

Chapter 1

Preparing the New Professoriate to Teach



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- Professor 1: Do you provide doctoral students in your graduate program the opportunity to teach a course as the instructor of record?
- Professor 2: Of course not. They don't yet have the terminal degree, so they're not qualified.
- Professor 1: So you think a terminal degree in your discipline is a *necessary* requirement to teach a college course in the area. Others may not agree with that view. However, *surely* you are not suggesting that the mere possession of the terminal degree is a *sufficient* qualification for teaching in your discipline.
- Professor 2: Well, I *surely* am making that claim! In my discipline, you are qualified to teach at the college level when you've earned the PhD, and not before. That's not the way it is in your discipline?

How representative is Professor 2's view? We have talked with colleagues from a broad range of fields and disciplines, and we can attest to the breadth and depth of at least the second part of Professor 2's claim—that the terminal degree is considered sufficient qualification for teaching at the college or university level (see also Howard, Buskist, & Stowell, 2007).

In fact, a respondent in a survey of department chairs and new faculty that one of us (VAB) conducted replied with a note stating that graduate students who were trained in teaching were the *least* accomplished when they taught their own courses. Although this respondent's opinion may be rarely held, preparation of doctoral students for teaching duties is often low on the priority list of graduate faculty in terms of the skill sets they wish to have their graduate students develop while earning their PhDs. Given the low priority assigned to teaching relative to research in many of the doctoral programs, we are not surprised to hear graduate students say that teaching preparation is deemphasized or even ignored in their graduate programs. As an editor noted in a comment in the American Historical Society's *Perspectives*, "Academics have long been concerned by the fact that research universities often produce topflight scholars who cannot, however, translate their scholarship into effective classroom instruction" (editor's note in Rayson, Farmer, & Frame, 1999; see also Caplinger, 2004; Utecht & Tullous, 2008).

Robert Boice (1992), in his classic *The New Faculty Member*, documented in stark terms the toll taken on many faculty during their first several years on the job, especially inexperienced faculty (those who lack teaching experience or who did not receive any sort of preparation for teaching while in graduate school). Boice examined the experiences of new tenure-track faculty members at a comprehensive public university and at a research university. He found that the first several years on the job were stressful and difficult for many of these new faculty members—not a surprising finding for those who work in academic departments. He also reported that many of the new faculty indicated that they spent large amounts of time on their teaching duties. For many of these faculty, the large time commitment to their teaching did not pay off. They often reported feeling stressed and expressed resentment toward students and senior faculty (who gave them little direction or support). End-of-semester student evaluation reports gave many of them discouraging news. Not surprisingly, these faculty worried about their teaching, but they also worried about not having sufficient time to complete their research or other scholarly work. Some of the faculty members were sure the situation would improve:

Yes, I know that you're worried about me. And I often worry, too. But I'll get to writing later, when conditions are right. I've been too busy [teaching] to do a proper job of it so far. Once I settle down to writing, I'll be able to get a lot done in a hurry. So you don't need to worry. (Boice, 1992, pp. 90–91)

Although some faculty remained optimistic that they would make progress in their research and writing, others continued to report they were worried that time was running out. As one third-year faculty member from the research

university put it, “I guess it must be obvious to you that I’m no great producer. I certainly have not spent my time the way I had planned. I really don’t understand it. I certainly didn’t expect to devote almost all of my time to teaching—I’m not even enjoying teaching” (Boice, 1992, p. 88; note that the nominal teaching load at the research university was two courses per semester).

Fortunately, many faculty members in Boice’s (1992) study were ultimately successful in setting their teaching and research on a positive trajectory. Unfortunately, the situation did not improve for some, resulting in a poor overall pre-tenure record of teaching and/or scholarship. We are not suggesting that the new faculty in Boice’s study would have had clear sailing if they had been better prepared as graduate students for their teaching duties. However, we know that very few reported any formal preparation in teaching while in graduate school (Boice, 1992, pp. 54–55). We agree with Seidel, Benassi, Richards, and Lee’s (2006) view that “being teaching-ready upon appointment [as a faculty member] . . . should decrease the likelihood that new faculty members will defer their scholarly growth until they have achieved an advanced level of teaching competence” (p. 230; see also Seidel & Caron, 2007; Silvestri, Cox, Buskist, & Keeley’s Chapter 4 of this volume).

To be sure, during the past two decades, academic leaders, representing many fields and disciplines, have recognized the need to prepare their faculty and future faculty to become effective teachers (Adams, 2002; Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, Sims, & Denecke, 2003; Pruitt-Logan, Gaff, & Jentoft, 2002). Many colleges and universities have established teaching and learning centers for the professional development of their faculty and graduate students. Likewise, many academic departments also provide some sort of preparatory or training experiences for new faculty and new graduate teaching assistants (GTAs).

However, the nature and extent of these preparatory experiences vary tremendously in their content, quality, and duration (see, e.g., Buskist, Tears, Davis, & Rodrigue, 2002). Moreover, they are often aimed at graduate student teaching assistants (see, e.g., Howard et al., 2007), not graduate student instructors of record. They range from half-day pre-semester workshops to year-long courses on the teaching of discipline-specific content. They may address a vast array of issues and topics, including course design, creating syllabi, classroom management practices, active learning techniques, lecture preparation, teaching ethically, student assessment, and course evaluation.

In *What Colleges and Universities Want in New Faculty*, Adams (2002, p. 4) offered several excellent recommendations to graduate faculty for preparing graduate students for college and university teaching:

- “Graduate programs must provide their doctoral students with a variety of teaching experiences and successively more independent teaching in order

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to prepare them for academic careers. These experiences should begin during the first year of graduate school and continue throughout graduate study.”

- “Students need to be introduced to new pedagogies, becoming involved with and knowledgeable about such areas as active learning, field-based learning, diversity, and technology.”
- “Students need more than just the experience of teaching classes. New teachers also should receive constructive feedback about their performance and participate in group discussions about creative teaching possibilities, problem solving, and advising.”

These recommendations are as timely today as when they were published a decade ago. We suggest that by implementing these and related recommendations, graduate faculty will help prepare graduate students to take on the full array of roles and responsibilities they will be expected to perform as faculty.

One purpose for creating this book is to draw more attention to the need to provide consistent and thorough training for GTAs and graduate teachers of record across disciplines. Additionally, we want to share with faculty from other fields and disciplines what has been learned in psychology regarding teaching others about effective teaching and learning. As a discipline, psychology has long been a leader in providing support and resources for teaching at the college and university level (Puente, Matthews, & Brewer, 1992). The Society for the Teaching of Psychology, founded in the mid-1940s, provides a tremendous array of resources to psychology teachers through its Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (<http://teachpsych.org/otrp/index.php>) and its various electronic publications (<http://teachpsych.org/resources/e-books/index.php>). Also, the first comprehensive approach to preparing PhD students for college and university teaching may have been implemented in the psychology department at the University of New Hampshire in the mid-1960s (Benassi & Fernald, 1993; Benassi & Fuld, 2004).

In this book, our contributors have reviewed and discussed the best practices that currently exist for preparing graduate students and new faculty to become effective in their duties as teaching assistants and in readying them to become teachers of record for undergraduate courses. Our goal was to cover the full range of topics central to developing efficacious training practices aimed at the professional development of the next generation of college and university teachers. The volume is primarily intended to be a resource for helping GTA supervisors and other faculty teach graduate students how to teach. However, for those graduate students and new faculty who do not have the opportunity to benefit from a formal GTA training

program, we are confident that they can read and benefit from the book's contents on their own.

In addition to this book (and the sources cited in Stiegler-Balfour and Overson's Chapter 23), we urge readers to consult the burgeoning array of resources that are available through reliable Internet sites. Some examples include the following:

- Training for Teaching Assistants at Duke in Mathematics (<http://www.math.duke.edu/~bookman/grstr.html>)
- The Colleges of Worcester Consortium's Certificate in College Teaching (<http://www.cowc.org/college-student-resources/certificate-college-teaching>)
- The Teaching Fellows Program at Auburn University (http://www.auburn.edu/~buskiwf/teaching_fellows.htm)
- The Academic Program in College Teaching at the University of New Hampshire (http://www.unh.edu/teaching-excellence/Academic_prog_in_coll_teach/index.html)
- The Higher Education Academy in the UK (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>)
- The Teaching Assistant Training and Teaching Opportunity (TATTO) program at the Emory University Laney Graduate School (http://www.gs.emory.edu/resources/professional.php?entity_id=20)
- Services for GTAs at the University of Washington's Center for Instructional Development and Research, one of the early leaders in preparing graduate students for teaching duties (<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/consulting/ta.html>)

Overview of This Book

Several of our chapters address topics that do not directly involve teaching but are relevant to it—working relationships between faculty and teaching assistants (Chapter 2), addressing graduate students' fears about teaching (Chapter 3), GTAs' perceived preparedness for teaching duties (Chapter 4), professional development and work–private life balance (Chapter 5), and preparing graduate students for the political nature of academic institutions (Chapter 21). We also include several chapters that focus on work that needs to be completed by graduate students as they prepare for teaching duties, especially when they are going to be the teachers of record—learning how to design a course (Chapter 7) and developing a teaching philosophy statement (Chapter 8). Of course, there are also the expected chapters that address different approaches to teaching—use of lectures (Chapter 10), active learning methods (Chapter 11), discussions (Chapter 12), and the appropriate use of technology (Chapter 18). What occurs during and outside of class time can have a large impact on whether a course is successful, and so we include

several chapters that address this general topic—building classroom rapport (Chapter 9), addressing ethical issues in teaching (Chapter 14), identifying and addressing incivility in and out of class (Chapter 15), addressing issues related to diversity in teaching (Chapter 16), and teaching controversial issues in the context of a liberal education (Chapter 17). We address the topic of assessment from three perspectives—assessment of student learning (Chapter 13), assessment of courses and their teachers by students (Chapter 19), and assessment of GTA training programs (Chapter 20). In an effort to inform GTAs and faculty who prepare GTAs about a large, and growing, body of scholarship on the science of instruction and of learning (Mayer, 2010) and its applications to teaching and learning in college and university courses, we include a chapter that describes some powerful principles that teachers can easily apply to a wide variety of teaching and learning contexts (Chapter 6). For those faculty interested in introducing undergraduates to college and university teaching, we include a chapter on teaching with undergraduate teaching assistants (Chapter 22). Finally, we include “Useful Resources for Preparing the New Professoriate” (Chapter 23).

Should All Graduate Students Receive Preparation for Their Teaching Duties?

The short answer to this question is yes (see also Adams, 2002). Putting unprepared GTAs (or new faculty who have not been prepared for teaching) in charge of a class of college students is, to us, indefensible. However, this reply is also the easy answer. It may be more constructive to consider this question in historical context. As Seidel et al. (2006, p. 226) observed,

In virtually every professional field, the development of formal academic programs to prepare individuals has followed long after the emergence of a specific profession. For instance, the practices of medicine, law, nursing, and journalism predated medical schools, law schools, colleges of nursing, and university-based journalism programs. So, too, the professoriate came into existence long before the development of formal academic programs in college teaching. As has been the case with these other professional fields, it is to be expected that the development of formal academic programs in college teaching will lead increasingly to practice expectations being based upon research and scholarship.

As evidenced by the scholarship included in this book and that is readily available in many scholarly publications, we believe that there is a strong body of knowledge on the full range of topics and issues related to teaching

and learning at the college and university level. This body of knowledge and the implications it raises for practice constitute “college teaching as a professional field of study” (Seidel et al., 2006, p. 225; see also Seidel & Caron, 2007, for an example in doctoral education in health administration).

Perhaps one reason many graduate programs do not include a systematic and thorough component on preparation of graduate students who aspire to faculty positions is that faculty and other academic leaders do not know about or perceive the value of the body of knowledge that constitutes the professional field of study in college teaching. Some faculty and administrators may also hold the view that learning to teach is done by teaching—“That’s how I did it. That’s how my advisor did it. We turned out okay.”

Today, that view simply does not wash. We started this chapter with a brief discussion of Boice’s (1992) work and the price that ill-prepared new faculty can pay. Fortunately, today we know a lot about how students learn, how teachers effectively assess what they learn, how to create engaging classroom environments that can foster student motivation and learning, and how to maximize the effectiveness of technology in teaching and learning. Although it is true that new teachers can, through trial and error, become effective instructors, it is also true—as this book will show—that preparing the future professoriate for teaching through formal academic programs in college teaching can have immediately positive and powerful effects on enhancing teaching quality and improving student learning.

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