

# TEACHING TUESDAYS



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## BELLISARIO BULLETIN



By [Juliet Pinto](#) | Acting Associate Dean and Associate Professor

One of the benefits of having an undergraduate teaching assistant program—beyond building resumes and communication skills—is the opportunity to mentor students in unique ways that go beyond typical assignments and graded projects. In this week’s Teaching Tip, Stephanie Thomas shares a video she created for students who may be considering becoming a TA, but faculty thinking about best practices in selecting a TA may also find it of interest. She shares highlights, and the video, below.

Last week’s newsletter highlighted the progress our web accessibility liaisons, Steve Sampsell and Danielle Harris, have made toward our College meeting new DOJ guidelines. In today’s Canvas Cue, Danielle shares how to identify and fix accessibility issues when creating content in the rich content editor.

January’s TTIRL, “Language and the learning environment: Communication strategies for managing controversial topics and heated discussions in the classroom,” has been rescheduled to **Monday, Feb. 9**, from 11:30-12:30 in 103 Willard. Please [register](#) for an updated headcount.

Have a great week!

### Important Items of Note

- **Global Learning Fellows Program** | February 8, 2026 [Application](#) Deadline | Details Attached
- **Teaching Tuesdays in Real Life (TTIRL) | Language and the learning environment:**

**Communication strategies for managing controversial topics and heated discussions in the classroom**, presented by Chas Brua and Beate Brunow from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence. Feb. 9 | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | 103 Willard | [Register](#)

## Careers/Internships

- **February 3** | 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Advanced Resume Review | Carnegie Cinema (113 Carnegie Building)
- **February 5** | 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. | Success in the City Info Session | 121 Sparks Building

## Upcoming Events

- **February 3** | 11:00 a.m. | [Introduction to PowerPoint Accessibility](#) | Virtual
- **February 3** | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. | [Fostering Student Connection with Technology](#) | Virtual
- **February 4** | 12:00 p.m. | [Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning](#) | Virtual
- **February 4** | 1:00 p.m. | [Rebuild PowerPoint Slides to Maximize Accessibility](#) | Virtual | Register in Advance
- **February 4** | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. | [Fostering Student Connection with Technology](#) | Virtual
- **February 5** | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. | [Tools to Repair PDFs](#) | Virtual | Register in Advance
- **February 5** | 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. | Film Screening and Q&A, "Robocop" (1987) | 113 Carnegie Building | "Symbiopsychotaxiplasm" (1968), presented by the Uncanny Valley Film Club.
- **February 9** | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Teaching Tuesdays in Real Life (TTIRL) | **Language and the learning environment: Communication strategies for managing controversial topics and heated discussions in the classroom**, presented by Chas Brua and Beate Brunow from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence. | 103 Willard | [Register](#)
- **February 10** | 10:35 - 11:50 a.m. | [Designing for Student Engagement](#) | Virtual
- **February 10** | 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. | [Microsoft 365: Key Tools for Storage and Collaboration](#) | Virtual

## TEACHING TIP



### What I look for in a TA...

Or perhaps what a TA looks for in *me*?

[Stephanie Thomas](#) | Assistant Teaching Professor

So, what do I look for in a TA?

- Funnily enough, **TAs have actually self-selected for me**. Oftentimes, they're students who are already in my class and toward the end of the semester approach me and say, "I really enjoyed

the class, are you looking for a TA for next semester?”

- My TAs need to be **comfortable talking to strangers in class and giving feedback**. TAs will walk the classroom with me when students break into groups, checking in and offering constructive conversation.
- I appreciate a TA who is **curious, excited about things, and open to creativity**.
- Part of the TA role is conducting office hour-type visits. They are coached on what I expect, which is to **provide feedback rather than answers and help students grow by asking them good questions**.
- Open communication with TAs is critical. It's **important that they give me candid feedback around what is working (or not working) in class**.
- Open communication not only helps identify what needs improved in the class but also helps us to **develop a good personal mentorship relationship**.
- Another important tip for TAs is to **make sure you are clear on expectations and comfortable asking questions**. The odds are, if a TA is having trouble understanding something, there are students in the class who also need clarity.



**PennState**

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**CANVAS CUE**



## **Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor**

By [Danielle Harris](#) | Instructional Designer

The [video tutorial](#) below will offer a brief overview of the accessibility checker tool functions when creating content in the rich content editor. The rich content editor is what you see when editing nearly anything in Canvas, including pages, announcements, and assignments. This feature will alert you to accessibility issues and make recommendations for improvement.



## SHARE A TEACHING STRATEGY



Share the phenomenal things that you have been doing in your classroom! Do you have a teaching technology or strategy that you've seen succeed and would like to share in the *Teaching Tuesdays* newsletter? If so, please [share your idea](#) for an upcoming issue.