

1) Quick Reflections

Maintain a short post-class reflection regarding what worked well, what didn't, and ideas for future improvements. By keeping an electronic or paper file of these brief reflections your next cycle of planning will be easier. As well, these reflections will be helpful to you in compiling your teaching dossier for tenure/promotion, and will help remind you of both positive outcomes and ideas to enhance your teaching.

Carol Rolheiser, Director, Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, and Professor, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE

2) Teaching AND Research

There is a temptation to see teaching and service as "university time" and research/learning as "your time." This can make you feel guilty to do research or learn new things, for fear that you're not spending enough time doing the real work of teaching and service. I found it helpful to keep in mind that the University is paying me to research and learn new things as well, which in turn enriches my teaching and keeps me up to date. Don't feel guilty to read and learn new things. It's hard to know if some new teaching innovation worked or failed, without the same kind of systematic analysis that we employ in research. I've tried a lot of different things over the years, and found it helpful to collect and carefully analyze good data about student performance, to see if my teaching innovations had the effects I intended. Getting rid of counterproductive innovations is at least as important as uncovering new, successful ones. The only way to do this well, it seems to me, is open-minded analysis of expected versus observed outcomes.

Christopher Cochrane, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts & Science

3) Keep Current

Read broadly and casually throughout the year in both the substantive and teaching-related literatures. Perusing top journals in your discipline, and top disciplinary and general teaching journals, will indicate new substantive and pedagogical developments in your discipline. Keeping notes about new content and ideas for its implementation will make course planning and revision much easier. As well, reading incrementally expands the timeframe for reflecting on both course design and the implementation of new content and approaches by allowing ideas to "sink in" over the year.

Nathan Innocente, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto Mississauga

4) Talking Too Much?

If you find yourself talking - teaching, lecturing, pontificating - for more than 15 minutes in a row, maybe it's time to stop and give your students a chance to say something either to you or to each other.

Zubin Austin, Professor, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, Academic Director, Centre for Practice Excellence

TAKE AWAY TIPS

5) Teaching Mentors

Many departments have a teaching mentorship program where new faculty members regularly meet with experienced faculty members to discuss all aspects of their teaching. If your department does not have such a mentor, ask for one. This person should be able to advise you on how to manage your preparation for teaching time, respond to students' requests, connect you to the wide array of teaching resources at the university, review your course evaluations with you, and strategize about your career development as an educator.

Marion Bogo, Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work

6) Talk It Out

We may encounter teaching related issues/concerns that we might think only happen in our classes. Talk to your colleagues -- you might find out you are not alone. By talking to them, you can get and explore different ideas on how to handle the issues/concerns more effectively, which allow you to build your own "teaching network" and make reflections on your teaching.

Iris Au, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts & Science

7) Common Email Questions and Answers

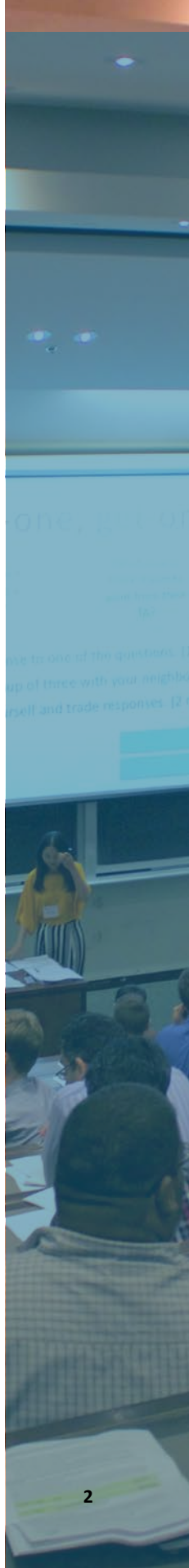
Effectively addressing emails is a valuable way of creating a positive sense of connection between students and faculty. However, if you've ever felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume of emails from students, you'll know that it can be challenging to give each reply the attention that it deserves. To help me maintain a positive sense of communication during busy times, I keep a list of my responses to common [email] questions that I can reuse and quickly personalize for each student. This process allows me to efficiently balance the amount of time I spend addressing emails, includes the relevant information that students need, and conveys the positive tone that I value in my student interactions.

Brett Beston, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto Mississauga

8) Curtail Email

Decide when to shut down your email in the evening. Feeling guilty that students may have to wait until morning for a response? Don't -- meaningful interaction with students demands focus and energy. We owe it to ourselves and our students to stay fresh.

Daniel Zingaro, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Mathematical and Computational Sciences, University of Toronto Mississauga



TAKE AWAY TIPS



9) Maintaining Balance

Setting up time, every week, for things you enjoy can help you stay sane. For example, set aside time for running, for having a proper lunch with your colleagues or protecting part of the evening or afternoon so you can spend time with your family. This may mean late nights or early mornings, but it is well worth it.

Francisco Estrada, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Arts & Science.

10) Annual Running Lists

Reading, attending seminars, teaching, and a host of other regular activities invariably spark great ideas for our courses. How can we efficiently manage this flood of ideas without becoming overwhelmed? For each course, I keep two kinds of running lists with links and a few quick thoughts (important). A short-run list mostly includes articles (ranging from academic to popular press) and topics useful for term tests, the final exam, paper assignments, weekly homework, student presentations, lectures, and so on. A long-run list is for future offerings of the course. Many ideas are unused, and a selection are rolled-over onto the next year's list, but they make creating materials and redesigning courses easier and reinforce the idea that you do not have to do it all right now.

Jennifer Murdock, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts & Science

11) Copy and Past Your Meeting Notes into Your Outlook Calendar

Keeping the meeting date and the notes together in one place, will save you significant time when filling out your PTR forms or when you are preparing your teaching dossier for tenure/promotion. Furthermore, if you are having subsequent meetings on the same topic, keeping your meeting notes organized can allow you to quickly look back on what was discussed and better prepare you for the future meeting.

Laura Taylor, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre, University of Toronto Mississauga

TAKE AWAY TIPS

12) Engage in Professional Development Activities

There are many different types of professional and teaching workshops offered throughout the year at different venues across the University of Toronto. One example is the Course Design/Re-design Institute at the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, which is extremely helpful if you are new at teaching or have to design or re-design a course. I recommend taking any workshops as early as possible, as you will find that you will understand some of your job expectations more and will thus be better prepared for new teaching and career challenges. There will be many tips and strategies you will learn about at these workshops and you will be able to identify those which work best for you in order to organize and prepare yourself for each stage of your career, be it a new course design, or preparing your promotion/tenure file. Another great aspect of all the workshops is that you also have an opportunity to make meaningful career or personal connections with faculty across the university and in disciplines other than your own.

Sanja Hinić-Frlog, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology, University of Toronto Mississauga

13) Teaching is a Team Effort

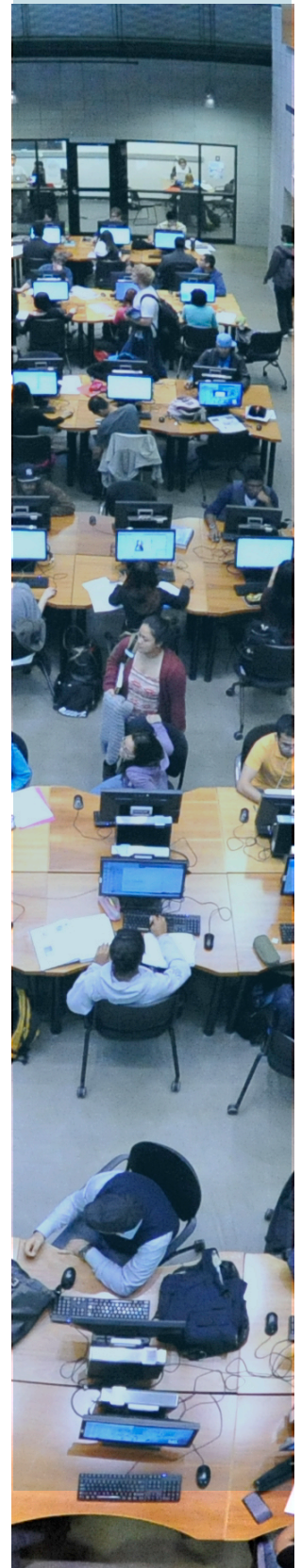
Teaching can sometimes feel like a solitary experience: you are struggling to keep your course running smoothly, to finish your lectures just in time, and to respond to inquiries from your students in a timely fashion. In all this flurry of activity, don't forget that you are, in fact, not alone. There are plenty of resources that will help you to design, plan and run successful courses. It definitely pays to engage with your local teaching and learning centres and their educational developers and skills experts, liaison librarians, and of course your faculty colleagues. Some of these interactions will be as part of organized events, but others can be simple chats and discussions in the hallway.

Christoph Richter, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Biology, University of Toronto Mississauga

14) Immerse Yourself in a Network of Other Teaching-minded Instructors

Whether your appointment is in the teaching-stream or tenure-stream, talk to others about their small group strategies, their assignments, their ideas for active learning, etc. Take advantage of the cross-pollination of ideas that becomes possible when you talk to others about their students and courses.

Jayne Baker, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto Mississauga, and Early Career Teaching Award recipient



TAKE AWAY TIPS

15) Peer Observations

It's easy to start believing that your own instructional style is "the only way to teach". To help find and maintain balance, reciprocal classroom peer observations are excellent for picking up teaching tips and sharing ideas with colleagues. These can be set up informally through discussions with faculty in your department, or through the *Open Doors on Teaching* initiative offered by CTSI. It's a win-win for both parties involved!

Andy Dicks, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Arts & Science

16) Teaching Assistants

Creating/practicing lectures, new assignments, labs and student interactions have an immediate priority that is simply impossible to deny. However, there are some tasks that take large amounts of time that don't need the highest level of attention. For these I will actively request Teaching Assistant time. I find that many colleagues assume that there are no resources available for this; however, 1) You never know until you ask, and 2) Make sure the request is well substantiated and well justified - with spreadsheets.

Jonathan Rose, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

17) Clarity

Strive for clarity, and then even greater clarity, in your instructions, expectations, and learning goals for the assignments you give your students. This might mean you spend more time developing your assignments, but clarity saves you time later responding to questions asked about what is required for the assessment and how it will be or was graded. And it helps your assessments to be more meaningful learning experiences for your students.

Alison Gibbs, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Statistical Sciences

RESOURCES

"Teach, Reflect, Repeat" Ashley Waggoner Denton, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Psychology | University of Toronto

<https://teachreflectrepeat.com/breaking-the-teach-repeat-cycle/>

Lang, M. (July 29, 2018). How to prepare for class without overpreparing. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* <https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Prepare-for-Class/244015>