

Proactive Team Practices for Effective Faculty-GSI Collaboration

<p>Overview</p>	<p>If your large course includes graduate student instructors (GSIs), then it is important that you have a proactive approach with your teaching team to promote inclusive teaching. This resource guide, adapted from the CRLT, is an inventory of 30 concrete strategies for building an inclusive class with a GSI. The Inventory focuses on five components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Invest in team development through regular contact and communication. 2) Clarify expectations and responsibilities for all team members. 3) Manage tasks, processes, and deadlines so that all GSIs can effectively contribute. 4) Advise and mentor GSIs on teaching topics and related professional development. 5) Check-in regularly with all GSIs about their experience with teaching and team dynamics. <p>Instructors can use the list to consider what strategies they may already be taking toward collaborating with their GSIs, what strategies they may like to implement, what strategies they would like to investigate further, and what strategies may not work for their classroom.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To provide instructors with concrete strategies for building collaboration with their GSIs. 2) To help instructors reflect on their collaboration with GSIs.
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>This inventory is best used initially in the planning stage of course development. Instructors can use it to consider past strategies they have used and to thoughtfully implement alternative strategies in a new course. Instructors should then review the inventory again during the semester as a way to assess their commitment and follow-through in applying these strategies.</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>This list provides many strategies, and some may be more challenging to implement than others. For example, inviting experienced GSIs to develop course material, lead review sessions, and give guest lectures may not always be feasible. Consider your priorities and limitations as you determine which strategies to commit to implementing.</p>

CRLT Proactive team practices for effective faculty-GSI collaboration

These lists offer examples of proactive practices for effective faculty-GSI collaboration. Reflecting upon your teaching practice, do you or would you use any of the following strategies?

✓ = I use this in my teaching

~ = I *sort of* use this in my teaching

X = I do not use this in my teaching

☆ = I would like to try this, but I need more ideas or resources

Invest in team development through regular contact and communication

_____ Learn about team members and their academic, teaching, mentoring experiences, and goals for the role of GSI, concerns, etc. Team size will determine the best approach for gathering this information.

_____ Develop community guidelines (team contract/ team agreement) for team interactions.

_____ Learn and use GSI names; learn what they choose to be called (which may differ from a name on a department list or roster) and how it is pronounced.

_____ Clarify how you would like team members to address you, especially if your team comes from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds.

_____ Model inclusive language and behavior. For instance, avoid generalizations that may not include all members (e.g., assuming they all own smartphones, celebrate certain holidays, etc.), plan team events with a range of physical abilities and financial resources in mind, avoid pop culture references without sufficient context.

_____ Create opportunities for the team to build relationships with each other (e.g., a meet and greet before the semester starts, an orientation meeting with time for conversation, a “grading party” with food, a team email, etc.).

_____ Introduce the teaching team to students, highlighting their expertise and the specific role(s) they hold in the course.

Clarify expectations and responsibilities for all team members

_____ Explicitly communicate the purpose, and time commitment for teaching responsibilities (e.g., grading exams, creating or giving feedback on exam questions, office hours, etc.).

_____ Share preferences for how GSIs should communicate with you and each other, to ask questions or discuss course material: what topics are best for team meetings, which are best for email, etc.

_____ Communicate and clarify your expectations for instructional teamwork. (What are GSI responsibilities, what are yours? What are the crucial deadlines? When and why might these shift? etc.)

_____ Establish and communicate (in advance) the formal GSI evaluation process.

_____ Explain grading criteria. Create and share rubrics, with review and feedback time.

_____ Give verbal instructions and information with a written accompaniment. Multiple modes can be helpful for processing. This also ensures that information is archived and available to the whole team.

Manage tasks, processes, and deadlines so that all GSIs can effectively contribute

_____ Dedicate meeting time for questions on content, course structure, assignments, etc.

_____ Provide opportunities for GSIs to give feedback before and after teaching the material.

_____ Explain the “why” or the learning objectives of the activities you ask GSIs to facilitate (e.g., discussion of readings, lectures, a critique of peers’ work, etc.)

_____ Carefully plan meetings, timelines, deadlines so that GSIs do not exceed their time.

_____ Offer guidance on time allocation for grading, lesson planning, email, office hours, etc.

_____ Share course resources (syllabi, rubrics, assignment/exam drafts, etc.) in easy-to-find places that are clearly organized (team Canvas site, Google drive, MBox, etc.).

_____ Plan for and distribute administrative tasks (updating CANVAS, printing, proctoring, etc.).

_____ Establish and communicate to GSIs and students a process for handling student complaints and grade grievances.

Advise and mentor GSIs on teaching topics and related professional development

_____ Organize orientation and training meetings for GSIs, providing support for teaching methods, and reflections on teaching successes and challenges.

_____ Invite experienced GSIs to develop course material, lead review sessions, give guest lectures (if they are keen to gain more teaching experience).

_____ Develop a structure for more experienced members to serve as mentors for peers who are new(er) to teaching. Establish clear guidelines about the nature and scope of the mentoring relationship.

_____ Invest in GSI development; encourage recommendation requests, make teaching award nominations, facilitate CRLT connections for GSI teaching consultations and trainings (e.g., CRLT's GSI Teaching Orientation and workshops).

Check-in regularly with all GSIs about their experience with teaching and team dynamics

_____ Create a process and make time to ask every team member for feedback about how their sections are going, development and mentoring needs, and challenges faced.

_____ Collect feedback at the end of the term about strengths and areas for improvement with regards to the team and/or their instructional role.

_____ Use strategies for including a range of voices: e.g., take a queue, ask to hear from those who have not spoken, use paired or small group conversations to seed larger discussion, etc.

_____ Establish a clear process for complaints (about team members) to be shared and addressed.

_____ When feedback is shared (about activities, assignments, responsibilities, etc.) express appreciation, address what you can incorporate, and discuss what will remain the same with your reasoning.

Total number of ✓ _____

Total number of ~ _____

Total number of X _____

Total number of ☆ _____