



## Good Practices from Mellon Library Partners, 2003-2004

### Getting the GSIs On Board in a Large Enrollment Course

**Environment:**

Anthropology 3 is a gateway course with about 300 students and 8 graduate student instructors (GSIs). The class meets twice a week as a discussion forum (which replaces the lecture), and once a week with sections led by the GSIs.

**Impact:**

GSIs asked questions during the pre-session that indicated that they needed this forum to be able to answer the undergraduates questions and were more confident and knowledgeable about their role related to the library skills and assignment.

**Description:**

It is very important that GSIs become familiar with the material you will be presenting so that they can reinforce the "library part" throughout the rest of the course. These graduate students may know their way around the discipline, but may not be as conversant in the library material you will be presenting. Students, however, will expect the GSI to answer any questions for the entire course, including library questions.

Test drive your class presentation with GSIs *before* you present it to the whole class. See what questions the GSIs have. Get in touch with the head GSI or the faculty member for your class and arrange a meeting so that the GSIs have a sneak preview of your presentation. This provides a space for them to ask questions about the library -- without having to do so in front of their students. Such a presentation might take place in the context of a regularly scheduled GSI meeting. Or, it could be a special session. It is especially helpful if the faculty member attends or requires attendance of GSIs at this meeting.

If possible get together in a setting where there is access to library resources. Graduate students have their own questions about the library and addressing these will help them provide more informed responses about the library when students query them. Make it easy for the GSIs to look smart and be smart when answering questions about the library.

Make it fun; add pizza.

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## **Other Recommendations for a Large Enrollment Course:**

### **1. Get on their wave length**

Attend class in advance of the library session to witness the instructor's presentation style, pick up the rhythm of the class session, see how the course content is structured, and to get pertinent references to incorporate into your presentation. As a library instructor you can use this information to ensure that the library session is an integral part of the course.

### **2. Check computer equipment in advance of the library session**

Especially in rooms with wireless access, ensure that your computer projects to the screen and connects to the resources you will be highlighting. Write down your login and password so you don't go blank at the start of the session.

### **3. Arrange for demonstration ports for use during the library session**

If the library session will require that more simultaneous users have access to a database than the Library usually offers, you can arrange with the vendor for demonstration ports for using during the date and time of the library sessions.

### **4. Timing and logistics are critical**

When preparing for a session in a large auditorium, calculate the time needed for logistics such as passing out papers or having students' group together and be sure to take that into account when planning what you can cover in the session. Organize these so that they interfere as little as possible with your presentation.

### **5. Increase student participation**

Encourage someone from the class to help out by doing the keyboarding. Tell them what will be expected of them and be prepared for a lull while they consider it. You could bring a \$5 copy card or other reward for the student who does volunteer. The rest of the class pays more attention when one of their members participates.

### **6. List all instructions clearly on the PowerPoint slides**

If you incorporate activities into the library session, write the directions or questions fully on a PowerPoint slide or other mechanism that can be projected on the screen. This allows students to refer to the task or question without you having to repeat it. This helps keep the session on track and on time.

### **7. Evaluate your effectiveness**

Early in the class, pass out index cards to students and let them know that they will be asked to write down the most useful information they learned from the session. Allow time at the end of the session for students to pass those to the faculty member, their GSI, your team teacher, or another designated person.

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