So You Want to be a Faculty Member?
Preparing Doctoral Students to Lead Graduate Courses

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- Program goal: prepare doctoral students for future faculty positions
- Program length: 3 years (with a masters degree)
- Dual role assistantship: teaching and research responsibilities
  - Research expectations: partner with faculty on research beyond thesis/dissertation work
  - Teaching expectations: transition from teaching assistant to instructor of record
Current Teaching Experience

• The teaching experience and training for doctoral students is undergraduate focused.
  
  – State mandates and university policies prevent doctoral students from teaching graduate courses.

• The Problem:
  
  – Doctoral students are not adequately prepared for the aspect of faculty life that involves teaching and mentoring graduate students.

  • Limited opportunities for mentoring and teaching graduate students.
Our Innovative Idea

• Pair senior level doctoral students with tenured faculty in courses serving new or junior graduate students.
  – Senior doctoral student role: facilitator
  – Tenured faculty role: Instructor of record
How we did it

• Required seminar course for graduate students.
  – Goals: Continued training and mentorship

• A senior doctoral student led the seminar with tenured faculty supervision.

• Faculty member observes and reviews seminars while in session and approves all assignments and materials.

• Experiences gained: graduate level course prep, graduate level course materials prep, and providing feedback to graduate students.
Our Experiences

• Gladys: Spring 2018 - Initial implementation of idea

• Course structure: Weekly seminar sessions every Friday through the entire semester

• Attendance: 12

• Class Demographics: Masters and Doctoral Students

• Assignments: Teaching Philosophy, Lesson Planning, and Microteaching

• Guest Lectures: University system resources and department leadership

• Lacey: Spring 2019

• Course structure: 3 consecutive, 4-hour long meetings the week before classes began; Three hour long meetings once-a-month during the semester

• Attendance: 12

• Class Demographics: Masters and Doctoral Students

• Assignments: Preflection, 3 classroom reflections, and teaching philosophy

• Guest Lectures: University system resources, departmental leadership, award-winning teaching examples
Observations

- Willingness to be flexible and level of interaction and trust differs from undergraduate to graduate students.

- Adjustment to understanding our positional authority and the role it plays in our teaching style, expectations, and outcomes.

- Mutual understanding and experiences outside of classroom lend to enhanced in-class experiences and discussions.

- Graduate student facilitation allowed for a structured yet judgement free environment
Recommendations

• Consider how your department prepares doctoral students for the aspect of faculty expectations that involves graduate teaching and mentorship.

• Provide opportunities within your program that place senior doctoral students in positions to lead and train junior graduate students.

• Attempt to recreate a similar immersive training experience.

• Develop tools to test and measure the training experience.
Questions?
Thank you!

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