



Moving from student to teacher: Creating a model teacher training program

Common challenges for new teachers and how to avoid them

Rachel Annunziato

Internal resources for student teachers

Sarah Duncan

Integrating lectures and labs

Karen Siedlecki

Ethical responsibilities for graduate student instructors

Adam Fried

External resources for student teachers

Harold Takooshian

Students as research assistants: Learning from the research process

Marisa T. Cohen

Liaising with administration

Michael Rametta

Improving the experience of moving from student to teacher

Natasha Chaku



Teacher training: http://www.fordham.edu/info/21662/graduate_program/3670/teacher_training

Manual: http://www.fordham.edu/downloads/file/4274/teacher_training_manual and www.socialpsychology.org/upload/view/111037/teaching-psychology-2016.pdf

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- Huston, T. (2009). *Teaching what you don't know*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
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Eight useful resources for new student teachers

Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP):	http://teachpsych.org/
Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP):	http://teachpsych.org/otrp/index.php
ORTP Syllabi:	http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php
Psychology Speakers You Can Hear Easily (PSYCHE) Speakers:	www.apadivisions.org/division-1/news-events/speakers/index.aspx
Association of Psychological Science (APS) teachers:	www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/members/teaching
Association of Psychological Science (APS) students:	www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/members/apsstc
Rate My Professor:	www.ratemyprofessors.com/
Graduate Students Teaching Association (GSTA):	http://teachpsych.org/gsta/index.php

Moving from student to teacher: Creating an effective TA program **

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1. Overview

“How can we best guide outstanding graduate students to become outstanding classroom teachers (Perlman, McCann, & McFadden, 1999)?”

Fordham University is a Jesuit institution which emphasizes the values of *Cura Personalis* (the "whole person"), and *Magis* (excellence). As such, it aims to combine excellence in teaching with excellence in research. This means to help train its graduate student teachers in how to communicate their knowledge to undergraduates. There is a rich literature on forming effective departmental teaching assistant (TA) programs (Pearlman, McCann, & McFadden, 1999). Since 2014, the Department of Psychology of Fordham University has developed a formal Teacher Training Program [Note 1 below], including a seven-page *Teacher Training Manual* [2].

This panel brings together TAs, experienced professors, and administrators to combine a review of this literature with their own first-hand approaches, and offer practical guidance for new teachers and their departments.

In the first segment of our panel, we will present core elements of teacher training including common errors and how to avoid them, compiling internal resources for new teachers, integrating lectures and labs, as well as ethical considerations in teaching.

Dr. Rachel Annunziato, the Director of Teacher Training, describes five common challenges faced by new teachers and how to avoid them. These include preparing engaging lectures, unclear attendance policies, grade inflation, establishing classroom conduct and forming rapport with students (Huston, 1999). Within each area, guidance is offered on why these areas are problematic and how to address them.

Sarah Duncan, a teaching assistant and the graduate assistant to the Teacher Training Program at Fordham, reviews the process of compiling and disseminating internal resources for teaching students. Specifically, she describes networking with organizations relevant to teaching across campus (e.g., the Office of Disability Services, Counseling and Psychology services) as well as the development of documentation at the department level (including a manual, standardized observation forms, and teaching checklists), as well as the methods of disseminating these materials.

Finally, Dr. Adam Fried, the Director of the Ethics Center at Fordham, discusses ethical responsibilities in teaching including preparation, planning, documentation, consulting and awareness of multiple relationships (Branstetter & Handelsman, 2000). He also offers guidance on creating an inclusive classroom, a topic he provides oversight on for teachers throughout the university.

The next segment of our panel addresses advanced topics in teacher training, particularly infusing classroom learning with external resources and connections. Dr. Harold Takooshian, Professor of Psychology, describes considerations in integrating Psi Chi and co-curricular speakers into a new course. He also shares additional external resources that can be employed to aid new teachers and enhance lectures. Dr. Marisa Cohen of St. Francis College presents her work on connecting students to research and presentation opportunities and how these experiences greatly augment their classroom learning and preparation for graduate school. Dr. Cohen offers data on her students' participation in a recent regional conference.

The last segment of our panel provides the perspectives of administrators and a new teacher on how to ensure the success of teacher training efforts. Mr. Michael Rametta from the Fordham College at Rose Hill Dean's Office discusses establishing effective communication

with administration and how they can support teacher training. Finally, Natasha Chaku, a first year graduate student, closes with her insights on how we can improve the experience of moving from student to teacher.

Notes

1. http://www.fordham.edu/info/21662/graduate_program/3670/teacher_training
2. http://www.fordham.edu/downloads/file/4274/teacher_training_manual

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- Huston, T. (2009). *Teaching What You Don't Know*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
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2. Common challenges for new teachers and how to avoid them

Rachel A. Annunziato

Shifting from student to teacher is exciting but also demanding. New teachers may find that being prepared for the following common challenges can help to ensure a smoother transition. These include preparing engaging lectures, unclear attendance policies, grade inflation, establishing classroom conduct and forming rapport with students.

Teachers, at all levels of experience, are often concerned about their course evaluations. One of the most prominent components of these rating scales involves lecture quality. Indeed, research has found that evaluation of the lecturer was more important to ratings than teaching effectiveness (Shevlin, Banyard, & Griffiths, 2000). Fortunately, there are resources available to help improve lecture quality. For example, *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2010) offers a variety of strategies as well as suggestions for incorporating technology into lectures. In our program, students are required to take a "Teaching of Psychology" course; one of the core objectives is to develop a mock lecture and receive feedback from the instructor and their peers. Our instructors receive departmental, as well as university evaluations. The former asks supervisors to describe how instructors have utilized multiple modalities in their lectures.

Two concrete areas for new teachers to consider before stepping into the classroom are attendance policies and grade inflation. Some colleges/universities have set attendance policies that must be adopted. But for others, instructors will have leeway. We strongly encourage taking a "foolproof" approach; that is, stating in your syllabus exactly how many absences are permitted, what the penalty is for absences, and how "excused" absences will be determined. Any "degrees of freedom" can be costly as the semester unfolds.

Grade inflation has been called a "crisis" (Johnson, 2006) in higher education. At our site, internal data collection showed that graduate student instructors gave significantly higher grades than faculty; these findings are similar to published research showing that students receive higher marks from adjuncts than tenured and non-tenured faculty (Kezim & Quinn,

2005). In our required teacher training workshops and supervision, grade inflation is emphasized as a serious problem that has reverberations for our department since administration does indeed review grade distributions. Supervisors are asked to review examinations and grades for our teaching students. And, we ask seasoned teachers to share their experience with being “tough” and how this has *not* impacted their course evaluations.

Finally, as graduate students become teachers, they must consider ways to establish classroom conduct and rapport with their students. Huston’s *Teaching What You Don’t Know* (2009) is a great resource for these broader issues. A classroom challenge perhaps even more salient for teachers in a psychology department is the rising rates of mental illness on college campuses (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2009). In our teacher training programing, each year we update the campus resources available to all instructors regarding what to do for students expressing or manifesting distress. We also, as will be described later, have established a strong relationship with administration that includes regular discussion of student concerns. And finally, rapport is a critical part of cultivating learning and satisfaction (Dukes & Victoria, 1989). We encourage our graduate instructors to thoughtfully take steps that foster rapport such as meeting outside of class (yes, office hours are still essential), leading “safe” discussions on sensitive and timely issues, and being aware of campus culture and student life in order to convey interest and awareness of the overall environment. At our training events, we try to expose instructors to exceptional faculty members to glean how they establish rapport both as a didactic exercise and also by example.

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Note: **Rachel A. Annunziato, PhD**, is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Fordham, and director of the Department of Psychology Teacher Training Program.

3. Internal resources for student teachers

Sarah Duncan

“How can teacher training programs cultivate and disseminate meaningful internal resources for their student teachers?”

The answer to this question is central to the role of teacher training programs. Campus-wide and department-specific resources facilitate teaching assistants' (TAs) transition from student to teacher and serve as guides throughout their teaching careers. Having access to and an understanding of the resources available on their campus is critical to their development as effective teachers.

The first steps in cultivating campus-wide resources for TAs are identifying and networking with organizations relevant to teaching across campus. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the university's Office of Disability Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, the Dean's Office, Media Services, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Office of the Title IX Coordinator. One way to build relationships with such organizations is to invite representatives from their offices to speak in-person with TAs. Such invitations demonstrate the value the teacher training program places on these organizations and also encourage TAs to feel more comfortable interacting directly with them. Additionally, these organizations may be able to provide the department with resources such as quick reference guides for easy access to information relevant to TAs' experiences.

Campus-wide resources can also be supplemented with documentation at the department level. Such documentation includes teacher training manuals, standardized observations forms, and teaching checklists. Teacher training manuals convey department expectations for TAs and may include an outline of the teacher training program philosophy, guidelines for supervision with faculty and for evaluation of teaching performance, key information to include in syllabi, and quick links to resources for students and faculty throughout campus. Teacher training manuals are also a platform for describing training and teaching opportunities for TAs throughout the university; raising awareness of such opportunities encourages TAs to consider their progression through the program and their opportunities for growth.

Standardized observation forms facilitate supervisors' evaluation of student teaching performance. These observations may be completed around mid-term so that TAs have the opportunity to improve upon their teaching during the remainder of the semester. These forms can assess teaching performance through checklists – to ensure TAs are covering the appropriate topics and engaging in productive teaching behaviors – and open-ended items for more individualized feedback. Examples of content areas that may be covered in observation forms include lab management (does the TA demonstrate time management and guide class discussion?), presentation (are visual aids used appropriately?), instructor-student rapport (does the TA call on students by name and respond effectively to student confusion?), and suggestions for improvement. Additionally, TAs may be provided with blank versions of these forms at the beginning of the semester to encourage reflection on their own teaching before the formal evaluation.

Teaching checklists outline a timeline of important teaching milestones for TAs to stay organized throughout the semester. These milestones include the deadline for syllabus approval prior to the start of the semester, a schedule for meetings between the TA and the course instructor/supervisor, a timeframe for scheduling mid-semester feedback sessions, and the

deadline for the submission of midterm and final grades. New TAs may particularly benefit from a checklist because they have not yet completed a full teaching cycle. However, these checklists are also helpful for experienced TAs because deadlines change from semester to semester.

Once these campus-wide and internal resources have been developed, they must then be effectively disseminated to student teachers. One avenue for introducing TAs to the resources that are available to them is through teacher training workshops at the beginning of each semester. During these workshops, TAs may be guided through the steps for accessing relevant resources and instructed on how to use them. Learning management platforms, such as Blackboard, provide a central location for storing and sharing these resources. Within Blackboard, folders can be created for essential teaching information, campus resources, workshop slides, useful readings, and sample syllabi. Additionally, students may be directed toward university-sponsored, campus-wide presentations about offices relevant to teaching. Finally, designating a point-person in the teacher training program to address questions about available resources may help to ensure TAs are taking advantage of these resources.

In conclusion, networking with organizations throughout the university provides TAs with access to accurate and comprehensive resources available to them on campus. Developing internal documentation specific to the needs of TAs in the department helps them to be organized and conveys information about expectations for them as teachers. Information about these resources should be formally conveyed to TAs early in their teaching careers, and they should be reminded about available resources often. Finally, keeping materials about campus-wide and internal resources up-to-date is an important part of encouraging TAs to regularly consult these resources as part of their teaching.

Note: *Sarah Duncan, M.A., is a doctoral student in Fordham University's Clinical Psychology Program and is the graduate assistant for the Psychology department's Teaching Training Program.*

4. Ethical Responsibilities for Graduate Student Instructors **Adam Fried**

Ethics training represents a core component of the Fordham TA training program, reflecting our commitment to provide ethics education for students in all professional psychology roles they may assume. The overall goal of the ethics training is to provide graduate instructors with the ethical tools and resources needed to be effective teachers and to address complex dilemmas faced by graduate instructors and all faculty. The training presents relevant departmental and university policies and procedures and key ethical standards from the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2010).

Key Ethical Standards

Competence. Research (e.g., Branstetter & Handelsman, 2000) suggests that graduate instructors may be particularly susceptible to teaching material not mastered or without adequate preparation. Ethical standards require instructors to possess or gain competence in the

material and methods in which they are teaching. It's important to remember that many graduate instructors may have little to no previous experience or training in teaching but are asked to independently teach courses, construct exams, and hold office hours.

Accuracy in Teaching. Faculty must ensure that their syllabi accurately reflects course content and adequately provide the basis for evaluating progress. For example, graduate instructors contemplating changes to a syllabus must ensure that students are made aware in a timely fashion and that these changes do not radically change the nature of expectations regarding the course. Too often, important policy questions, such how to handle missed classes and late assignments, are not considered until after the class is underway, resulting in confusion and possible complaints by students. Graduate instructors and their supervisors are encouraged to proactively think through policies and procedures and to include them in their syllabi.

Student Disclosures. Although psychology course material may lend itself to personal exploration among students, graduate instructors are cautioned against soliciting personal information from students (such as personal therapy or mental health history) in assignments or class exercises. Graduate instructors should also understand how to respond to observed or communicated concerns about a student's physical or mental health. The training explores our obligations to intervene, methods of maintaining appropriate boundaries, and strategies of providing referrals and resources without establishing a therapeutic relationship.

Boundaries and Multiple Relationships. Questions about maintaining appropriate boundaries can be some of the most challenging issues that graduate instructors encounter. Many situations may represent a gray area, for which there may or may not be an immediate or definitive solution, requiring careful thought and consideration. Some examples include: (1) attempts by students to establish personal relationships with instructors, such as invitations to interact socially, requesting a social media relationship (such as through Facebook), or regularly attending office hours to discuss personal issues (2) instructors frequently discussing personal issues that are not related to class or being asked for or offering personal advice to students; or (3) a former client from the counseling center enrolled in a graduate instructor's class (Dallesasse, 2010). The training provides information about identifying potentially dangerous boundary crossings and criteria (such as those offered by Youngreen & Gottlieb, 2004) to evaluate the ethics of multiple relationships.

General Recommendations

We conclude trainings with some general recommendations:

1. Recognize and appreciate instructor responsibilities. Graduate education represents a developmental process of transforming students into professionals. Graduate students may see themselves as being "in between" positions of being students while holding professional responsibilities. Responsible instruction requires an appreciation of ethical responsibilities in terms of accuracy in teaching, competence with respect to the material, and fairness in grading and evaluation. Instructors are also responsible for creating an inclusive and welcoming classroom environments that respect value student diversity. For example, trainings provide strategies and resources for ways to create an LGBTQ inclusive classroom (see www.fordham.edu/lgbtresources).

2. *Use ethical decision-making models.* Graduate instructors, like professional psychologists, are encouraged to use ethical-decision-making models, such as those offered by Fisher (in press) to address ethical dilemmas. Instructors should be able to demonstrate that they have appropriately considered all aspects of the ethical dilemma, including antecedents, alternative solutions, consultations, appropriate implementation of solutions, and continued monitoring. The training also emphasizes that appropriate documentation and consultation with colleagues, supervisors and other professionals are key ethical tools used by responsible psychologists.

3. *Recognize power differentials and student vulnerabilities.* Some students may use assignments, class discussions or office hours to disclose serious emotional, legal or other problems that may require intervention. Graduate instructors, while not specifically soliciting such information, must remain alert and prepared for how to address situations with vulnerable students. For example, we encourage graduate instructors to be aware of campus resources and policies as well as general intervention recommendations for responding to students in distress (available at <http://www.fordham.edu/studentdistressresources>). On a related note, we encourage graduate instructors to recognize the grading and other power they hold over students and the ways in which seemingly harmless requests, such as asking students to serve as subjects in their research studies, may place them in a difficult position and violate our ethical commitments.

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Note: **Adam Fried, PhD**, is Assistant Director of the Fordham University Center for Ethics Education and lecturer in the Department of Psychology.

5. External resources for student teachers

Harold Takooshian

"What resources are available to students as they begin their teaching career?"

Fortunately, there is much good news to answer this question: (1) Some of the most legendary classroom teachers of the last century are psychologists--Philip G. Zimbardo, David G. Myers, Wilbert J. McKeachie, Charles L. Brewer, Ludy T. Benjamin, Drew C.

Appleby. (2) Most of these master teachers have written on the art and science of teaching, to benefit their fellow teachers. Wilbert McKeachie's book on "Teaching Tips" is now in its fourteenth edition (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2014). The American Psychological Association (APA) has published several practical volumes on teaching (Forsyth, 2016), including five volumes with over 300 classroom lab exercises developed by master teachers (Benjamin, 2008). The Association for Psychological Science (APS) has also published many articles by David G. Myers, and a three-volume series of "Lessons Learned," where master teachers offer over 80 practical chapters on specific topics on course preparation, delivery, and assessment. Also on-line is a free 94-page volume on how to teach the Introductory Psychology course for the first time. [1]

Sadly, there is bad news here as well. Student teachers are largely unaware of this trove of helpful resources as they begin their transition. In 2015, when 55 student teachers were asked to raise their hand at a teacher training workshop, only four (2%) were already involved with APA, only four (2%) were involved with APS, and zero were involved with the APA Society for Teaching of Psychology (STP). This underscores the value of teacher training, to jump-start students teaching careers.

Eight of these resources are listed in Table 1, below. (1) STP welcomes students to join, and offers a practical website. (2,3) The STP Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP) offers many invaluable resources, including a repository of peer-reviewed syllabi for a wide array of college courses. (4) APA offers PSYCHE (Psychology Speakers You Can Hear Easily)--a national network of over 220 experts within APA (including six APA past-Presidents) who are prepared to speak to local campus and community groups. (5,6) APS offers websites specifically geared for psychology teachers as well as students. (7) Rate My Professor offers anonymous, standardized feedback to U.S. classroom teachers, which is invaluable even for schools that lack course/teach evaluation system. (8) Finally, the Graduate Student Teacher Association (GSTA) is a subdivision of STP which involves graduate students charged with teaching undergraduates.

How sad, if not tragic, if students begin their teaching career without knowing of these resources. Of course, a key value of a student teacher training program is to familiarize students early with these extensive resources available to them as they transition from student to teacher.

Table 1. Seven useful resources for new student teachers

STP:	http://teachpsych.org/
OTRP:	http://teachpsych.org/otrp/index.php
OTRP syllabi:	http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php
PSYCHE speakers:	www.apadivisions.org/division-1/news-events/speakers/index.aspx
APS teachers:	www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/members/teaching
APS students:	www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/members/apssc
Rate My Prof:	www.ratemyprofessors.com/
Grad student teachers:	http://teachpsych.org/gsta/index.php

Note

1. <http://teachpsych.org/Resources/Documents/ebooks/STPIntroPsychPrimer2.pdf>

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Note: **Harold Takooshian, PhD**, is Professor of Psychology at Fordham, and co-founder of the APA national network of PSYCHE (Psychologist Speakers You Can Hear Easily).

6. Students as Research Assistants: Learning from the Research Process

Marisa T. Cohen

Research opportunities are valuable for undergraduate students in that they offer the ability to develop the skills necessary for continued learning and practice in their discipline. Research opportunities have been shown to assist with the pursuit of graduate work and successfully securing employment opportunities (Regeth, 2001, as cited in Cooley, Garcia, & Hughes, 2009). Conducting research during the undergraduate years also enables students to learn about the research process and develop their areas of interest (Crowe, 2006). Engaging in research introduces students "...to the complex questions and problems that prevail in a given subject and increases the contact time between teachers and students" (Gorzycki, n.d., para. 1). This can further assist them in deciding what they want/do not want to pursue for their graduate work.

In order to effectively design an experiment, students must be able to envision research from a variety of methodological perspectives. By forming and developing hypotheses, and collecting and analyzing data, they sharpen their inductive and deductive reasoning abilities. Finally, by disseminating their research at local and regional conferences, they advance their presentation skills.

Working with undergraduate students, not only serves to improve the students' research abilities, but can be beneficial for professors as well. Collaborating with students can help professors conduct additional research in their area of interest (Regeth, 2001, as cited in Cooley et al., 2008). The process of working with, and developing a project with students, also provides a means for understanding and assessing the skills of the students. This also enables the students and teachers to build a more meaningful relationship outside of the classroom, and create a mentor/mentee bond.

I have been working with undergraduates through the Self-Awareness and Bonding Lab (SABL) at St. Francis College (www.sfc.edu/sabl). My colleague, Dr. Karen Wilson and I co-founded the lab in Fall 2014. While we have been active for quite some time, the lab recently received a bit of media attention and had its official launch on February 12, 2016. The research conducted through SABL centers on the subfields of social psychology and relationship science. The majority of the research focuses on how social relationships impact the resulting growth and development of the individual. Other lines of research focus on the development of relationships throughout the life span, including factors influencing mate choice, fidelity, and peoples' perceptions of what makes relationships survive and thrive.

The unique aspect of this lab is that it is student centered. Students approach the professors with their research interests, and together, we work to develop a study. Typically, students create their research ideas through exposure to relationship science topics in the media, or as a result of taking my "Attachment and Attraction" seminar course. All of the current Research Assistants are conducting their studies without receiving credit or pay, so their desire to explore this field is intrinsic. As a result, two of our current Research Assistants are graduates of St. Francis and are still active contributors to the lab.

Our Research Assistants have presented at several local conferences, such as the Hunter College Psychology Conference, Pace University Psychology Conference, and the 27th Annual Greater New York Conference on Behavioral Research. Through these experiences, they were able to share their work with the larger research community, as well as learn from others in the field. It has been an invaluable experience, one that we hope to offer other undergraduates in the future.

Note: Marisa T. Cohen, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at St. Francis College and the co-founder of the Self-Awareness and Bonding Lab (SABL). Her research focuses on peoples' perceptions of love and infidelity. Dr. Cohen is an active contributor to *ScienceofRelationships.com* and often presents guest lectures on her relationship science research and its application to everyday life.

7. Liaising with administration

Michael Rametta

As the newest members of an institution's teaching staff, graduate students serving as teaching assistants or fellows will quickly learn that educating students effectively entails much more than mere instruction. Outside of their classroom skills training and syllabus development, graduate student instructors must learn to interact effectively with academic administrators when students appear to be experiencing difficulty in their classes.

In approaching relationships with academic dean's offices, it is important to keep in mind the following crucial questions: (1) As an instructor, when should I contact my dean's office?; (2) How can I work with my dean's office to intervene effectively in student concern cases?; (3) What are some best practices for framing academic integrity and dealing with violations? This article covers key factors to consider as new teachers address these questions.

The Dean's Office at Fordham College at Rose Hill encounters examples of both overprotective and "under" protective teaching styles, in both new and veteran faculty alike. Both styles are problematic, albeit for different reasons.

An overprotective instructor may, for example, e-mail the Dean's Office concerned that a student earned a C on her first quiz and arrived 15 minutes late to class one week. Although the academic deans take all concerns seriously, not all minor concerns like these need to be brought to the attention of the administration.

By contrast, an "under" protective instructor might report to a class dean a student who has not only missed class for 5 weeks, but who has also not handed in any written work, and who remains unresponsive to e-mail communications. Clearly, such a concerning case should have been brought to a dean's attention before 5 weeks of incurred student absences.

For new instructors, developing personal judgment and discretion to assess exactly when a situation warrants outside help is an essential part of becoming an educator in a higher education setting. Some situations, such as troubling student comments in writing, bizarre classroom comportment, or disclosures of sexual misconduct, should be reported immediately not only to the dean's office but also (per institution policy) to the relevant Title IX/Student Affairs office.

After identifying that administrative intervention is needed for a student concern case, new instructors need to work productively with the relevant dean's office to do so. Especially in psychology departments, graduate student instructors may feel uneasy when dealing with cases that primarily concern student mental health. Psychology graduate student instructors must be aware of the possible and problematic student perception that by disclosing sensitive information to an instructor, the instructor thus serves in a confidential therapeutic role. Moreover, struggling students could also perceive active intervention of any nature by a psychology graduate student instructor as a form of therapy. New instructors should, therefore, carefully read and understand the APA Ethics Code's Standard 3.05 (Multiple Relationships).

Above all, it is best to refer student mental health concerns to the dean's office or campus counseling center. Tactful inquiries after class or by e-mail, framed in the language of concern—not surveillance—can greatly improve student outcomes and help new instructors ethically fulfill their distinct pedagogical duties to students.

Another common set of new instructor inquiries to the Dean's Office at Fordham concerns academic integrity and violations thereof. At Fordham, the relevant Class Dean meets with students in every documented academic integrity violation case. All incoming students also take an online academic integrity tutorial, administered by the Dean's Office, during the first weeks of class.

First offenses of plagiarism, which are usually the result of careless or rushed work, and not deliberate deception, are often best addressed through a pedagogical, not punitive, approach. Such offenses merit a zero on the assignment in question, a sanction that is sufficient to deter violations without excessive harshness. Proactive and constructive intervention, which could include using class time to discuss academic integrity and specific citation expectations, leads to more opportunities to correct mistakes and minimize violations. All academic integrity

violations should be reported to the administration, per relevant institution policy. Instructors should exercise their discretion as to what qualifies as a true violation (versus simply poor work), and senior faculty can be an excellent resource in developing such judgment.

The stakes are significant for graduate student instructors approaching their first classes. Students know when instructors are disengaged with them, and will then disengage with the class. One way to promote success in the classroom is to seek out opportunities to assist faculty who serve as faculty advisors. Mentoring undergraduate research provides a similar experience. Most importantly, new instructors should never feel that they are “annoying” administrators or senior faculty when contacting them for guidance. The willingness and ability to do so competently helps students feel appreciated as people of worth and integrity. They will get more out of the material, and will become more excited to learn.

Note: *Michael Rametta, M.A., is Assistant to the Freshman Dean at Fordham College at Rose Hill (Bronx, NY).*

8. Improving the Experience of Moving from Student to Teacher **Natasha Chaku**

My name is Natasha Chaku. I'm a first year grad student with the Applied Developmental Psychology program at Fordham University. Today, I'm going to briefly talk about how we can improve the experience of moving from student to teacher. I believe that there are many benefits for graduate students that learn to teach university-level courses early on in their academic career. They acquire better reading and writing skills; communication skills and organizational skills. They learn the importance of balancing both academic and research pursuits with the other requirements of their job. However, I also believe that teaching is a skill that must be honed over time and with practice. The best teachers make teaching look easy and natural. Veteran teachers such as those you've been listening to become great teachers as they learn over time how to explain concepts, talk to students and manage their time in and out of the classroom. Most grad students, on the other hand, teach or TA a class their first semester with little to no prior instruction or training and must learn to teach as they go. Though graduate students were and still are students and have attended many, many classes themselves, they have little experience actually thinking about pedagogy or classroom management. Eventually, most graduate students go on to become fantastic instructors in their own right, but in the short term, inadequate preparation and minimal training can result in poor teaching, confused undergraduates and frustrated grad students. If teaching is to remain a vital and important part of our profession, we have to smooth out the experience of moving from student to teacher.

Luckily, I believe that many of the right ways to help students become teachers at the university-level are the same as the practices used to help student-teachers transition into high school, middle school, and grade-school classrooms. As much of this work has been done for us by our colleagues working in education and pre-service training programs, we should look to them for inspiration. The best education programs in the country often have student-teacher programs where teachers are required to learn about the pedagogy of teaching; take classes on the content of their courses; learn about the professional requirements of their field; learn

classroom and time management techniques; and participate in a practicum where they work with a veteran teacher in their classroom first as an observer, then as an aide and finally, as the lead teacher.

Fordham does a great job of emulating this sort of gradual release into the classroom. At the beginning of each semester, the Psychology department hosts teacher trainings that are a requirement for all graduate students and are often attended by many faculty members. In order to feel successful and invested in their courses, graduate students should know why they are teaching and what their goals are. Teacher training is an important time to introduce new graduate students to the policies, procedures, and requirements of teaching psychology. It is also an important place for both new graduate students, returning graduate students and faculty members to gather as educators and discuss serious issues arising in classrooms, on campus, and in the world. The decisions and conversations that arise from teacher training and professional development sessions set the tone for the rest of the semester.

New graduate students also have the opportunity to meet with others who are teaching the same class during teacher training. Like teachers in high schools and middle schools, many graduate students at Fordham teach or TA the same class multiple times so after the first time, they are intimately familiar with the course and content and can serve as a resource for new students. I was lucky enough to receive materials and helpful instructions from previous graduate students who had already taught my course. Fordham does a great job of collecting, organizing and distributing the materials used in previous courses to graduate students. As material creation is one of the most time consuming parts of teaching, lessening this load for new graduate students is essential. It gives new graduate students more time to practice delivering content, grade or have conversations with students.

The most successful new teachers in high schools and middle schools are paired with a veteran teacher either as a mentor or as a supervisor. New teachers can learn teaching techniques, content, or classroom management techniques from veteran teachers. New teachers are often given feedback on what they're doing well and what they could improve. Veteran teachers often serve as a sounding board for new teachers and provide much needed social and emotional support. This sort of mentorship has proved immensely helpful for new teachers. Similarly, at Fordham, new graduate students are paired with faculty members that serve as their supervisors. Therefore, each graduate student has a faculty mentor that can discuss students, grading and other course considerations with them during regular meetings. As most graduate students start by teaching the lab portion of a professor's class, they are never truly teaching alone. They are working in concert with a senior colleague who helps legitimize them in front of their first undergraduate class; can guide them to resources on different psychological topics and can suggest different ways of presenting the information. This faculty mentor also observes at least one class to provide graduate students with specific feedback to ensure high quality teaching persists at all levels. The relationships formed between graduate students and their teaching mentors are often fruitful, guarantee good teaching, and continue past the initial teaching assignment.

We continue and will continue to have discussions at Fordham about improving our program and our graduate students' experience of moving from student to teacher. For example, our students are young adults not children and graduate students are often young themselves. Though graduate students may make better connections with undergraduates because of this, special thought should be given how to draw a firm line between undergraduate students and their graduate instructors. Second, more than ever, many of our

students are English language learners. Though in high, middle, and elementary schools, teachers get special certifications and training to help those students and sometimes those students are placed in separate classrooms, this is not the case in college. Graduate students must be trained on how to sensitively help those students while keeping their standards high. Third, we must continue to think of ways to ease the transition from student to teacher by incorporating more time for graduate students to observe veteran teachers and giving graduate students more space inside the classroom to lead small group discussions or presentations under the guidance of the professor. Finally, graduate students rely primarily on the lecture format. As psychologists we should value hands-on, active learning and interactive classrooms that promote critical thinking and deeper processing. We should be encouraging new graduate students to include more written assignments, experiments, discussion and research practices in their classes. More work and training must be done to help graduate students incorporate these practices into their teaching.

Many universities such as Fordham already have robust teacher training workshops for new graduate students in place and we can only improve the process from here. Making sure all of our graduate students' transition smoothly from student to teacher is vital and important part of ensuring the quality teaching of psychology and creating great future researchers and educators.

Note: *Natasha Chaku, MA*, is a first-year doctoral student in psychology at Fordham University, and Teaching Assistant for the Foundations of Psychology course.



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