Overview of Teaching & Related Responsibilities for Teaching Assistants

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This session will provide . . .

- Overview of teaching & related responsibilities
- Preview of other sessions
- Your TA responsibilities are unique
- Tailor information to your unique roles & needs
- See FacDev Program Schedule for more TA workshops
Overview

Effective Instruction

- Knowing your responsibilities
- Preparing to teach
- Delivering instruction
- Managing the classroom
- Assessing student learning
- Knowing services available
Knowing your responsibilities
Knowing your responsibilities

Types of TA responsibilities

1. Primary instructor of course
   - Handle all aspects of teaching (planning, delivering instruction, grading, etc.)

2. Teaching support
   - Assist faculty supervisor
   - Tutoring, grading, lab supervision, etc.

Ask your supervisor about your specific responsibilities as a TA
Teaching experience continuum

Where are you on the continuum?

- New to teaching
- 1-2 semesters
- 3 or more semesters
- Guide on the side / Sage on the stage

Activity
Preparing to teach

Ask about:

- Approved course syllabus
- Course objectives or learning outcomes
- Topics to cover in the course
- Textbook/course website
- Grading policies or requirements
- Departmental / accreditation expectations

Prepare your course syllabus & plan details based on these specifics
Preparing to teach

- Consider audience & content when planning for course delivery

- Accommodate diverse learning styles using variety of methods / strategies
  
  • Lectures
  • Group discussions
  • Hands-on activities
  • Technologies

VAK groups
VAK Activity
Delivering instruction
Delivering instruction

First day of class

- Introduce yourself / course
- Establish positive, welcoming tone
- Explain course syllabus / policies
- Clarify course schedule / deadlines
- Mention campus support services
- Explain your willingness to help students
- Allow students to ask for clarifications
Delivering instruction

*Each* class period
- Identify objectives & the content
- Use appropriate delivery strategies

Integrate activities with lecture to actively engage students in learning

Avoid lecturing entire class period

TAs read VAK cards
Typical 50-minute class

- State learning outcomes for the class
- Lecture interactively for 15-20 minutes
- Engage students in small group discussions for ~5 minutes on content covered
- Whole-class discussion after group work
Delivering instruction

Typical 50-minute class

- Lecture another 15-20 minutes
- Ask students to write a “1-minute paper”
- Summarize key points covered
- Review readings & assignments
- Make yourself available for questions
Managing the classroom
Managing your classroom

- Demonstrate respect for students, their needs & interact professionally
- Explain why policies are necessary
- Develop policies with students
- Listen to student concerns
- When in doubt, check with supervisor or appropriate campus support unit
Managing your classroom

Effective classroom management helps to
- Create positive learning environment
- Establish credibility
- Encourage student participation
- Cover course content as planned
- Prevent academic dishonesty
- Deal effectively with difficult students

Establish & be consistent with classroom policies that are fair & easy to enforce
Assessing student learning
Plan for assessing student learning

- Based on course objectives/learning outcomes
- What was covered in class
- Use variety of assessment activities
- Establish performance criteria/rubrics for each assessment activity
- Conduct assessment activities throughout semester
Formative assessment

- Part of the instructional process
- Provides information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening
- Informs instructors and students about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made

Source: nmsa.org
Summative assessment

- Occurs after instruction (of unit/content area/semester)

- Given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know

Source: nmsa.org
Assessing student learning

- Provide students with samples of expected/good performance

- Assign semester grades based on policy stated in course syllabus
  - Curve, percentage, performance

- Grade fairly & consistently & listen to student concerns

- Maintain confidentiality of student records & follow FERPA policies
Assessing student learning

Typical assessment activities
- “One-minute” paper
- Homework assignments, lab exercises
- Quizzes & examinations
- Papers, projects, presentations
- Laboratory exercises, performances

Prevent academic dishonesty
- Design assignments that demonstrate individual student’s performance
- Don’t reuse old assignments/ exams
Knowing support services
Knowing available support services

- Familiarize yourself with offices & services they provide
- FacDev / supervisor / department chair can help identify proper service
- Support services help you & your students

No matter your TA role, know that we are here to assist you and your students!
Knowing available support services

ACCESS
- Tutoring & supplemental instruction services

Center for Access-Ability Resources
- Accommodating students with disabilities

Counseling & Student Development
- Helping students with emotional difficulties & study skills assistance

Employee Assistance
- Stress management
Knowing support services available

Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct (formerly Judicial Affairs)
  - Handling academic dishonesty

Office of the Ombudsman
  - General advice on various issues

Office of Testing Services
  - Scantron tests & evaluation services

Writing Center
  - Writing-related assistance

Faculty Development & Instr. Des. Center
  - Teaching-related issues, Blackboard, etc.
Information in this session . . .

Is applicable regardless of your role as a TA

Will better help you communicate & present effectively

Is a teaching resource

Don’t be afraid to ask for assistance!
No “deer in the headlights” TAs at NIU
Thank you for your contributions to the teaching mission of NIU!