

Open Ended Questions

What do you like best about the wiki?

- I like the fact that there is even an attempt to have this wiki. Being able to access additional and specific resources all in one place is very helpful.
- The information contained on the wiki is an extremely useful reference material for all TAs - especially less experienced ones.
- Gives good info that a new (or returning) TA would be able to consult
- It's multimedia & interactive
- The amount of work that has been done to bring all of this information into one location. The amount of potential it presents us with in terms of rethinking some areas and refining others in order to make the final product something engaging.
- Collective authorship, well-organized
- Thorough, detailed & useful info
- It has the potential to be a wonderful teaching resource
- You can link into one specific module if that is your area of concern as a TA. Provides information that I would have liked to have known before I became a TA.
- It's a one-stop shop for TAs. It really could be a source for ideas, help, etc.
- It could be a user-friendly tool if set up and utilized correctly.
- It's dynamic nature-easy to change content in response to new ideas and new findings in education research. I think that the wiki also has the potential to be very interactive, which will make it more appealing to the next generation of TAs.

What are the general problems with the wiki?

- It lacks a cohesive feel. Since individual groups make these modules, it is understandable. However, I think an effort to apply the same format, style and content to every module would be helpful, at least on the main page of each module.
- Aside from being incomplete, the overall presentation, user-friendliness and interactivity of the above-mentioned useful information the wiki contains. For example, the lack of linking between modules, and heterogeneous module style.
- A lot of little kinks need to be worked out (links, tabs, etc) but, overall, well done.
- Incomplete; a little boring in parts.
- Within my module (#1), there is a lot of editing/fine tuning that needs to be done. I also suggest a general rethinking in terms of the tone/style/aesthetics & in terms of whether there are newer/other technologies that could be incorporated to make the tool more user friendly/engaging.
- Its text-I'm not sure how many people will read through the whole thing. We need a test to evaluate TAs as part of the wiki.
- Feels like a test. Not very fun/welcoming.
- There are "walls" of text that discourage usage & difficult/useless videos. Links refer to other universities, not our own.
- The layout is not consistent between modules. Some are more developed than others. You don't always know what module you are in because there is no related super-heading, link on the bottom or the module title does not change to another color once you click on it.
- Most of it is dry & boring. Why not include more examples, screen-shots, etc? Much of it is unfinished. There should be some means of feedback/drop box for new TAs with ideas to add.

- Many of the current links are non-functional currently.
- Inconsistency! It's not just that some modules are much less developed than others, but also that the format, organization and content are so disparate across the wiki. Might be good to have a standardized format for the landing pages, and set requirements regarding the minimum amount of graphics, images, videos, etc. that need to be included.

How can we incorporate more cutting edge research (e.g. education, computer science, etc.) into the wiki?

- Perhaps use chatting/blogging; put it on a social networking site like Facebook.
- Links to different studies or articles about the new research.
- By linking important topics mentioned on the wiki to other related materials, sites and the like. For example, in addition to mentioning that students pay less attention late in lecture, link to the study proving it, or to a clip of a teacher being wacky late in class, or *something*.
- A library would be a good idea (ex. 17700 articles come up on a Google Scholar search for "teaching assistant" "performance." This could be cross-referenced in ways that would make it user-friendly in both general and specific situations.
- Perhaps come up with a web game to help TAs review what they have learned.
- RSS feed? Links to CHE, etc? Links to outside pedagogy info? Opportunities for feedback (blog, discussion forum)
- Flash sites/modules
- Include more relevant videos
- When linking to outside resources, make sure the page is updated regularly. Invite doctoral or MA students from relevant programs to write guest columns. Make the discussion forum more prominent, and have participants discuss or debate cutting edge research findings from journals.

Once the wiki is complete, do you have any suggestions on how to promote it to new TAs?

- Ads in Daily Trojan, emails to departmental list serves.
- Advertise it on main pages of USC website. Of course, really push the wiki during TA orientation/training.
- Prominent listing of link on CET site, graduate handbook site, etc.
- Through the departments, along with TA letters at beginning of semester.
- Send it out in a CET email.
- Incentive, raffle, bookstore gift certificate, random survey
- Flyers
- Adding questions to the end of each module or compiling a test at the end that covers questions from each module students may be required to pass a 'quiz' to obtain 'TA Certification'
- University-wide updates every 2-4 weeks
- During new TA training, small group discussions of the topics/subtopics presented in the wiki would be warranted.
- Give new TAs access to this resource during summer (or winter) break. There is so much new information introduced during orientation that competes for our attention. Students who are anxious about teaching would welcome the opportunity to learn more before arriving on campus.

Regarding *your* professional development, what aspects of teaching would you like to learn about in the TAF program? In other words, what main theme(s) are essential to teaching in general and should therefore be addressed here?

- Incorporating new & evolving technology to facilitate the entire teaching/learning process. Also, how to effectively engage the students' attention & convey your thoughts/ideas
- To learn more about effective teaching practices for different levels of comprehension that have scientific evidence to support them.
- As I progress toward being a professor, I would like to know more about the differences in roles and responsibilities as a professor vs. as a TA. In addition, I think it would be useful to learn more about how professors rework their courses and teaching style over time in order to keep things fresh (for themselves & for students), as well as current (with respect to technology and the like-practices etc.) Last: creating courses.
- Lessons learned, involving students, bringing in multiple perspectives
- Developing a syllabus/test questions/dealing with difficult students
- The aspects of teaching that experienced teachers/mentors feel are the most important/essential for beginning teachers to be exposed to. Ideally, I would like to be exposed to a variety of perspectives on each of these aspects.
- I'm interested in learning more about how to teach in creative fields such as my own field, animation, because there is a significant difference in teaching sciences vs. fine arts.
- Motivational techniques, Making readings more experiential by incorporating media, exercises, pedagogical theory
- How can I become a stronger teacher? How will this teach me not to be just a TA, but a professor?
- Effective types of teaching for different types of learners, what not to do as an educator, presenting course material in a creative/novel/interactive manner, using Power Point effectively (not as a crutch)
- Engaging with students in the age of technology
- I'm very much interested in the science that goes into effective teaching/ learning. I would like to implement a learner-based strategy for my future classes & in order to do so I certainly can use the advice of others who have used such strategy before.
- It's hard to tell at the beginning of the program (especially if you are not versed in pedagogical theory or familiar with the research) what the essential themes are. Feels a bit like walking in on the first day of class and asking the students what they want to learn. => That said, the greatest challenge I've found myself facing as a TA and instructor at USC has been motivating students to put in the effort necessary to learn the material (I'm surprised at how difficult it is to get students to do the reading!). So I'd like to learn more about non-punitive ways to motivate students/make students more excited about learning.

Any other comments, suggestions, ideas?

- Overall, I think a more user-friendly and interactive presentation of the information already contained in completed wiki modules (as well as completion of incomplete ones!) would make this wiki a very useful resource for TAs.
- Definitely add feedback opportunities in later versions
- It might be a good idea to think about adding a section on 'Interacting with Professors' somewhere within a module. This may be particularly relevant in terms of different personality types. Some professors are very easy going and friendly while others are all about

business and make no effort to create a personal relationship with the TA. I'd also like to see something about where to go if you are having problems with your professor.

- Rather than dividing TAFs evenly into groups, it might be more efficient to assign group members based on which modules need the most work (fewer TAFs on the modules that are almost complete)