

CIDR Teaching and Learning Bulletin

Information for People who Teach at the University of Washington

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Teaching and Learning in Sections and Labs

Over the years CIDR staff have consulted with faculty members and TAs, observed their teaching, and gathered feedback from their students in nearly every department at UW. To help faculty members and TAs coordinate their teaching in sections and labs, we have identified underlying teaching and learning principles which apply across a wide range of teaching situations.

Communicate to students how section or lab meetings relate to the course as a whole.

Since sections and lab meetings are usually attached to larger courses, students are better prepared to learn when the links between these parts of a course are clearly defined. To help communicate these links,

- Use the syllabus, course web site, and first day of class to show how various components of the course – for example, lectures, assignments, sections, labs, online discussion, tests – are designed to work together.
- As part of lectures, preview how material will be dealt with in section or lab meetings.
- During section or lab meetings, watch for opportunities to draw connections to lectures.
- Plan for members of the instructional team to meet regularly to discuss lecture and section or lab linkages.

Communicate to students what they can expect in your specific section or lab meetings.

Sections and labs vary in purpose from one course to another, so it will help students to know what your intended purposes are. Otherwise they may base expectations for your course on experiences in other courses.

Expectations to clarify for students include:

- **Content:** Will sections and labs be primarily for review of lecture material, presentation of new material, discussion of selected readings, work on class projects?
- **Participation and Interaction:** To what extent will section meetings be based on discussion, group work, or student presentations?
- **Use of Time:** What is a typical agenda or schedule you plan to follow for each section meeting?
- **Grades and Tests:** How will work in sections and labs be assessed? Will sections and labs be places for test preparation and review? Taking tests or quizzes?
- **Availability:** How will you establish appropriate levels of accessibility and rapport with your students? How will office hours, e-mail, and study centers be used?

Help students develop strategies for successful learning in your discipline and in your course.

In many courses, students are exposed not only to new information, but also to new ways of learning and thinking about that information. To help them learn successfully,

- Assess students' preparation for learning. What do they already understand and what will be challenging to them?
- Help students connect new material to what they already understand. Be ready with familiar examples, analogies, and connections to students' prior experience.
- Show students *how* you think about (prioritize, organize, integrate, assess ...) the material. Create opportunities to practice analytical skills that are useful in your discipline.
- Frequently assess student progress and understanding to help you fine-tune your teaching from one day to the next.

Help students become monitors of their own learning.

In many courses, part of what students are learning is to assess their own level of understanding or the quality of their work. To help them develop these skills:

- Provide prompt feedback on tests and assignments so students can see how you assess their learning.
- Help students use study guides or review questions to assess for themselves how effectively they have studied.
- Ask students to reflect on their learning, and provide them with opportunities to apply, analyze, or extend it beyond points presented in class.

CIDR

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How can CIDR help?

At CIDR we can help you apply and adapt these principles as you work on planning, assessing, or improving your teaching. Call or e-mail to arrange an appointment.

Teaching and Learning in Sections and Labs

The *Bulletin* provides people who teach at the University of Washington with *brief* descriptions of current topics related to teaching and learning in higher education. Previous issues include:

- Developing a Teaching Portfolio
- Classroom Assessment of Teaching and Learning
- Preparing for the First Day of Class
- Classroom Observation
- Designing a Course
- TA Preparation Reconsidered
- Teaching through Discussion
- Transforming a Course
- Helping Student Writers Succeed
- Teaching a Service Learning Course
- Teaching Freshman Interest Groups
- Information Literacy: The Library Connection
- More and Better Class Participation
- Teaching, Learning, and Technology in a UW Classroom
- Helping Students Read Well
- Mentoring
- What Helps Students Learn?
- Inclusive Teaching
- Talking with Colleagues about Teaching
- How Do We Change the Way We Teach?
- Problem Solving in Groups
- Engaging Students in Discussion Online
- Developing a Professional Portfolio
- Pieces of the Writing Puzzle

Issues of the *Bulletin* are available at: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/TeachingLearningBulletin.html>

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Questions for CIDR?

If you have questions about teaching and learning, or you would like to find out more about working with CIDR, you can call us at 543-6588, send a message to info@cidr.washington.edu, or visit our web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/>



- Would you like to be notified by e-mail when future issues of the *Bulletin* are posted to the CIDR web site?
- Do you have questions about teaching that you would like to see addressed in a future *Bulletin*?
- Has this issue of the *Bulletin* been helpful for you?



Please let us know by sending a message to info@cidr.washington.edu