

## **Chapter Four**

### **Ongoing GSI Development**

In a GSI development program, it is important to think about the needs of GSIs at all levels of experience. While earlier chapters addressed training of new GSIs, this chapter focuses on program development for experienced GSIs. As discussed in Chapter One, many GSIs will develop new concerns as they develop experience, such as:

- Enhancing teaching skills further to better meet student learning needs
- Mentoring others on teaching-related issues
- Developing skills and credentials for faculty or professional roles after degree completion

At the beginning of their career, GSIs may be at the senior learner stage, more concerned with their image in front of the classroom than with student learning. As they progress towards being junior colleagues, GSIs learn the skills to teach their students and can also serve as mentors and advisors for new GSIs. Looking beyond the GSI role, graduate students begin to think about future roles and the types of professional development and documentation that will enhance their employability.

#### **Enhancing teaching skills**

Once GSIs have moved past their first semester of teaching at U-M, many are interested in continuing to enhance their teaching. CRLT workshops can be one valuable resource for experienced GSIs because they cover topics such as using technology in the classroom, multicultural classroom facilitation, and using groups. (See [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/gsi\\_seminars.html](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/gsi_seminars.html) for a schedule.) Some departments also sponsor one or two workshops per term, which bring together new and experienced GSIs to discuss pedagogy in the discipline. These gatherings can be useful to develop mentoring relationships, share ideas, and create a culture of teaching in the department. Figure 4.1 shows an example of a spring teaching workshop in the Department of English Language and Literature. Covering topics such as syllabus construction, it brings together new, experienced, and prospective GSIs (i.e., GSIs who plan to teach in the upcoming term).

CRLT also can offer customized workshops and seminars for departments, which can be more tailored to particular disciplinary styles of student work and teaching. Recent examples include workshops on academic integrity, student presentations, evaluating student writing and working with groups. To arrange a customized workshop, please contact CRLT at [crlt@umich.edu](mailto:crlt@umich.edu) or 734-764-0505.

**Figure 4.1: Department of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan**  
*Spring Teaching Workshop*  
*for*  
*Fall 2007-Winter 2008 Instructors*

\*Bagels and coffee will be provided each morning, starting at 9:30 a.m. Lunch is on your own!\*

Wednesday, April 25

**10:10-10:30 Workshop Introduction and Overview with Anne Curzan**

**10:40-12:00 Purposes and Goals of English 125 at UM**

Facilitators: Anne Curzan & Caroline Eisner

**1:10-2:00 Tips on Writing and Planning a Syllabus**

Facilitators: Jeremy Chamberlin, Jim Beitler, Kelly Sassi

**2:10-3:00 Introduction to Teaching Creative Writing**

Facilitators: Mike Bunn, Jennifer Metsker, Geoff Bankowski

Thursday, April 26

**10:10-11:00 What to Expect from First-Year Writers**

Facilitators: Ben Gunsberg & Paul Feigenbaum

**11:10-12:00 Designing and Writing Essay Assignments**

Facilitators: Mark Koch, Paul Barron, Natalie Bakopoulos

**1:10-1:40 Overview of FSYS Resources, Q&A with Bonnie Campbell & Lori Scott**

**1:40-2:00 Pausing for Questions with Staci Shultz**

**2:10-3:00 Choosing Textbooks & Using CTools**

Facilitators: Aaron McCollough & Dan Mrozowski

**Please note:**

- This workshop does **not** replace the mandatory teaching workshop in August.
- Please RSVP to Staci Shultz at [shultzst@umich.edu](mailto:shultzst@umich.edu) if you plan to attend.
- New as well as experienced instructors are welcome to participate.

## Experienced GSIs as Mentors

Advanced GSIs can be invaluable partners for GSI development programs and course management. Experienced GSIs may wish to take on a mentorship role because this supervisory experience can be useful to their professional development. (For more on Graduate Student Mentors, or GSMs, please see Chapter One.) Departments can use experienced GSIs as mentors for new GSIs and other graduate students in a number of ways, such as the following:

- Utilizing GSMs to:
  - conduct early feedback sessions;
  - work intensively with GSIs who need extra assistance;
  - offer pedagogical workshops for GSIs;
  - plan teaching circles, where GSIs can informally discuss teaching or readings on pedagogy
- Letting more advanced GSIs take the lead at a course's team meetings.
- Assigning new GSIs to experienced GSIs for observation of more experienced colleagues' classrooms or ongoing mentorship.

CRLT also offers a number of opportunities for GSIs to gain additional mentorship experience. CRLT Graduate Teaching Consultants (GTCs) are a group of about ten experienced GSIs who are carefully selected and trained to conduct midterm student feedbacks and observations across the U-M campus. GTCs also participate in a year-long teaching circle. Engineering Teaching Consultants (ETCs) perform a similar role for the College of Engineering. For both programs, calls for applications are sent out in early spring. (See <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/gtc.html> for more information about GTCs and <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/egsm.html> for more information about ETCs). In addition to these programs, CRLT also offers opportunities to facilitate GSI Orientation workshops and practice teaching sessions. (Contact [crlt@umich.edu](mailto:crlt@umich.edu) for more information about these opportunities.)

In addition to serving as resources for other GSIs, experienced instructors also may find fulfilling experiences in mentoring undergraduates. In many departments, student retention, especially of underrepresented minorities, is a concern, and experienced GSIs often can play a valuable role in mentoring undergraduates. For example, in the Psychology Department, experienced graduate students established a mentorship program for undergraduates, the Michigan Association of Psychology Scholars (MAPS Program). Graduate student volunteers pair up with 1-3 undergraduates to help the mentee find research opportunities, navigate the department, and gain additional support. In turn the GSI gains experience in mentoring, which can be both personally fulfilling and valuable background for the academic job search. Figure 4.2 illustrates a training workshop for mentors in the MAPS program.

**Figure 4.2: MAPS Program, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan**  
*(The MAPS program was developed by Jennifer Yim, Annemarie Hindman, and Marisela Huerta. This workshop was developed by Mary Wright, CRLT in collaboration with these graduate students.)*

### MAPS Training Workshop

As people come in (hour to 10 after)	<p><i>Enter and get food.</i></p> <p>Facilitator: As people come in, they start a minute paper: “Think about an effective mentor you have had (or would like to have). What makes him or her effective?”</p>
5 MIN	<p><i>Introductions, Agenda</i></p> <p>Basic introduction to the MAPS program: Why was it formed? Who does it involve?</p> <p>Facilitator goes over agenda for the event.</p>
15 MIN	<p><i>Topic of this portion: What is a mentor?</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Ask participants to sharing of minute paper with partner. What similarities do you see? Differences?</p> <p>Listing and discussion of themes.</p> <p>Wrap up –</p> <p>(1) “mentorship philosophy” – Because mentoring expectations differ, it’s useful to think about and discuss expectations for the mentorship relationship.</p> <p>(2) (segue) identify task orientation as one key characteristic of effective mentorship relationships.</p>
25 MIN	<p><i>Topic: Effective mentorships have a flexible structure</i></p> <p>Discuss goals of the MAPS program, Q&amp;A from participants.</p> <p>With a worksheet menu, develop a mentorship plan for the upcoming term (e.g., introductory activities, research skills, etc.). Discuss.</p>
20-30 MIN	<p><i>Topic: Cultivating an effective relationship with your mentee</i></p> <p>Facilitator: Divide up the group into three with each group having a MAPS organizer. Assign one case study to each group. Small group discussion, followed by large-group discussion.</p>
5 MIN	Evaluation

## MENTORING CASE STUDIES

### Case Study #1: Time

“I’m currently mentoring a junior. We meet every month, but she bombards me with several emails every week. Sometimes she even seeks me out in the department, even if it means interrupting my work or a meeting that I’m having with someone else. The strange thing is that she often asks about things that we’ve already talked about. I want to be supportive, but this is becoming extremely frustrating!”

- a. What should the mentor do now?
- b. What could the mentor have done to prevent the situation?

### Case Study #2: Identity

“Last fall, I worked with a fantastic undergraduate mentee. She was very intelligent and even helped me do some bibliographic research for my dissertation proposal. I think that she had a positive mentorship experience, but there are still a few questions that linger in my mind. This mentee was an African-American woman from a small town. I always wondered how she felt on a big campus. I also wondered how she felt about the fact that I am not African-American. I wanted to ask her how she felt, but I worried that it might be insensitive or politically incorrect to do so, and she never brought it up. I still wonder how those feelings may have affected her experience.”

- a. Should the mentor have done anything differently? If so, what?

### Case Study #3: Mentee or no mentee?

“Last month, I met with my mentee at Espresso Royale. The meeting seemed to go well, we exchanged emails and phone numbers, and we made plans to meet again to talk about his courses and maybe set up a tour of my lab. This month, I emailed him twice, but he never replied back to me. I feel guilty, because I wonder what’s going on with him, but I don’t know how much to ‘pester’ him about meeting again.”

- a. What should the mentor do now?
- b. Could the mentor have done anything to prevent the situation? If so, what?

Case studies #1 and #2 adapted from: Handelsman, J., Pfund, C., Lauffer, S.M., & Pribbenow, C. (2005). *Entering mentoring*. Madison, WI: The Wisconsin Program for Scientific Teaching.

**After the Degree: Preparing Future Faculty**

Efforts to assist graduate students with their academic job searches and in their transition to faculty jobs are often called Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) initiatives. PFF resources are one valuable service that departments can offer experienced GSIs. Activities might include mock job interviews, practice job talks, help writing teaching or research statements, and assistance developing sample syllabi. In departments where many of the students will be considering non-academic positions, it is also helpful to think about how teaching skills transfer to the workplace (e.g., giving presentations is a skill useful for both settings), or in parallel, about constructing Preparing Future Professionals workshops. (Preparing Future Professionals initiatives focus on assisting graduate students with the transition to non-academic jobs, such as positions in industry and government.)

Many academic job searches require some demonstration of teaching effectiveness, whether through a teaching philosophy, submission of student ratings, teaching demonstration, or other means (Meizlish & Kaplan, in press). Figure 4.3, from the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, offers a sample list of possible activities for graduate students to develop instructional skills and documentation.

**Figure 4.3: Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures,  
University of Michigan**

*Building Teaching Credentials for the Job Market*

Obviously, the most important thing for you to do in this respect is to teach your sections consistently well. What follows is intended solely to make you aware of some other possibilities, and not to make you feel bad if you find you don't have time to try these things:

- \* Become a Graduate Student Mentor (GSM) (mentoring incoming GSIs)
- \* Become a Resident Advisor at the Max Kade German Residence
- \* Teach abroad as part of the Lausanne exchange
- \* Teach an existing 232 section, or propose a new one
- \* Teach an intensive course (100 or 230)
- \* Guest teach in an upper level course
- \* Get involved with German Day
- \* Become involved with Kaffeestunde at the Max Kade German Residence, or one of the Stammtische in town
- \* Develop new activities and instructional materials (e.g., create online tutorials and/or exercises, teach with a video or a song, devise new in-class activities etc.)
- \* Work with the language program director to arrange collaborative activities with English classes in German-speaking countries, or other German classes in the U.S. (e.g., high schools in Michigan) or around the world.
- \* Attend workshops on pedagogy and teaching with technology given by the LRC, CRLT, and other campus units
- \* Carry out an "action research" project in your classroom, in collaboration with the Language Program Director
- \* Make a teaching portfolio (see the information on the following pages)
- \* Give talks or publish papers on pedagogy
- \* Participate in work on a new textbook (e.g., writing the workbook or test bank)
- \* Attend major conferences on language teaching, such as ACTFL or CALICO

Some additional suggestions for building credentials for the job market:

- \* Give talks or publish papers
- \* Assist with the organization of a conference
- \* Go to mock interviews

Many departments also offer workshops to assist their GSIs in creating teaching philosophies or teaching portfolios. In their survey of 457 job search committee chairs across several disciplines, Meizlish and Kaplan (in press) found that 57% of chairs reported that they requested a teaching statement at some point in the job search. These results did not differ based on institutional type, but somewhat by discipline. (Requests for teaching philosophies were most frequent in the natural sciences.) Teaching portfolios were less commonly requested, but for graduate students seeking positions in teaching oriented institutions (e.g., liberal arts colleges), they are still a valuable part of the preparation process for the job search.

In these workshops, departments can talk about what it means to write a successful teaching philosophy or create an effective teaching portfolio. Examples of “excellent” documents can be very helpful in this process, as can peer editing and critique. CRLT offers a number of resources that can assist in building such a workshop, such as:

- Occasional Papers on constructing teaching philosophies and portfolios (see <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/occasional.html>)
- Examples of teaching philosophies from U-M students (see <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpts.html>)
- A rubric for evaluating teaching philosophy statements
- Consultations on drafting or revising teaching philosophies

#### *PFF Resources Offered by CRLT*

CRLT offers a range of PFF programs and resources to support graduate students and postdocs who are in all stages of the academic job search, from contemplating a faculty position to negotiating an academic job offer. These include:

- The Preparing Future Faculty Seminar, a nationally recognized program that brings together 50 students across the U-M campus in May to discuss preparation for the academic job search, information about the U.S. system of higher education, and reflection on pedagogy. Applications are solicited in early Winter Term. This seminar is co-sponsored by CRLT and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. For more information, see [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/teaching\\_seminar.html](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/teaching_seminar.html).
- The Intercampus Mentorship Program, which pairs up U-M graduate students and faculty at several nearby colleges and universities, such as Albion College, Eastern Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, Kettering University and Oberlin College. Participants work together on brief mentorships that often involve activities such as reviewing job search materials, teaching a sample class, and talking with undergraduates. There is both a short-term mentorship option (co-sponsored by Rackham Graduate School and CRLT), involving 1-3 days of meetings or campus visits, and a Mellon Foundation long-term mentorship (3-7 days) at Oberlin and Kalamazoo Colleges. For more information, see [http://sitemaker.umich.edu/rackham-crlt/gsi\\_introduction](http://sitemaker.umich.edu/rackham-crlt/gsi_introduction).



- The University of Michigan Graduate Teacher Certificate offers U-M graduate students an opportunity to document their professional development as college-level instructors and prepare for their faculty job search by developing and refining their teaching skills and receiving recognition for their training and experience. The U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate documents a student's professional development in five focal areas: (1) orientation to college teaching and student learning; (2) exposure to new teaching strategies through seminars and courses; (3) experience as a Graduate Student Instructor; (4) mentorship on teaching with a faculty member; and (5) preparation of a teaching philosophy statement. See Figure 4.4 for further details on these areas. Participants who complete the program receive a U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate. The certificate does not appear on graduate students' official U-M transcripts, but may be included on their curriculum vitae. (Please note that a U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate Program is not a teaching license or credential for K-12 instruction from the State of Michigan.) This program is co-sponsored by CRLT and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. For more information and specific program requirements, please see [http://www.sitemaker.umich.edu/um.gtc/introduction\\_to\\_program](http://www.sitemaker.umich.edu/um.gtc/introduction_to_program).
- The PFF Conference, an annual event in the Fall Term that brings together U-M and off-campus speakers to address career issues for graduate students, including job interviewing, teaching presentations, and work/family balance. This event is co-sponsored by The Career Center and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. More information about this conference can be found at: <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/onedayPFF.html>

References:

Meizlish, D., & Kaplan, M. (in press). Valuing and evaluating teaching in academic hiring: A multi-disciplinary, cross-institutional study. *Journal of Higher Education*.

**Figure 4.4: Center for Research on Learning and Teaching  
and Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan**  
*University of Michigan Graduate Teacher Certificate*

*Documentation is required for each component.*

*Additionally, submission of an entrance and end-of-program evaluation will be required for certificate completion.*

Focal Area	U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate
<i>A. Prerequisite for program participation</i>	1. Attendance at a full Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) Orientation program <u><b>OR</b></u> 2. Documentation of least eight hours of departmentally-based GSI training or ELI 994. <i>Any Orientation/training must include practice teaching and a classroom climate session.</i>
<i>B. Learning about teaching</i>	1. Attendance at five CRLT, department or disciplinary workshops, at least one of which must focus on multicultural, inclusive teaching practices and at least one of which must focus on instructional technology <sup>1</sup> <u><b>OR</b></u> 2. Successful completion of a three-credit course on college teaching or ELI 994 (ELI 994 also satisfies Focal Area A) <sup>2</sup>
<i>C. Instructional practice</i>	1. Two terms of teaching at U-M <sup>3</sup> , as certified by a course supervisor or GSI supervisor. This teaching must include direct contact with students in a classroom, studio, lab or equivalent setting. Positions involving only grading and/or office hours will not fulfill this requirement. <u><b>AND</b></u> 2. One of the following teaching consultations: Midterm Student Feedback, classroom observation, videotaping, or written reflection (2-3 pages) on student ratings <sup>4</sup>
<i>D. Mentorship on teaching</i>	Participation as a mentee in a faculty mentorship on teaching (2-3 meetings), with a U-M faculty member or a faculty mentor elsewhere (such as through the Rackham-CRLT Mentorship Program). The mentorship must include an endeavor above and beyond preparation to teach courses to which GSIs are appointed. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) design, present, and receive feedback on a guest lecture, (2) prepare a syllabus, instructional materials or assignments for a future course, (3) conduct a research project on teaching and learning, (4) observe the mentor teach and then discuss the experience.
<i>E. Reflection on instructional practice</i>	Completion of a 2-3 page written reflection on one's teaching philosophy <sup>5</sup> .

<sup>1</sup>Workshops focusing only on basic functionality of hardware or software rather than applications for teaching and learning do not satisfy the instructional technology requirement. Participation in the Rackham-CRLT May Preparing Future Faculty Seminar may be substituted for this requirement.

<sup>2</sup>“Successful completion” is defined as a B grade or better or a “Satisfactory (S)” grade in a pass/fail course.

<sup>3</sup>Participation in the U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate Program does NOT guarantee one a GSI appointment. Graduate students who cannot complete a second term of teaching as a GSI, for whatever reason, may petition the U-M Graduate Teacher Certificate Advisory Committee (UMGraduateTeacherCertificate@umich.edu) to complete BOTH requirements B1 AND B2 in lieu of a second term of teaching.

<sup>4</sup>Consultations may be provided by a CRLT-trained consultant OR faculty OR Graduate Student Mentors in the same discipline as the GSI appointment.

<sup>5</sup>A CRLT-trained consultant will be assigned to evaluate the reflective exercises based on criteria specified by the program. If necessary, to satisfy the criteria, participants may resubmit revisions of their teaching philosophy.