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Tales of Teaching: Exploring the Dialectical Tensions of the GTA Experience

Jennifer M. Hennings

Today's GTA staff meeting begins like any other. Our group of 13 Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAs) gathers with our supervisor around our department's too-small conference table. We gripe about our classes, our students, and our grading for awhile, and ask for each other's advice. Then our supervisor's tone becomes more serious. She tells us that several faculty members have complained to the department chair about our behavior in and around our GTA offices. She asks us to think about the types of conversations we're having, and who can hear us. The 13 of us share two large offices on a faculty hallway. Officially, these offices serve as our faculty workspaces, where we hold office hours, meet with students, develop lesson plans, and trade classroom stories. Yet these offices also serve as de facto student lounges, where we gossip about our graduate seminars, moan loudly about our research, and try unsuccessfully to do our homework amidst a buzz of animated conversations. We live our lives at full volume in these offices, generally with the doors wide open. And apparently this has become too much for some of our colleagues.

We sit silently for a moment, shifting awkwardly in our seats. Then Collin says, "I feel like we just got schooled."

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The double meaning of Collin's statement strikes me. In the traditional sense of the word, we are indeed being *schooled* as GTAs, since many of us want to teach at community colleges and universities after we graduate, and our time as GTAs is the ideal training for these teaching positions. Yet in this moment, we also feel *schooled* in a negative way, like naughty schoolchildren facing our teacher's wagging finger. As teachers, we are expected to establish good working relationships with our colleagues, to behave professionally in our classrooms, and to manage all of the instructional responsibilities that come with teaching our own courses. Yet as students, we also want to joke with our friends, gossip about professors, and (eventually) get our own homework done. We feel stressed and overwhelmed by the constant juggling of our workloads, and we chafe at the idea of being silenced in our offices, which feel like the only spaces where we can "be ourselves" (i.e., be students).

For me, this story epitomizes the tensions inherent in the GTA role. We are teachers and students at the same time, and these roles present us with opposing desires and responsibilities that we must navigate on a daily basis. Several teaching guides for GTAs (e.g., Curzan & Damour, 2006; Hendrix, 2000) highlight the complexities of this dual role, and research by Feezel and Myers (1997) confirms that this role conflict is a key communication concern for GTAs. Yet while communication studies scholars frequently mention the difficulty of this role conflict for GTAs (see, e.g., Feezel & Myers, 1997; Myers, 1994, 1998; Roach, 2003; Staton & Darling, 1989), few scholars have moved beyond surveys or anecdotal essays to interview GTAs about their experi-

ences of this role conflict. This lack of GTA voice in the research about GTAs leaves us with a limited understanding of how GTAs perceive this role conflict, how it affects their communication with students, peers, and mentors, and how they perceive its impact on their development as educators. By offering a thorough analysis of GTA interviews about this role conflict, this study takes a step toward filling that gap and nuancing our understanding of the GTA experience.

Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) concept of relational dialectics can help us make sense of the tensions inherent in the GTA experience. These scholars explain that our relationships are "organized around the dynamic interplay of opposing tendencies as they are enacted in interaction" (p. 6). They argue that a healthy relationship is not one in which these opposing tensions are eliminated, but rather one in which participants "manage to satisfy both oppositional demands, that is, relationship well-being is marked by the capacity to achieve 'both/and' status" (p. 6).

The goal of my research is to use relational dialectics theory to understand how GTAs negotiate the "both/and"-ness of their dual identities as teachers and students. Because extant research has limited our understanding of the GTA experience by sidelining or silencing GTAs' voices, I have chosen to position GTA voices at the center of this interview study. In doing so, I not only aim to fill a gap in current research, but more importantly, I hope to spark further discussions about GTAs' experiences. Palmer (1998) highlights the value of teachers engaging in conversation about their teaching instead of practicing privately behind the walls of their own classrooms. I hope that this study will stimu-

late meaningful dialogue between communication studies GTAs and other instructors and supervisors of the introductory course.

In this paper, I will discuss the three dialectical tensions that emerge from GTAs' interviews about role conflict and identity management: distance-closeness, perfect teacher-perfect student, and structure-freedom. I will analyze the coping strategies that GTAs use to negotiate these perceived tensions, and will discuss the ways in which these tensions appear to affect GTAs' communication with students, peers, supervisors, friends, and family. To conclude, I will address the implications that these findings have for GTAs, their supervisors, and their students, and will highlight the value of community, mentorship and talking about teaching in GTA training and development programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In universities across the United States, an increasing number of departments are turning to GTAs to teach or support introductory courses (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Gray, 1990; Shannon, Twale, & Moore, 1998). Some GTAs teach dependent sections of a course taught by another professor, while others are responsible for their own independent sections of an introductory course. Often, universities transfer teaching responsibility to GTAs to give full-time faculty more time to conduct research and teach graduate-level courses (Shannon et al., 1998). While specific data about universities' uses of GTAs are somewhat outdated, the economic downturn of the past few years suggests that GTA numbers are

not likely to decrease any time soon: a more recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Coplin, 2006) cites the use of TAs as a way for colleges and universities to cut costs. As GTAs assume a larger percentage of university teaching responsibilities, it becomes even more important to understand the tensions and challenges that GTAs face. In this research, I will use Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) theory of relational dialectics as a lens through which to examine these tensions and challenges more closely.

Relational Dialectics Theory

Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) theory of relational dialectics offers an appropriate frame for this research because of its focus on oppositional tensions in relationships. Baxter and Montgomery explain that "the ongoing interplay between oppositional features is what enables a relationship to exist as a dynamic social entity" (p. 6). In further relational dialetics research, Baxter (2004) explains that these oppositional features create tensions that keep us in a constant state of flux; we do not resolve these tensions, but rather we continue to negotiate and struggle with them in our various relationships.

Communication studies scholars have explored dialectical tensions in a variety of contexts: rural Indian health care (Basu & Dutta, 2007), lesbian relationships (Suter & Daas, 2007), stepfamilies (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2006), the college classroom (Prentice & Kramer, 2006), and many others. One of the most relevant studies for this research is Prentice and Kramer's (2006) study of dialectical tensions in a college classroom. They

point out that researchers frequently use dialectics to study dyadic relationships, and their goal in their study is to expand the application of relational dialectics theory by using it to study a group. In this case, the group is the students and professor of a university seminar course. Through participant observation and interviews, they identify three key dialectical tensions that characterize students' interactions in the course: "(a) their desire to participate and their desire to remain silent during class discussions, (b) their desire for both predictable and novel classroom activities, and (c) managing their personal time and their class time" (p. 339). They discuss various strategies that students use to manage these tensions, and then argue that these tensions can broaden our understanding of the myriad factors that influence student behavior in a classroom.

Yet as Prentice and Kramer (2006) point out, very few communication studies scholars have explored the classroom setting dialectically. Furthermore, none of these scholars appear to have examined GTAs' experiences from a dialectical perspective. Having seen the utility of this theory in understanding the complexities of a college classroom, I see relational dialectics theory as a useful lens through which to examine the GTA experience.

This study is a new direction for relational dialectics, both in terms of subject matter and the application of the theory. Instead of focusing on a dyad or a classroom, I will use relational dialectics theory to examine the tensions that emerge from a complex web of relationships centered on a single person, the GTA. Picture the GTA as the knot at the center of a web. The other groups of people in the web include students, peers, su-

pervisors, professors, family, friends, and others. As GTAs, our relationships with these different groups of people often involve conflicting desires and expectations. Relational dialetics theory offers a valuable lens through which to examine this "knot of contradictions" (Cornforth, 1968; cited in Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 16) that GTAs must negotiate. Specifically, as GTAs share stories about these webs of relationships, they surface tensions that characterize the GTA experience.

To analyze the strategies that GTAs use to negotiate tensions, I will turn to Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) categorization of functional and less functional strategies that people often use to negotiate dialectical tensions. The two less functional strategies that Baxter and Montgomery identify, *denial* and *disorientation*, involve either rejecting one pole of a tension, or resigning one-self to the belief that the tension is inescapable and in-herently negative. The six functional strategies include: 1) *spiraling inversion*, which is moving back and forth between the two poles of a tension over a period of time; 2) *segmentation*, which is moving back and forth be-tween the two based on the situation, possibly within the same period of time; 3) *balance*, which is compro-mising between the poles and fulfilling each one only partly; 4) *integration*, which is fulfilling each pole fully (this occurs rarely); 5) *recalibration*, which is reframing the tension so it is no longer perceived as a tension; and 6) *reaffirmation*, which is embracing the tension and viewing it positively (the opposite of disorientation). Taken together, these strategies offer a useful frame-work for exploring the strategies that GTAs use to man-age dialectical tensions.

Research about GTAs

Extant communication studies research on GTAs can be grouped into three categories: GTA training and supervision, GTA socialization, and GTAs in the classroom. While this research provides valuable insight into the GTA experience, it focuses predominantly on the input of GTA supervisors and undergraduate students, or on the aggregate responses of GTAs on surveys. Our understanding of GTAs will increase greatly as we turn our attention to the insights and wisdom shared by GTAs themselves through individual GTA interviews.

GTA training and supervision

Over the past 30 years, scholars researching GTAs have developed a significant body of research around issues of GTA training and supervision. Numerous researchers have reflected on the effectiveness of GTA training programs at their own universities (e.g., Andrews, 1983; DeBoer, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Nyquist, 1989). Taken together, these essays highlight the importance of several elements of training: a clear definition of the GTA role, observation and critique of GTA teaching, discussion about grading, thorough explanation of the subject matter, and interaction with new and experienced GTAs. Sprague and Nyquist (1989) expand on these essays by offering a conceptual framework for understanding GTAs' supervision and development. They suggest that GTA supervisors fill three roles (manager, instructional role model, and mentor), and that GTAs evolve through three stages of development (senior learner, colleague-in-training, and junior colleague).

While these scholars ground their writing in their many years of experience as GTA supervisors, the voices of GTAs are troublingly absent from their work. Williams and Roach (1992) take a step toward including GTAs when they survey GTAs about what they perceive to be the most important aspects of their training programs, and their work gives us a broad picture of GTA's key concerns about their training. Yet only with research that speaks more directly to GTAs can we move from simply knowing what concerns GTAs have to understanding more fully *how* GTAs negotiate these concerns in their daily lives.

Socializing GTAs

Research on GTA socialization aims to define and understand GTAs' communication concerns as they learn how to fulfill their roles as GTAs. Staton and Darling (1989) argue that GTAs' socialization occurs through their communication with peers and supervisors, and that GTAs use four communication strategies to socialize themselves: asking questions to obtain information, developing a new social system, adjusting to rules and procedures, and generating new ideas about teaching and research. They stress the importance of creating social opportunities for GTAs and providing GTAs with time to discuss teaching and research so that they can develop as teachers and scholars.

Myers (1994, 1998) builds on Staton and Darling's (1989) work in his research on GTAs as organizational newcomers. He offers empirical support for Staton and Darling's claim that peer and faculty relationships are key to GTAs' socialization (Myers, 1998), and he also

argues that daily interactions with other GTAs and department office staff are some of the socialization activities that GTAs find most important (Myers, 1994). While Myers' work provides a complement to Staton and Darling's research, the silence of GTAs in his and others' socialization research remains a problem. By speaking directly to GTAs, we can more fully understand how GTAs conceptualize and communicate in their roles.

Studying GTAs in their classrooms

Most of the studies of GTA classroom communication focus on undergraduate students' perspectives of GTAs. Experiment-based and survey-based studies of GTA attire (Morris, Gorham, Cohen, & Huffman, 1996; Roach, 1997) offer conflicting opinions about the impact of GTA dress on students' perceptions of GTAs, while Yook and Albert (1999) use laboratory experiments to argue that intercultural sensitivity training can increase students' sympathy and decrease anger toward international GTAs. While these studies offer insight into students' perceptions of GTAs, they not only neglect to explore the GTA perspective, but also take GTA communication out of context by relying on students' memories or moving teaching to a laboratory setting. In their delineation of relational dialectics theory, Baxter and Montgomery (1996) emphasize the importance of studying communication in its "historical, environmental, cultural, relational, and individual chronotopes, or contexts" (p. 44), and this is something I aim to do by engaging GTAs in direct conversation.

My efforts to put GTA communication in context draws some inspiration from Fitch and Morgan's (2003) use of interviews to illustrate how students construct international GTAs' identities through negative narratives. Their analysis of student interviews helps broaden and contextualize our understanding of GTA communication, and I hope to further increase our understanding by introducing GTA voices to this body of research.

The shift toward the GTA perspective has begun to emerge in more recent scholarship, though more work remains to be done. Roach (2003) surveys pre-service GTAs about their levels of anxiety, and asks them to identify potential coping strategies that they might use to address their anxieties as they begin teaching. His study highlights the need for further investigation into GTAs' actual classroom experiences, so that we can move beyond hypothetical conclusions about how GTAs *might* respond to anxieties and learn more about GTAs actually negotiate these challenges in their teaching. Hendrix, Hebbani, and Johnson (2007) provide the most complex portrait of GTAs from the GTA perspective. Their study explores the experiences of GTAs of color (GTACs) in predominantly White universities, and uses individual interviews to identify differences between the experiences of GTACs and White GTAs. They find that GTACs not only feel more of a need to prove their own credibility in the classroom, but they also express a greater awareness of their own racial identities in the classroom and a greater feeling of responsibility to educate their students about racial issues. In addition, their analysis of GTA interviews provides much-needed insight into how GTAs perceive their own communication.

In their conclusion, Hendrix and her colleagues call for more research that will provide "a more inclusive and realistic view of life in academe" (Hendrix et al., 2007, p. 75). I hope to respond to this summons by continuing down the "road less traveled" in GTA research. The goal of this study is to move beyond explaining and predicting the effects of GTA communication on students' perceptions, and to use relational dialectics theory to illuminate the complex web of communicative tensions that characterize GTAs' identities. To address the lack of GTA voice in this area of research, I asked RQ1: *How do GTAs articulate challenges and concerns about their roles as GTAs?* Then, I used Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) relational dialectics theory as a framework to address RQ2: *What tensions emerge from GTAs' stories of role conflict and identity management?* Finally, since the goal of this research is to provide practical suggestions for GTAs and other instructors and supervisors of the introductory course, I asked RQ3: *What implications do these perceived tensions have for GTA training, supervision, and mentorship?*

METHOD

GTAs have been surveyed, paraphrased, and quantified, but rarely heard. For this reason, I chose interviews as a way to incorporate the richness and wisdom of GTA voices into the study of GTA communication. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explain, interviews are "particularly well suited to *understand the social actor's experience and perspective*" (p. 173; authors' emphasis). I interviewed 10 GTAs who were simultaneously pursu-

ing master's degrees and fulfilling teaching roles in their department. I chose this number of GTAs based on the work of Kvale (2007), who cites 15 (±10) as a standard number for interview sampling, due generally to researchers' time constraints as well as the law of diminishing returns (p. 44). In this study, by the time I reached the tenth interview, I did discover saturation in terms of the themes that emerged.

Using convenience sampling, I met GTAs from two large, public universities on the West Coast. These GTAs were from three different departments: English (two GTAs), Foreign Language (two GTAs), and Communication Studies (six GTAs). The GTAs consisted of seven females and three males, and they ranged in age from 23 to about 50. Their ethnicities were: seven White/Caucasian (three self-reported; four White-appearing), one Italian/White, one Jewish, and one Indian. All of these GTAs were the sole instructors of record for their assigned courses, meaning that they were the only instructors with whom students interacted for their courses. Each interview lasted between 60 and 75 minutes, and was audio recorded and transcribed. I obtained IRB approval for all interviews, and asked each interviewee to choose a pseudonym. As recommended by Kvale (2007), I grouped my interview questions in a way that indicates which interview questions are associated with each research question.

To guide my analysis, I looked to previous dialectical research by Braithwaite and Baxter (2006) and Prentice and Kramer (2006). First, I read all of the transcripts several times so that I was familiar with the entire collection of interviews. As I read each transcript, I made note of stories, issues, or concepts that stood out as sali-

ent in each interview. While the decision of what is and what is not "salient" in research is ultimately a subjective decision, I made my decision of salience based on how much emphasis a GTA placed on a topic when she or he was talking. For example, I noted when a GTA spoke with particular energy or emotion about a topic, and also noticed when GTAs returned to or re-emphasized a topic over the course of the interview. After identifying examples of salient topics, my second step was an "inductive process in which a given datum [was] compared to prior data for its similarity or difference" (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2006, p. 35). If a new example was similar to existing examples, I added it to an existing category. If it was different, I created a new category. Then, like Prentice and Kramer (2006), I reviewed these categories to see what tensions emerged as most significant across the set of GTA interviews. I chose this inductive approach because it honors GTAs' voices as sources of meaningful and relevant knowledge. By not pre-imposing categories on my analysis, I made room for GTAs' interviews to surface tensions that may not otherwise have emerged from current research on GTAs or dialectical tensions.

FINDINGS

One of the reasons I started this research was to try to make sense of the stress and anxiety that I experienced as a GTA. Since I entered graduate school with prior teaching experience, I expected to move smoothly and confidently into my role as a GTA. Instead, I often felt nervous and self-doubting, even in my fourth and

last semester as a GTA. During these interviews, I found myself nodding, laughing, and wincing as these GTAs reflected and echoed my own frustrations in their stories about their teaching, their graduate work, their personal lives, and the intersections of these areas. Also, GTAs from both within and outside of communication studies all shared similar stories of stress, frustration, and triumph, reminding me that the challenge of teaching an introductory course as a graduate student is a challenge that extends beyond my own discipline. While there are many interesting themes that emerged from these interviews, I will focus here on the three dialectical tensions that stand out as most significant across the set of interviews as a whole: 1) the desire for both distance and closeness with students, 2) the desire to be both a perfect teacher and a perfect student, and 3) the desire for both structure and freedom within the GTA role.

The Distance-Closeness Dialectic: "Cracking the Whip" and Being their Friend

The distance-closeness dialectic emerges from GTAs' conflicting desires to be both authority figures and confidantes in the classroom. At least half of the GTAs I spoke with say they need to establish an authoritative, credible presence in the classroom, which requires a degree of distance from students. As one GTA explains, it is difficult to be an authority in the classroom if your students see you merely as one of them. Yet nearly every GTA also talks about wanting to connect personally with students and to make a difference in students' lives. This type of connection requires a closeness that

comes into direct conflict with GTAs' desire to maintain distance and authority.

Desiring distance from students

Of the different reasons that GTAs gave for using distance to establish authority, age and self-doubt stand out as their two most pressing concerns. Edna, a 23-year-old GTA, explains that she was not prepared for "the fact that [students are] going to look at me and say, 'Hmm, she seems young and naive.' So, I had to come up with a little bit more of a persona in the classroom to gain authority." Rebecca, a 25-year-old GTA, shares Edna's concern: "I was really worried about being or looking too young, and my students not respecting my authority. I think that's a common concern with GTAs." Because of her concerns about her age, Rebecca has chosen not to "out" herself as a GTA to her students. She also jokes about "cracking the whip" with her students as a means of establishing control, though she acknowledges that this authoritative mindset can be "problematic." Edna says she creates an authoritative persona in the classroom by demonstrating her expertise in the subject: "I just sort of started opening my brain and showing that I have all of this knowledge. It doesn't matter how old you are. It's just the fact that I still have things that I can teach you."

Many of the GTAs I spoke with also identified self-doubt as a factor that influences their desire for authoritative distance in the classroom. While several of the GTAs in this study were teaching assistants during their undergraduate years, only two had taught their own courses before becoming GTAs. As a result, some of

them spoke about establishing authority in the classroom as a means of masking their own self-doubt. Joe explains, "Standing at the front of the classroom for the first time independently is a challenge. You need to present yourself as the authority, [as though] you know what you're talking about, and there is the constant threat of self-doubt." Hannah, a first-year GTA, says while that "you doubt yourself constantly" as a first-year GTA, she finds reassurance in turning to second-year GTAs who seem more confident. Indeed, many of the second-year GTAs speak about their self-doubt primarily in the past tense.

Desiring closeness with students

Despite their reasons for staying distant from students, all of the GTAs also talk about wanting to make a difference in their students' lives and wanting their students to like them, both of which involve closeness. For GTAs, making a difference involves more than just teaching course material. Angelica sums up this desire by saying, "In my role as a teacher, it's not just teaching the subject, but somehow touching their lives, somehow making an impact. . . . I really take it as like I'm their teacher but I'm also kind of their friend." When I asked GTAs about the most rewarding part of their GTA experience, nearly every one of them talked about the relationships they have developed with their students. Thomas mentions that he is happy to be the person his students turn to with questions or concerns about family, money, commuting, or sexual health. And while GTAs are not the only instructors who want to support students, their student identities often help them relate

to students on a personal level. Alois explains, "I understand their experience because I'm still having it a little bit. I really want to be able to help them negotiate their identity as students because I haven't let go of being a student completely yet."

While this desire to get more involved in students' lives seems to stem from GTAs' desire to make a difference, it also seems to relate to their desire for student approval, a common topic of conversation. Hannah worries that her students won't like her because she has high expectations of them, and says that she tries to make herself likable by using humor. Beth explains that she tries to connect with her students by "act[ing] like I am one of them or something. . . . I'm probably a little bit more laid back, a little less professional-seeming from other [instructors]." This quest for approval has benefits as well as drawbacks. Mickie says she solicits frequent feedback from her students so she can use this feedback to become a stronger, more effective instructor. In contrast, Thomas describes his first semester of teaching as a time when he was overly malleable and didn't say no to his students. He attributes his lenience to his lack of confidence in his own teaching instincts, and now encourages other GTAs to "say no" and to not second-guess themselves in front of students, since it caused problems in his class.

Strategies for navigating
the distance-closeness dialectic

Despite the fact that many GTAs express a desire to be an authority in the classroom, their desire for closeness with students generally wins out. While many

GTAs talk about struggling to set limits with students, no one mentions any difficulties in connecting with students or building relationships. Thus, the challenge that most GTAs face in negotiating this tension is figuring out how to put boundaries on their closeness.

   Starting out strict. For Joe, the key to negotiating this dialectic is portraying himself as strict at the beginning of the semester, and then lightening up later on. He says, "Because I'm a young person, I try to present a very hard-lined bull right out of the gates, because it's important to me that these students know that I'm their instructor and not their friend. This isn't playtime." His movement between distance and closeness over time reflects Baxter and Montgomery's (2006) idea of spiraling inversion. Joe explains that his strategy stems from his tendency to care too much: "It's difficult not to become attached to these men and women that you're interacting with. However, at times, the investment is too big and the connection is too strong." Thus, by performing the role of "hard-lined bull" at the outset, Joe is able to get enough distance from his students, and they can then interact throughout the semester in a constructive way. Joe's insight invites GTAs to reflect on how they might maintain enough emotional distance and perspective so that they can fulfill their roles as instructors *and* maintain a healthy balance in their own lives.

   Striking a balance. Rebecca navigates this tension by trying to be rigorous without being rigid. She explains, "I feel like I struggle with tensions as a teacher. I want to be compassionate—and that's the one that wins—but then I also try the opposite. You have to hold them accountable." She knows that sacrificing her high academic standards would be a "disservice" to her stu-

dents, so instead, she tries to "keep [her standards] in mind, but also not be a total stickler for every little thing." Beth takes a similar approach: she is committed to correcting students' grammar in her language class, but she explains that

> I try to not be *too* correcting. I think that can be intimidating. . . [if you] correct everything at once. You can choose [to focus on] a certain point or certain pronunciation point without making them afraid to open their mouths ever again.

Here, Beth and Rebecca demonstrate Baxter and Montgomery's (2006) strategy of balance by fulfilling certain desires for academic rigor and compromising in other areas. While each GTA will draw her or his own line between rigorous and rigid, this strategy offers us the chance to consider what standards matter most to us.

The Perfect Teacher-Perfect Student Dialectic: "I'm Always Late, and I'm Hungry"

The tension that GTAs feel between distance and closeness can stem from a desire to be what Angelica calls a "transformative" teacher, which she defines as the teacher whom every student remembers. But this quest for teaching excellence is complicated by our desire to succeed as graduate students. We struggle to meet our high expectations for ourselves as both teachers and students while also balancing our needs for sleep, socializing, humanity, and mental health. Over and over again, GTAs tell me that there is simply *not enough time*. Beth sums it up perfectly in the quote

that opens this section: "I'm always late, and I'm hungry." I call this second tension the perfect teacher-perfect student dialectic. We get frustrated that we can't invest ourselves fully in the role of either student or teacher, and we have to make sacrifices to get it all done.

Being the perfect student

GTAs are often selected for their roles because of their outstanding performance as students (Sprague & Nyquist, 1989). When I ask GTAs to describe themselves as students, many are quick to categorize themselves as perfectionists and workaholics. Hannah tells me, "I take my student life really seriously. I study six days a week, all the time if possible. . . . I'm obsessed with being a perfect student and doing things perfectly." In addition to getting good grades, several GTAs mention the joy of being nominated for academic honor societies or receiving praise from professors. Because GTAs value these acknowledgements, they continue to strive for excellence in their scholarly work, despite the new strains that teaching adds to their schedules.

Other GTAs explain that being a great student is critical for career success. Frances explains that she is very focused on getting good grades because "being a good student right now will make it possible for me to be a good teacher in the future." As much as these GTAs love teaching, they also need to focus on their student work so that they can complete their degrees and get the full-time teaching jobs that many of them want. As Joe says, "Being a teaching associate is an exciting opportunity, but without getting my master of arts degree,

that experience would be for naught. I'm not going to be able to get work in this field without a degree." Ultimately, then, a GTA's attempts to be a perfect student can also help her or him achieve the goal of becoming a full-time teacher.

While this perfectionism did not surprise me, one thing that does is the fact that many GTAs define themselves more as students than as teachers. Since GTAs often talk about how their teaching work can dominate and overwhelm their student work, I expected GTAs to describe themselves more as teachers than as students. Most of these GTAs, however, identified more strongly with the identity of student. Angelica explains:

> I see myself as a teacher and identify myself as that. That is part of my identity. But maybe. . . I identify myself as a student more because I've been a student for longer, obviously a lot longer. It takes up more of my time. I'm teaching, but I'm not right where I need to be yet. . . . [Teaching is] all a bit new. So, maybe that's why I don't identify myself as much with it, but. . . when people ask me what I do, I always talk about both of them together, student and teacher. It comes up in all of my conversations. I don't leave the teaching part out.

Angelica's narrative reveals the interplay between her two identities. She identifies more with her role as a student because it feels more familiar and defined, whereas her teaching identity is still evolving. Yet she still describes herself as both teacher and student, which is also true for all of the other GTAs.

Being the perfect teacher

As students who are familiar with success, GTAs often crave the same level of accomplishment in their own classrooms. For many of these GTAs, the key to succeeding as a teacher is being prepared for the public performance in the classroom, even at the expense of one's own homework. Beth explains, "The teaching does dominate, because you are in front of people. . . . I can show up for one of my own classes, unprepared, and just kind of hope I don't get too bad of a grade." Rebecca shares a similar concern: "I feel like I have to pick teacher over student because there are 30 kids relying on me, and if I went in there and did a really horrible job. . . I would feel so bad about that." Both Rebecca and Beth distinguish between the public failure of not teaching well and the private failure of not succeeding as a student. While Rebecca says that she does not have to make the choice very often, she nevertheless makes it clear that she would choose her public responsibilities as a teacher over her private responsibilities as a student.

For Edna and other GTAs, getting behind in grading seems to be less of a concern, since it does not affect their public performance in the classroom. Edna explains, "If it's grading, I'll do my own stuff [first]. . . . But if it's something like lesson planning, then no, I'll leave my reading to the end, because I'm someone that always has to be prepared in the classroom." Even Angelica, who talks about wanting to achieve perfection as a teacher and a student, admits that she will put off grading if she needs to get her own work done, because "there are some things that you can be flexible with, and

some things that you can't." Grading is the most common place where GTAs confess to falling behind as teachers, even though they acknowledge that grading is an important part of investing in students' success. The biggest hurdle to GTAs' success as teacher is often their ability to manage their time. As Mickie says, "Time management, I think, is the key to being a good TA."

Strategies for negotiating the perfect teacher-perfect student dialectic

Compartmentalizing. Many GTAs seek to compartmentalize their roles in their quest to succeed, meaning that they divide their time and attention to focus on one role at a time. This strategy correlates to Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) concept of segmentation. As Joe explains, "I guess I compartmentalize both roles. So there are times when I'm really an instructor, and that's what I'm doing, and there are times when I'm a student, and that's really what I'm doing." While this may sound like a logical strategy, GTAs are quick to explain that compartmentalizing their roles is a difficult task. Alois, who holds a research position in his department in addition to being a GTA and a student, explains, "I tried to compartmentalize the three identities, and did not realize that they do struggle with each other as much as they complement each other and support each other."

Edna voices a similar frustration about juggling her roles, and says that "probably the best thing I could have ever thought of" was deciding to teach on days she does not have graduate seminars. That way, she explains, "I wouldn't have to go, 'Okay, I just taught a

whole lesson on feminism, and now in an hour I have to go my own class.' It was very difficult to switch gears for me." While not all GTAs have this luxury, the idea of teaching and taking classes on different days could be a good way to compartmentalize.

Compromising. In addition to compartmentalizing, many GTAs also find themselves making frustrating compromises to achieve Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) notion of balance. As I began this research, my own tendency was to compromise my student work and prioritize my teaching work, and I expected to hear other GTAs say that they do the same thing. Instead, I found that many GTAs either compromise each role equally, or sacrifice their personal lives so they can avoid compromising either of their academic roles. Alois tells me, "I think I've [compromised] equivalently, like, 'Okay, I'm going to not find three more articles for that research paper, but I'm also going to spend five minutes less per hour [on grading].'" Similarly, Rebecca says she would never skip class to grade students' papers, but she might choose to read "just 3 of the 4" articles for one of her own classes to finish grading.

For several GTAs, though, sacrificing personal life feels more comfortable than making academic compromises. Angelica tells me that she often cancels plans with her friends at the last minute so that she can "hibernate in my home" to get her work done. Similarly, Mickie says she often sacrifices "quality time with my husband," while Beth says, "I don't really have any social life. . . I don't really have the time." Although cutting out time with friends and family may feel like a necessary sacrifice, it also takes its toll. Angelica explains, "Sometimes I don't feel as mentally healthy as I

need to be because I think schooling can be very drain-
ing and very stressful for me. . . Sometimes I feel educa-
tion can dictate my life." Even though she says that "I
really enjoy education, and I'm doing this for a reason; I
want to be here," she also shares her concern that her
sacrificial coping strategy may not be sustainable in the
long run.

Changing your attitude. While some GTAs suc-
cumb to sacrifice, others manage this tension by
changing their attitude, or what Baxter and Montgom-
ery (1996) would call reaffirmation. This change seems
to be a direct response to their conflicting desires for
perfection. While these GTAs strive for excellence, they
also emphasize the importance of not taking things too
seriously. In offering advice to new GTAs, Joe says:

> If you don't take your effect on [your students] so seri-
> ously, you will be able to keep some distance. Under-
> stand that you are one of many instructors, you're
> doing the best that you can. And if they don't get it all
> now, it's a bummer, but you don't need to commit
> hari-kari because you've dishonored the emperor, you
> know what I mean?

Here, Joe recognizes that the work he does is important,
but that he must maintain a realistic perspective about
the role he plays in his students' lives. Alois shares a
similar perspective: "I don't take it [teaching] too seri-
ously, even if I take it seriously as I take anything else.
You know. . . I laugh at myself when I take teaching too
seriously. There's a value in that." For both Joe and
Alois, the decision to not take things seriously helps
them be more balanced in their approaches to school.
Edna, who also advocates a less serious attitude, ex-
plains, "I've always been a very casual person, and so I

try to keep that sense of fun or spontaneity in the class-room. . . . I try to have a rapport with my students." She goes on to say that her light-hearted attitude improves her relationships with students and helps her create an engaging classroom climate. While this type of attitude shift will not eliminate GTAs' time management conundrums, it may help GTAs relieve some of the anxiety that comes from trying to achieve perfection.

The Structure-Freedom Dialectic: Hold Me Up, Let Me Fly

The first two tensions that I have discussed focus mainly on GTAs' relationships with other people. Distance-closeness addresses the tenor of GTAs' relationships with students, while perfect teacher-perfect student addresses GTAs' relationships with themselves, their students, and their professors. In contrast with these more personal tensions, the third tension that emerges from these interviews is often more of a structural tension. GTAs seem to experience this tension not so much in relationship with a particular person or group of people, but rather in relationship with the overall structure of their training programs, departments, or their universities. This tension, which I will call structure-freedom, stems from GTAs' conflicting desires to have structure and support as they teach, and to have freedom to be creative and to shape their classrooms according to their own interests.

Desiring structure

As new teachers, GTAs desire a certain amount of structure to support them as they develop their confidence. Angelica, a first-year GTA, is happy that her department "put together a system so that we weren't just thrown into the classroom. They give us a format like, 'This is your syllabus. Here are your [assignments]. This is what they look like.'" After teaching with this structure for a semester, Angelica felt more confident about rearranging certain aspects of her course to better suit her interests. Like Angelica, Beth is thankful that her department chair offered her a plan of what pages to cover each day in her introductory language course. She says, "Having that guide laid out is really, really helpful. And I would say that I recommend that in any department, rather than just having the TAs trying to figure it out all on their own."

Another benefit of structure is that it can give GTAs confidence to make changes in their classrooms once they have more experience. Like many other GTAs I met, Alois was required to use an assigned syllabus during his first semester of teaching. He says, "The framework of the class was so useful. And I think that was what empowered me in my second year to really fuck with the course, to really tweak it." Thus, Alois sees this initial structure as a foundation that helped him adapt and change his course later on.

Even GTAs who advocate for less structure acknowledge that some structure is necessary because GTAs teach introductory courses that need to meet general education requirements. Joe explains, "There is a pretty strict set of policies that composition instructors are re-

quired to follow, and those are included in the syllabus. . . which works in many ways. There needs to be a rhetoric, if you will, a standard." Despite his overall preference for more freedom, Joe acknowledges that certain guidelines helps the university ensure continuity across different sections of the same introductory course.

Desiring freedom

While structure can feel empowering to new GTAs, more experienced GTAs often yearn for the freedom to experiment and take risks in their classes. This tension between structure and freedom is reminiscent of the predictability-novelty dialectic that emerged from Prentice and Kramer's (2006) ethnographic classroom study, in which students appreciated the predictable structure of each class period but also liked the variety of activities that their instructor introduced each day. Similarly, GTAs' tension between structure and freedom emerges when they talk about the organization and content of their courses. Hannah talks about how she does not agree with every element of the assigned curriculum for her course:

> I teach what I'm supposed to teach, but I might tell them that it doesn't always work this way. I want them to be keeping in mind that [persuasion is] contingent all the time. It depends on so many different things. And also, I think it might kill their creativity in speeches if we give them too strict guidelines.

Here, Hannah navigates the dialectic in two ways. First, she finds freedom within a prescribed curriculum by qualifying and contextualizing the top of persuasion. Second, she tries to find a balance between giving as-

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signment guidelines and not "killing" her students' creativity.

Like Hannah, Joe is happy to be able to shape his class to match his interests. Because of his seniority as a second-year GTA, he is able to replace some of the short stories in his syllabus with one of his favorite full-length non-fiction books. He says that this was "very exciting, to be able to invest a little bit more of myself into the syllabus and choose something, you know a book, a work of art." He identifies this freedom as a characteristic of successful GTA programs:

> I think it's important not to have total free reign, not like you can do whatever you want, but to create a kind of base and to allow each individual TA to work with those fundamentals as he or she would like. Because you are giving people the opportunity to invest themselves in what they're doing, and that brings out the best in people.

Joe sees freedom as a necessary condition for creativity, and mentions this repeatedly during his interview. Rebecca expresses similar concerns when she says that the ideal GTA training program "would give you enough practical [guidance] to not make you feel like you're going to die of uncertainty and just like feel like you're drowning, but not give so much [structure] that that starts to becomes your focus." The enthusiasm that GTAs express for their freedom in the classroom is worth nothing, because granting GTAs this freedom is likely to help them be even more invested in their teaching.

Strategies for navigating the structure-freedom dialectic

GTAs generally negotiate the tension between structure and freedom by taking increasing advantage of the unique "job security" that comes with being a GTA. In doing so, they demonstrate Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) strategy of reaffirmation by reframing their tension as a valuable opportunity. With the first strategy, occupying a unique position, GTAs use reaffirmation to look more positively on their positions as GTAs, focusing more on the unique freedoms of the position instead of dwelling on its structural limitations. With the second strategy, sanctioned and covert risk-taking, GTAs also reframe the structure-freedom dialectic by using their GTA position as a chance to experiment as teachers.

Occupying a unique position. Several GTAs highlight the fact that GTAs have more latitude than other instructors because they are still students. When asked what advice she would give to new GTAs, Frances says:

> Try to learn everything that you can learn while you are a GTA, because you have a little bit of room to make mistakes, and as soon as you are not a GTA, I think that space diminishes. And so learn from your mistakes to make them more valuable. . . and also appreciate that GTAs are set up for a learning experience—it's kind of that liminal space between student and teacher.

Frances points out that since GTAs are having a "learning experience," they are more able to experiment because people expect them to make mistakes. She encourages GTAs to "own your class, and own your syllabus, and don't be afraid to use your expertise and offer

something that students might not get in another class."
Edna also talks about the latitude and job security that
comes from being a GTA, and says that she takes ad-
vantage of this freedom to try out different classroom
personas and teaching styles: "Sometimes I will try
group work or lecturing, like, students have no idea of
what's going to come at them that day. Sometimes, it's
games. . . . I mean it's just, you know, different ways
they can be interested." If GTAs are experimenting with
different teaching methods and looking for new ways to
engage their students in the course material, they can
become more versatile, adaptable teachers, a character-
istic that ultimately benefits their students.

   Sanctioned vs. covert risk-taking. GTAs also re-
spond to the structure-freedom tension by experiment-
ing with risk-taking in their teaching. Many of the risks
that GTAs discuss are decisions that have been sanc-
tioned by their supervisors. When Edna decided that
one of her course textbooks was too expensive and "over
[her students'] heads," she and several other GTAs "re-
volted, and chose a completely different book," with
their supervisor's approval. The advantage of having
their supervisors' support is that it makes GTAs feel
even more confident about taking risks. Similarly, Alois
expresses praise for his supervisor because "I'm pretty
sure our supervisor articulated that. . . you could really
mess it up and it's not the end of the world. So I went
into it with a risk-taking attitude of, 'Wow, if I really
stink it up, that's great.'" In both cases, these GTAs
characterize their relationships with their supervisors
as open, involved, and encouraging, which seem to en-
courage risk-taking.

GTAs with supervisors who are less involved or less supportive are more inclined to take covert risks. Beth, who describes her supervisor as "breathing down her neck," says that her supervisor does not like the idea of Beth including supplementary exercises from the Internet in her lesson plans. I got the sense from our conversation, though, that she continues to integrate these exercises into her course without telling him. Thomas, meanwhile, is assigned to a different faculty mentor each semester, and has infrequent contact with his course director. This means he generally takes risks without seeking their advice. When the course director pointed out that he had forgotten to include certain required concepts in his syllabus, he says that he agreed to revise his syllabus, but then continued to teach in exactly the same way as before. He explains, "I *have* addressed [the required concepts]. I just don't do it like the way it says in the book. . . . Anyways, like I said, they would never know if I did or if I didn't."

Whether or not GTAs feel supported by their supervisors in their risk-taking, all of them identify this risk-taking as central to their growth as educators. As such, this is an important strategy for GTAs to consider when negotiating the tension between structure and freedom.

IMPLICATIONS

Strengths and Limitations

One of the strengths of this study is that it explores a new application of relational dialectics theory, focusing on discourse about a web of relationships instead of from a dyad or a single classroom group. It also com-

plements existing GTA research by providing insight into the successes and struggles of GTAs from the perspective of GTAs themselves. The most important idea here is that GTAs do not have to resolve these opposing tensions by choosing one side over the other. Instead, as GTAs experiment with coping strategies like segmentation, spiraling inversion, balance, and reaffirmation, they find ways to be demanding *and* compassionate, successful *and* balanced, structured *and* creative.

While some researchers might see the number of participants in this study as a limitation, the goal of this study is not to generalize about all GTAs. Instead, the value of this study lies in its ability to complement and complicate quantitative studies by looking more deeply at the knowledge and wisdom that emerges from GTAs' own stories. For example, as mentioned earlier, Roach (2003) asks pre-service GTAs to identify coping strategies they think they might use to address their anxieties when they start teaching. My research expands on this type of study by exploring the different coping strategies that GTAs *actually* use to manage their perceived tensions. By delving into the richness of GTAs' stories, we come to understand how and why GTAs negotiate their experiences the way they do.

Advice for Communication Studies GTAs and Supervisors

While this study engaged GTAs from three different departments, these interviews show that GTAs from within and outside communication studies share similar concerns and experience similar tensions in their navigation of the student-teacher duality. Two of the most

critical factors that emerge from these interviews are community and mentorship. When engaged thoughtfully by communication studies GTAs and their supervisors, these two factors can go a long way toward helping GTAs navigate their roles with confidence.

Cultivating community

As communication studies GTAs, we are responsible for teaching our students the foundational elements of communication. Whether we are comparing pathos, logos, and ethos, or discussing the intricacies of interpersonal communication, we help our students develop the skills they need to succeed in both public and private communication. At the same time, as new teachers and scholars in the communication studies field, we need a supportive community of peers, mentors, and supervisors in which we can discuss the foundational elements of pedagogy and develop the skills we need to succeed as scholars and educators.

Every GTA in this study talks about the importance of her or his relationships with other GTAs. Hannah identifies her GTA cohort as a "really solid support network" that helps her learn and grow as a teacher and a student, while Alois mentions the "bitch sessions that are so important," both for letting off steam and getting advice from other GTAs. This supports previous research that highlighted relationships with peers and supervisors as essential to GTAs' socialization (Myers, 1994, 1998; Staton & Darling, 1989).

Other GTAs who are not as close to their peers express a desire to nurture these relationships. Beth is frustrated that she hardly ever sees her fellow GTAs,

and she would appreciate regular meetings that would give her the chance to exchange ideas for classroom activities and lesson plans. Frances, too, wishes there had been more interaction between her and other GTAs during her first semester of teaching, so that she could have received more advice and not struggled through challenges alone. Hendrix et al. (2007) highlight the value of regular, mandatory GTA meetings where both "pedagogical and discipline-related issues can be promoted" (p. 65). Meetings would give GTAs like Beth a chance to develop the supportive community that GTAs cite as crucial to their survival.

Finding mentors

While GTAs' relationships with peers are important sources of personal and professional support, they also need more experienced mentors to support their development as teachers. For some GTAs, this mentor may be her or his GTA supervisor, while for others, it is a more experienced GTA or another faculty member. Alois explains that having a mentor is important because you can approach her or him with "the real practical [questions] you don't realize to ask until the morning you're going to teach your class." Edna says that her supervisor is a valuable mentor because "he tries very hard to troubleshoot. Obviously, he can't be there every moment of the day, but. . . he's going to say, 'Okay, in a real teaching situation how would we take care of this?'"

Like Hendrix et al. (2007) and Sprague and Nyquist (1989), nearly all of the GTAs in this study mention the importance of having a mentor who cares about teaching. Some GTAs express frustration that their assigned

faculty mentors show little or no interest in observing their classes or sharing constructive feedback. It is disheartening for a new teacher to have a mentor who treats the task like an unwelcome burden. Thus, it is crucial for communication studies departments to hire GTA supervisors who care about pedagogy and the mentorship of new teachers, and for these supervisors to consider pairing GTAs with mentors who will take an active interest in GTAs' development as educators.

Suggestions for Coping with Tensions

While having a strong community and thoughtful mentorship will position communication studies GTAs for success, GTAs also need to consider how they will confront dialectical tensions when they arise.

Talk about teaching

As GTAs, one of the greatest gifts that we can give each other in our communities is the willingness to make teaching a public practice instead of a private one. Palmer (1998) writes about teaching as the most private of public professions: although teachers always practice their craft in front of other people (students), they rarely invite their colleagues into their classrooms (p. 142). He contrasts teachers with other professionals like lawyers and doctors, who practice their crafts in front of one another, and thus are more likely to hold each other to certain standards of performance. Tompkins (1990) offers a similar and striking metaphor when she writes, "Teaching was exactly like sex for me—something you weren't supposed to talk about or focus on in any way

but that you were supposed to be able to do properly when the time came" (p. 655).

Like Tompkins and Palmer, all of the GTAs I met speak about the value of talking with other GTAs about teaching. Beth mentions that these exchanges "improve the possibility of instruction," while Angelica says they "open new possibilities for the teacher next to [you]." As new teachers, we need the chance to talk about what we love about teaching and what frustrates us. It is important for GTAs to invest energy in these types of conversations, and it is equally important for supervisors to build these conversations into the structure of GTA programs.

Celebrate the liminalities of the GTA role

In addition to talking about teaching, we would do well as GTAs to embrace the liminalities of our role. While our role feels fraught with tension, the idea of celebrating this experience arose in several interviews, and relates to Baxter and Montgomery's (1996) notion of reaffirmation. Earlier, I discussed how some GTAs use their GTA position as an opportunity to take supported, incremental risks in the classroom. Our liminal status offers us other valuable opportunities that we can embrace. For example, Thomas tells me that when he is having trouble understanding a topic from one of his graduate seminars, he often takes his questions to his own students. He explains, "I'm coming in almost aligning myself with them, like, 'This stuff's confusing me. What do you all think?' Interestingly enough, I have gotten much better answers to things from my [under-graduate] students [compared to graduate seminars]."

By engaging his students in a shared learning process, Thomas not only expands his own understanding of core concepts from his discipline, but he also "aligns" himself with his students and uses this questioning as a way of establishing rapport with them.

Instead of pretending to have all of the answers, we can instead embrace our identities as students and new teachers, and use these identities to join with our students in the creation of knowledge. This idea relates to Freire's (1970/2003) philosophy of problem-posing education, in which "the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself *[sic]* taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (p. 80). If, as GTAs, we can practice embracing our roles as teacher-students, we can cultivate healthy habits of problem-posing in our classrooms that will serve us well in our futures as educators.

Implications for Students and Educators

Supporting GTAs as educators is particularly important because of the impact that it can have on students. Like their counterparts in other departments, communication studies GTAs teach introductory courses, which means that they are often one of the first instructors that students meet within that department, or even that university. (During my department's GTA training, we often remind each other that we're not just teaching public speaking, we're also teaching students "how to do college.") The experiences that students have in a GTA's classroom are likely to have an impact on their percep-

tions of that GTA's department and the university as a whole. Thus, it is important to pay close attention to GTAs' development as instructors, so as to ensure the best possible learning environment for their students. For example, if GTAs learn to take thoughtful risks in the classroom (as the GTAs in this study advise), they can become more supple and innovative educators.

Moreover, since all but one of the GTAs I met plan to continue their careers as educators, I believe we can contribute to the overall success and welfare of post-secondary instructors by addressing the needs and concerns of GTAs. From my casual conversations with other lecturers and professors, it appears that the tension between distance and closeness with students is a tension with which many educators grapple. And while tenure-track professors and lecturers do not experience the perfect teacher-perfect student tension exactly as GTAs do, they nevertheless face the conflicting desires to focus on and excel in teaching, research, and university service. Thus, by helping GTAs learn to negotiate these tensions in constructive ways, we can help school them in the "best pedagogical practices" that will continue to serve them well throughout their teaching careers.

Directions for Future Research

This is an exploratory study that points to many other possible veins of GTA research. In the interest of bridging the gap between quantitative and qualitative GTA research, it would be valuable to use these interview studies to develop a survey instrument that could be offered to GTAs nationwide. By pairing in-depth interview studies with broader survey data, we can de-

velop an even more holistic understanding of the GTA experience and can provide better support to GTAs.

Several GTAs in the study also pointed out the value of doing a longitudinal interview study of GTAs, e.g., interviewing GTAs when they first start teaching, when they are more experienced GTAs, and then when they move on to full-time teaching. This type of study could offer even greater insight into the long-term effects and benefits of GTA training programs, and would further clarify the factors that have the greatest positive influence on GTAs as educators.

Final Thoughts

As suggested by Collin's words in the opening, our time as GTAs is a fertile time for schooling. We school our students in the intricacies of our discipline, while we too are being schooled: schooled in how to be graduate students, how to be teachers, how to be scholars, and how, ultimately, to perform the delicate juggling act between our multiple roles. One of the most valuable things we can do—as GTAs, as supervisors, as communication studies scholars—is to encourage the sharing and discussion of these experiences. As we explore and analyze GTAs' tales of teaching and learning, struggling and thriving, compromising and balancing, we can better understand the tensions that GTAs face. In turn, we can create training programs that support and nurture GTAs as educators, and that ultimately contribute to the thoughtfulness and engagement of future generations of university faculty.

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