assignments.

After completing this session participants will be able to

- describe common problems in research assignment design
- describe best practices in research assignment design
- explain the nature and cycle of information
- identify research tools appropriate for finding different types of information
- recognize effective and ineffective library research assignments

Web Savvy Students

According to the 2002 Pew Internet and American Life Project, 73% of college students say they use the Internet more than the library. We will provide you with the background and tools necessary to teach students how to use Web resources effectively for college-level research.

After completing this session you will be able to

- explain how search engines and directories vary
- determine Web authorship
- conduct effective Web searches using advanced features
- evaluate Web sites
- create effective Web evaluation assignments

Preventing and Detecting Plagiarism

In a 2001 survey, 41% of students admitted to “cut and paste” plagiarism. You will learn how to structure courses to prevent plagiarism and how to detect plagiarism through targeted searching.

After completing this session participants will be able to

- define plagiarism
- identify various types of plagiarism
- explain cultural differences in notions of plagiarism
- explain the instructor’s role in preventing plagiarism
- create plagiarism-proof assignments
- use effective searching techniques to detect plagiarism from online sources

Teaching with Technology Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Teaching with Technology certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to design a course that incorporates technology to manage course materials, facilitate discussion, and promote active learning.

Sessions Offered in the Teaching with Technology Series:

- Blackboard: Enhancing Communication
- Blackboard: Getting Started with your Course Content
- Blackboard: Increasing Feedback
- Teaching with PowerPoint

Recommended Sequence:

- Teaching with PowerPoint is REQUIRED to earn a certificate. From the remaining three Blackboard offerings, choose two.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Blackboard: Enhancing Communication

This hands-on session will focus on the effective uses of Blackboard's communication tools to connect instructors with students outside the classroom. We will discuss how to use, facilitate, and manage these tools to elevate class communication online.

These tools include

- Email
- Discussion board
- Chat
- Announcements
- Groups

Blackboard: Getting Started with your Course Content

Blackboard enables you to enhance in-class instruction by providing 24/7 access to course materials and by offering a variety of tools to assist you with course management. You will learn hands-on how to build a Blackboard course site by uploading course documents, organizing material, and applying course designs.

In this session we will discuss

- adding files to a course site
- managing material using folders
- adding Web resources to a course site
- using adaptive release
- customizing a course menu
- applying unique design to a course site
- managing students and teaching assistants
- managing the gradebook

Blackboard: Increasing Feedback

You will learn hands-on how to use Blackboard's assessment features to evaluate students' learning and to gain valuable feedback from your students. We will demonstrate creating quizzes and surveys, using the gradebook, and collecting assignments through Blackboard.

Teaching with PowerPoint

As PowerPoint has become the standard presentation software used at UT Austin, many students find the presentations boring and accuse some teachers of becoming note-dependent while using it. We will demonstrate effective ways to use PowerPoint, covering techniques for increasing student participation, maintaining students' attention, and branching presentations to enable student interaction. Providing images, slides, or graphics during class helps students link content with the "big picture" of the course and with their prior knowledge about the topic. Visual materials can also serve as memory cues for later recall and may also pique the interest of students in exploring content further.

After completing this session you will be able to

- identify effective PowerPoint presentations
- explain techniques for eliciting student responses
- create a PowerPoint presentation using branching techniques
- develop a master slide for use in presentations
- add graphics, video, and hyperlinks in a presentation
- incorporate Gagne's nine events of instruction into a PowerPoint presentation

Teaching through Writing Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Teaching through Writing certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to improve subject matter instruction by using writing to foster thinking, shape learning, support inquiry, model professional values, and facilitate formative assessment.

Sessions Offered in the Teaching through Writing Series:

- Incorporating a Substantial Writing Component in the Syllabus and Assignments
- Conventions of Standard, Edited English
- Assessment versus Evaluation: Formative Responding Supporting Summative Grading

Recommended Sequence:

- There is no recommended sequence for this series.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Incorporating a Substantial Writing Component in the Syllabus and Assignments

If you're asked to provide a substantial writing component in your class, you may fear that you must graft additional activities onto the syllabus and wear an additional hat as English teacher. We will explore ways to support instruction by incorporating writing to achieve three purposes: receive feedback on students' learning, facilitate students' study out of class, and motivate students' development as practicing professionals in their field—all without requiring you to read additional materials or do additional grading. The goal is to design low-stakes writing activities that need not be read, assessed, evaluated, or graded, but that are integral to students' success in high-stakes writing.

After completing the session you will be able to

- maintain subject matter as the focus of instruction
- design writing activities consistent with the process approach
- design writing activities conducive to formative assessment
- use writing activities to foster productive study practices
- obtain ongoing formative assessment of instruction
- obtain ongoing formative assessment of students' learning
- model the research and writing activities of practitioners
- convey for students the professional culture of practitioners

Conventions of Standard, Edited English

In her pioneering work *Errors and Expectations*, Mina Shaughnessy of the City University of New York described how her colleagues' obsession with good grammar in the face of open admissions in the early 1970s affected student writers: "So absolute is the importance of error in the minds of many writers that 'good writing' to them means 'correct writing,' nothing more." Thirty-five years and a paradigm shift later, teachers responsible for responding to or grading students' writing are still unsure how to balance being a coach with being a judge.

You will explore what you regard "using good grammar" to mean and how your own skill as a writer stacks up to that standard. We'll discuss important distinctions among three critical professional skills—proofreading, editing, and reviewing—and examine how each one can be used throughout the composing process to contribute to the quality of students' finished writing. You'll be encouraged to coach students' writing, seeing it as a productive activity for developing understanding and taking advantage of errors and mistakes.

You'll practice proofreading and editing texts by students and colleagues.

After completing the session you will be able to

- assess your proficiency in standard, edited English
- identify important characteristics of standard, edited English
- identify discourse situations requiring standard, edited English
- distinguish among issues of mechanics, expression, and communication
- discriminate for text features between usage myths and true mistakes
- choose among the tasks of proofing, editing, or reviewing text
- identify recent trends in editing convention
- identify appropriate general and discipline-specific manuals of writing convention

Assessment versus Evaluation: Formative Responding Supporting Summative Grading

Robert Duke, a member of UT Austin's Academy of Distinguished Teachers, says that it is important to separate assessment from evaluation: the "finding-out aspect" of assessment is what makes it useful as an ongoing activity that "should be at the fore in a teacher's thinking from the first moments of goal setting and throughout ... planning and implementing instruction." By separating the gathering of information about what students are learning from judging or grading that learning, teachers can know whether the class is "getting it" and, in the case of writing, don't have to feel that they must read everything students write.

You will explore your experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and doubts concerning assessment's role in fostering students' learning. We'll consider how to use formative assessment to allow students to learn from mistakes, rather than be penalized for them.

You'll be prepared to use formative assessment of students' low-stakes drafts to develop students' composing and editing skills to apply to their high-stakes work.

After completing this session you will be able to

- use the minimal marking technique
 - prioritize surface text features to target
 - choose representative sections of students' texts
 - identify problems with surface text features
 - classify problems with surface text features
- conference with student writers in several contexts: online, in person, in small or large groups

Understanding Your Students Topic Certificate

Goal:

- The Understanding Your Students certificate series will enable the Graduate Student Instructor to design instruction that takes into account student differences, in order to promote individual motivation for learning, accommodate different learning styles, and broaden use of more effective learning strategies.

Sessions Offered in the Understanding Your Students Series:

- Motivating Students to Learn
- Learning Styles and Implications for Instruction
- Helping Your Students Become More Effective Learners

Recommended Sequence:

- There is no recommended sequence for this series.

Session Descriptions and Learning Objectives:

Motivating Students to Learn

One common complaint of instructors is that “My students just aren’t motivated.” We will explore what motivation is and how it impacts students’ learning, by examining three major theories of motivation and considering examples for translating these into teaching and learning. You’ll then apply one of these theories in your own teaching context.

After completing this session you will be able to

- define motivation
- explain expectancy/value theory, achievement goal orientation, and attribution theory
- give an example of the implications of each of these theories for instruction
- apply one or more of these theories to consider changes you can make in your classes to enhance students’ motivation

Learning Styles and Implications for Instruction

As you may have guessed, people don't learn in the same way, often causing frustration for teachers and learners. We'll focus on identifying learning styles and understanding how they influence teaching and learning. You will complete the Kolb Learning Styles Inventory and discuss how your own learning style might influence your teaching. We'll discuss appropriate instructional activities for students with each of four learning styles described by the Kolb inventory. You'll work in teams to design a class session based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, discussing how to use this tool in your own discipline.

After completing this session you will be able to

- identify your learning style using David Kolb's inventory
- list and define the elements that influence individual learning styles
- explain some characteristics of each learning style
- develop a lesson using the Kolb experiential learning cycle

Helping Your Students Become More Effective Learners

We know that many undergraduates think that learning requires simply reading a textbook and recalling information, while instructors expect them to be able to apply, analyze, and understand what they read. We'll consider guidelines for helping students embrace effective learning strategies, using tools to promote better long-term memory storage and retrieval. We will examine three study and learning techniques and, with the help of illustrative graphics, demonstrate how students in any discipline can apply them inside and outside the classroom.

After completing this session you will be able to

- define concepts such as *meaningful learning*, *metacognition*, and *self-regulated learning* and explain how study strategies are linked to them
- provide some reasons why students frequently fail to retrieve instructional material from long-term memory
- identify some guidelines to promote more sophisticated study strategies
- explain three learning strategies for complex instructional material:
 - identifying important information in textbooks
 - effective note-taking
 - organizing material using timelines, matrices, and concept maps
- advise faculty how they might modify their instructional approaches to better accommodate students' learning strategies