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Embry, P., Scott, S., & McGuire, J. (2004). *Inclusive Teaching: A Resource Guide for Graduate Assistant Instructors*. Storrs: University of Connecticut, Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability.

Inclusive Teaching: A Resource Guide for Graduate Assistant Instructors

Welcome to Facultyware, the Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) web site.

This page is designed to help graduate teaching assistants find answers to questions that arise as they move toward the goal of teaching more inclusively.

UDI offers a new paradigm for teaching in ways that include diverse learners. Facultyware's Inclusive Teaching Assistant Resource will link you to selected resources within the Facultyware Website, related to the UDI approach to inclusion in college teaching. External links to other websites that provide helpful information for graduate teaching assistants are also included. These external links, located outside the Facultyware Website, may differ from UDI in their approach to inclusion. To avoid confusion about what is and is not UDI, all external links are identified.

Whether this is your first semester as a graduate teaching assistant, or you are a "veteran" teaching assistant who serves as a peer mentor, these resources can assist you in your development as an inclusive teacher. We encourage you to explore throughout Facultyware and to return often as the Website evolves.

What is Universal Design for Instruction (UDI)?

UDI is an approach to teaching with the purpose of including a broad range of diverse learners. Click below to learn more about UDI from Facultyware.

[LINK] [UDI Fact Sheet](#).

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Where can I find information about disabilities and their implications for college learners?

Facultyware's *An Introduction to Disabilities* is a resource for administrators, college and university faculty, graduate teaching assistants, learning specialists and disability service providers who are seeking information about various types of disabilities and their implications for teaching and learning in the college environment. Click below to access Facultyware's *An Introduction to Disabilities*.

[LINK] [Facultyware's An Introduction to Disabilities](#)

External Links to Websites outside Facultyware and the UDI paradigm.

The Website of Vanderbilt University's Center for Teaching and Learning offers a brief online guide titled *Teaching College Students with Disabilities*, located at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/cft/resources/gleanings/misc/tipsheets/studentswithdisabilities.htm>

The Website of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, offers *Disabilities Resources for Teaching Inclusively*. This document provides information about access to education for students with disabilities, information about

disabilities, and strategies for teaching students with disabilities. It is located at <http://www.umass.edu/cft/publications/pdf/Disabilities%20Handbook.pdf>

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What is the legal context for including students with disabilities in college level instruction?

Federal civil rights legislation from the last half of the twentieth century records America's determination to eliminate discrimination in our society and assure the civil rights of our citizens. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) protect the rights of individuals with disabilities who are otherwise qualified to participate in programs or activities at colleges and universities. For more information about the requirements of federal law and university supports, go to the Facultyware Resource on Legal Requirements

[LINK] [Facultyware Resource on Legal Requirements](#)

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Where can I find online resources about meeting the multicultural needs of students in college classrooms?

[External Links to Websites outside Facultyware and the UDI paradigm.](#)

The Office for Multicultural Professional Development at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis offers an extensive annotated bibliography of multicultural classroom resources online, as well as other resources to assist faculty in making their classrooms more inclusive. The Website is located at

<http://opd.iupui.edu/resourceguide/>

The Website of the University of California, Berkeley's Office of Educational Development offers several chapters from *Tools for Teaching* by Barbara Gross Davis. For an excellent resource on teaching diverse college learners, see the chapter titled *Diversity and Complexity in the Classroom: Considerations of Race, Ethnicity and Gender*, located at

<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/diversity.html>

The website of the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University offers *Tips for Teachers: Encouraging Students in a Racially Diverse Classroom*

<http://www.bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/TFTrace.html>

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What are some ways that a graduate teaching assistant can make instruction more accessible to college and university students with diverse abilities and/or cultural perspectives?

Being a graduate teaching assistant is an opportunity to share your interest and enthusiasm for your academic discipline, as well as your growing expertise in your favorite subject. Being a teaching assistant is important work. It's a big responsibility to introduce new college and university learners to the core content, terminology and favored methods of inquiry that define your discipline. After all, if you are teaching or working with an introductory level class, as many graduate teaching assistants do, your

teaching style will contribute to students' decisions about whether to continue to study in your discipline, or if they would feel more "at home" in another academic department.

Here are some Facultyware resources related to reaching a wider range of learners with a UDI approach to teaching as you introduce new learners to your discipline.

Equitable Use is one of the nine Principles of UDI

Principle 1. Equitable Use

Instruction is designed to be useful to and accessible by people with diverse abilities. Provide the same means of use for all students; identical whenever possible, equivalent when not (Scott, McGuire & Shaw, 2001)*.

To view an example of a syllabus that exemplifies the Principle of Equitable Use, click on one of the links below.

[Syllabus for a Non-majors' Biology Course, Product 0101](#)

[Syllabus for Contemporary Issues in Developmental Disabilities, Product 0107](#)

*Citation

Scott, S.S., McGuire, J. M., & Shaw, S. F. (2001) Principles of Universal Design for

Instruction ©. Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability.

For the nine Principles of UDI © on Facultyware, click the link below.

[LINK] [Principles of Universal Design for Instruction ©.](#)

[External Links to Websites outside Facultyware and the UDI paradigm.](#)

The Website of the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Teaching and Learning includes a document titled *Creating Inclusive College Classrooms*. It provides a brief introduction to variation among learners in a section titled *Assumptions About Students' Learning Behaviors and Capacities*. This document is located at

http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/P3_1.html

The Website of the Office of Instructional Consultation at the University of California, Santa Barbara includes *TAs as Teachers: A Handbook for Teaching Assistants*. This online handbook contains a chapter, *Special Teaching Topics for TAs*, which includes a chart with a spectrum of useful tips for teaching students with disabilities. This document is located at

<http://id-www.ucsb.edu/ic/ta/hdbk/ta3-4b.html>

When instructors make course materials available to students online, it is important to make the materials accessible to all students. The University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign offers a free download that will allow you to post your Power Point Slides in html format, so that they will be accessible to all students, including students who use screen readers. The download is located at:

<http://cita.rehab.uiuc.edu/software/office/overview.html>

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How can I incorporate more variety in my teaching?

As a graduate teaching assistant, you have an opportunity to teach students with varying levels of experience in the subject you are teaching and with varying levels of familiarity with the expectations of college level study in North America. Today's college and university students come from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, and also vary by gender, age, ability/disability status, learning styles, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and nationality. Diversity among students contributes to a rich learning environment where students and instructors benefit from hearing many voices. The growing diversity among college and university students has encouraged instructors to accommodate a wider range of individual abilities. The following Facultyware resources provide helpful information related to teaching in ways that allow for variation in individual abilities.

Flexibility in Use is one of the principles of UDI.

Principle 2. Flexibility in Use

Instruction is designed to accommodate a wide range of individual abilities. Provide choice in methods of use (Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2001).*

For an example of a multiple-choice exam that exemplifies the principle of equitable use, click below.

[LINK] [Multiple Choice Exam with Written Option-Product 0106](#)

For an example of Multi-Modal Multi-Intelligence Teaching Methods, click below.

[LINK] [Multi-Modal Multi-Intelligence Teaching Methods-Product 0113](#)

*Citation

Scott, S.S., McGuire, J. M., & Shaw, S. F. (2001) Principles of Universal Design for Instruction ©. Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability.

For the nine Principles of UDI © on Facultyware, click the link below.

[LINK] [Principles of Universal Design for Instruction ©](#).

External Links to Websites outside Facultyware and the UDI paradigm.

The Website of the University of Oklahoma's Instructional Development Program includes *Ideas on Teaching: Enhanced Lecture Formats*. This document offers a brief summary of research on teaching methods that expand the lecture format to create a more active learning experience for all students. This document is located at

<http://www.ou.edu/idp/tips/ideas/lecture.html>

Working In Groups: A Note to Faculty and a Quick Guide for Students is an online document available from Harvard University's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. This document offers tips for facilitating a collaborative group so that all students can participate and is located at

<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/wigintro.html>

The website of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Teaching and Learning Laboratory offers an article from the MIT Faculty Newsletter on the subject of promoting

students' "surface learning" or "deep learning" depending on the instructor's flexibility in choosing teaching strategies. The article, titled *When Students Learn*, is located at

http://web.mit.edu/tll/published/when_students_learn.htm

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How do effective college instructors build rapport in the classroom?

As a graduate teaching assistant, you are beginning the process of developing your own unique teaching style. You may already have noticed that it is easier to "reach" some students than others in your class. If so, you may be interested in learning how to develop a teaching style and a classroom "climate" that communicates to all your students, "You are welcome here and your contribution to this class is valued." The process of becoming an inclusive teacher begins when instructors acknowledge the diversity of their students. It continues as instructors look for ways of teaching that do not exclude students from opportunities to learn. The following Facultyware resources are related to creating a welcoming instructional climate that supports individual learning.

Instructional Climate is one of the principles of UDI.

Principle 9. Instructional Climate

Instruction is designed to be welcoming and inclusive. High expectations are espoused for all students (Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2001).*

For a rubric that describes and encourages appropriate class participation, click below to access Syllabus: Contemporary Issues in Developmental Disabilities (Facultyware Instructional Product 0107), and go to page 7 of the document.

[LINK] [Syllabus: Contemporary Issues in Developmental Disabilities, product 0107](#)

For an approach to teaching writing that incorporates self-identification of learning style as well as awareness of the learning styles of others, click below to access Icebreaker for a Writing Curriculum (Facultyware Instructional Product 0112).

[LINK] [Icebreaker for a Writing Curriculum, product 0112.](#)

*Citation

Scott, S.S., McGuire, J. M., & Shaw, S. F. (2001) Principles of Universal Design for Instruction ©. Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability.

For the nine Principles of UDI © on Facultyware, click the link below.

[LINK] [Principles of Universal Design for Instruction ©.](#)

External Links to websites outside Facultyware and the UDI paradigm.

Encouraging and Affirming Diverse forms of Class Participation, written by a University of California, Berkeley Graduate Student Instructor describes his approach to inclusive teaching. The essay is located at

http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/gsi/tea/essays1/TEA_Dosh.htm

The University of Washington's Center for Instructional Development and Research offers many resources on inclusive teaching, located at

<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/inclusive/>

The University of Michigan's College of Engineering has a Website for engineering educators, offering information about inclusive teaching that would be useful for instructors in many disciplines. The Website is located at

<http://www.engin.umich.edu/teaching/resources/teaching/inclusive.html>

The Website of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Carolina includes a comprehensive online book *Teaching for Inclusion: Diversity in the College Classroom*. Chapter 2, *Strategies for Inclusive Teaching*, is located at

<http://ctl.unc.edu/tfi2.html>

Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom is a guide to effective facilitation of classroom interactions when controversial topics raise strong emotions among the students. This document from the Website of Harvard University's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning is written for teachers who want to help students learn from the "hot moment" while protecting and caring for all the participants. It is located at

<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/hotmoments.html>

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How do graduate teaching assistants grow and change as they gain experience in their role as instructors?

Teaching occurs in a reciprocal relationship involving risk and change. The instructor develops a deeper understanding of the subject through identifying and communicating the underlying structure of the knowledge that is to be taught. The student constructs a new place for this knowledge among the previously learned associations that formerly defined his/her world. Communication, motivation, attention and emotion interact in the reciprocal process of teaching and learning. As both students and teachers, graduate teaching assistants participate in this activity everyday. It is safe to say that all TAs have days when they fully appreciate the complexity of learning and teaching.

Nyquist and Sprague (1998) proposed a model of graduate teaching assistant development in which graduate students grow through experience as college and university teachers, moving from senior learner to colleague-in-training to junior colleague stages of development. They described the complexity of the process of developing as a TA:

Moving through the stages of TA development is not a tidy, step-by-step process. Although there are some dramatic turning points and breakthroughs, like most of life's developmental processes, the professional growth of TAs is frequently clear only in retrospect when some sort of pattern becomes visible out of a ragged "two-step forward, one-step back process... The teaching/learning encounter is first and foremost an intense human activity. Anyone who moves into the role of teacher will make some profound personal changes. No model of stages completely captures the existential highs and lows that TAs live through. (p.78, 79)

Faculty development is a career-span process, beginning with the graduate teaching assistantship Graduate teaching assistants, new faculty and experienced faculty all continue to develop as instructors, adapting to changes in the knowledge base of their discipline, in technology, and in their experience and skill as they develop a repertoire of teaching strategies. They also develop inwardly, in response to the risk inherent in caring for others. As Palmer (1998) expressed it:

Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together... Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self knowledge-and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject. (p.2)

Teaching with the intent of including all learners goes beyond mastery of a content area to involve knowing oneself, conveying acceptance of others, and being open to teaching in more than one way. Inclusive teaching is about the journey as much as it is about the destination. As McKeachie (2002) wrote:

Skill in teaching is not something to be learned and simply repeated; what makes it exciting is that there is always room to grow. As you reflect on your classes, you will get new insights and will continue to develop both your theory of teaching and learning and your repertoire of skills and strategies. (p.xvii)

References

McKeachie, W. J. (2002). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research and theory for college and university teachers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Nyquist, J. D & Sprague, J. (1998). Thinking developmentally about TAs. In M. Marincovich, J. Prostko, & F. Stout (Eds.), *The professional development of graduate teaching assistants* (pp.61-88). Bolton, MA: Anker

Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Where can I find more resources related to TA and faculty development?

Once they were graduate students, now they are faculty members who have been recognized for their excellence in teaching. Click below to access research from the University of Connecticut's UDI Project about faculty members honored as University of Connecticut Teaching Fellows. Learn how they developed their skills and philosophies of teaching over their long careers.

[LINK] [Facultyware Tech Report 02 Addressing student diversity in the classroom: The approaches of outstanding university professors.](#)

UDI Project staff asked David A. Zera, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Psychology and Special Education at Fairfield University, "What advice would you give to new faculty?"

Click below for audio or a transcript of this dynamic young professor's response.

[LINK] [Assistant Professor David A. Zera, Ph. D. Soundbyte.](#)

[External Links to Websites outside Facultyware and the UDI paradigm.](#)

The TA role is complex and challenging. For some thoughts on how TAs manage multiple responsibilities, consult The Center for Teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst's online Teaching Assistant Handbook. Part 1 of the handbook, *Elements of the Teaching Assistant Role*, includes a section titled *The TA as Graduate Student: Balancing It All*. It is located at <http://www.umass.edu/cft/handbook/handbook.htm>

Talking things over with peers in an online forum can lead to new ideas and new contacts. These Listservs are for graduate teaching assistants. Tomorrow's Professor, a Listserv on Preparing for Academic Careers in Science and Engineering, by Richard M. Reis of Stanford University, is a resource for graduate students around the world who offer postings on topics of interest to graduate teaching assistants in any discipline. You don't have to be a Stanford student to join the listserv, which is located at <http://cis.stanford.edu/structure/tomprof/listserver.html>

The T-ASSIST Listserv, located at the University of Arizona, is an online discussion space for graduate teaching assistants worldwide. You don't have to be a University of Arizona student to participate. To subscribe, go to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.ARIZONA.EDU

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