

The First Tutorial

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Goals of the Workshop

- 1) Get to know one another.
- 2) Talk about fears & concerns and address them.
- 3) Talk about your expectations for tutorial.
- 4) Talk about your students' expectations for tutorial.
- 5) Provide you with some ideas so you will leave here excited about your first tutorial!

Breaking the Ice


- Partner/small group interviews:
 - Name? Faculty? Have you TA'ed before? Something interesting / unique about yourself?
 - What are your concerns/fears about your first tutorial?
- How can we address these fears and concerns?
 - Additional resources (CLL, CSD, LTRC, etc.) are listed in the handout

Breaking the Ice

- Is an ice breaker activity appropriate for your first tutorial? Do students already know one another?
- Name Tags
- Short Paragraph / Cue Cards
 - Name; Student ID; Year; Faculty; Major; Reason for taking the course; What they'd like to see in tutorial

Be Prepared!!!

- Know the material you will be teaching
 - Meet with the professor who teaches the course
 - Hours of work form
- If possible get resources from a student who TAed the course in a previous year

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- Test overhead, projector or any other equipment you might be using before the start of the tutorial
 - Labs
 - Do the lab well before the first lab to ensure all equipment is working properly

- Outline
 - Give yourself time guidelines
 - Jot down important things so you don't forget
 - But, be flexible!!
- Tone
 - The first tutorial sets the tone for the rest of the year.
 - What will you wear? What will they call you?
- Confidence / Respect
 - Remember: You are the TA because you have the knowledge and skills to be the expert – both in the content, and in the skills required to be a good student.

- Class Discussion
 - Brainstorm around key word related to course.
 - Class rules / norms / expectations.
- Syllabus
 - Contact info, office information & hours, your expectations (i.e. for participation marks)
- Readings / Textbook
- Marking Scheme / Evaluations
- What do they expect from the TA?

Expectations of the Tutorial

- What is a typical tutorial?
- How do you choose to run your own tutorial?
- You and your students may have different expectations
- You will have different types of learners:
 - Auditory
 - Visual
 - Experiential
- Share your expectations regarding academic integrity

What Type of Students Should you Expect?

- Students who simply want to be given the “correct” information.
- Students who want new information and ideas.
- Students who mostly want to know about essays, assignments, tests, and the professors expectations.
- Students who want to promote and test their own ideas. There are two types: one who is oriented to the TA only, and one that is oriented also to the other students.
- Students who come to tutorials to get one or two specific questions answered. They often understand the readings and are only interested in their own questions.
- Students who want argumentation and debate (perhaps for its own sake).
- Students who want relevance – connections between the course work and their own lives.
- Students who prefer to listen and not be challenged or required to participate.

Students' Expectations

- Q: If you were a student in your course, what would you expect to learn / happen at the first tutorial?
- Q: What are some ways we can accomplish these things?
- Think of a time when you had a really great or really horrible TA. What made them so good or bad?

Talking to a Large Group

- Keep students involved
- Don't get in the habit of answering your own questions
- Students won't respond at first – doesn't matter!!
- Keep talking while you are waiting for a response

Teaching the Same Lesson

- It won't be the same with every class
- Don't get complacent with the second or third time
- Classroom dynamics play a large role
- What works in one class might not work in another
- You can make it better every time!

Checklist for the First Class:

- Am I energetic and enthusiastic about this class?
- Is the classroom arranged properly for the day's activities?
- Is my name, course title, and contact information displayed (chalkboard/handout)?
- Do I have an ice-breaker activity ready?
- Do I have a way of learning names?
- Do I have a way to gather information about the students?
- Have I outlined how students will be evaluated?
- Do I have announcements or pertinent information ready to share?
- Do I have a way of gathering student feedback?

Quick Tips:

- Visit the classroom ahead of time.
- Arrive to class early.
- Have a class list, take attendance.
- Be aware of classroom dynamics
 - Be sensitive to gendered language, sexual, cultural, and socio-economic differences.
- Be comfortable with silence (7 second rule).
- Be prepared, but flexible.
- Be yourself!!

Questions and Answers?

Evaluations

Announcements

- Where can you get more information
 - Discussion panel on what TAs do
 - Center for Leadership in Learning (T13 – Room 124)
- Lunch in BSB 136