

2015-05-12

Teaching Assistant in Residence: A Novel Peer Mentorship Program for Less Experienced Teaching Assistants

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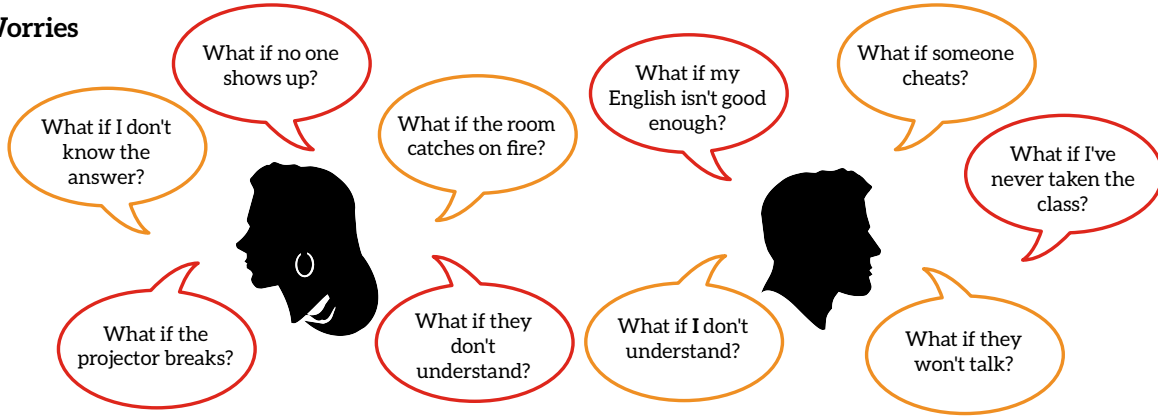
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Teaching Assistant In Residence

A Peer Mentorship Program for Teaching Assistants

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The Worries



The Program

The TA in Residence program provides training, feedback and support to approximately 80 teaching assistants in the Department of Computer Science each semester. An expert TA hired to serve as the TA in Residence delivers a workshop on teaching skills and coaches their peers by providing observation-based feedback and advice.

The Work of the TA in Residence

The TA in Residence Program is:

- **Peer-based:** The program establishes a "safe zone" in which teaching assistants receive formative feedback from a peer rather than summative feedback from a supervisor or instructor.
- **Specialized:** The TA in Residence is able to deliver information about discipline-specific topics which generalized training may not provide.
- **Collaborative:** The TA in Residence is able to identify new techniques and best practices and propagate these to other tutorials.

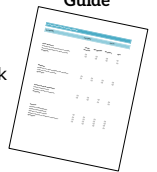
The New TA Workshop

- How the TA in Residence Program Works
- How to prepare for and run a tutorial
- How to do all the unspoken things
- How to grade
- How to interact with all the stakeholders
- How to be a balanced TA

Tutorial Observations

- The TA in Residence observes a tutorial and then the TAiR and the TA meet to talk about how they felt about the tutorial, what could be improved and what should be shared with other TAs.

The Observation Guide



The Skills and the Confidence



References

B. Stephenson, A. Kuipers, R. K. Adl and F. Stephenson. **Teaching assistant in residence: a novel peer mentorship program for less experienced teaching assistants.** *Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges*, 29(4): 183–190, 2014

T. Kendon. **TA in Residence - Winter 2015.** <http://pages.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/~tjkendon/ta/tair/w15/>
April 25, 2015

TA OBSERVATION SESSION FORM

| TA NAME | COURSE | DATE | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Could Improve | Acceptable | Excellent | N/A |
| Class Structure | | | | |
| Provides an overview of day's content | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Directs preparation for next tutorial | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Methods | | | | |
| Materials are well-designed and prepared | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Uses non-lecture activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Teacher-student Interaction | | | | |
| Solicits student input | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Involves a variety of students | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Content | | | | |
| Appears knowledgeable | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Appears well-organized | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Explains concepts clearly | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relates concepts to students' experience | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comments | | | | |

This document is based upon the Classroom Observation Checklist
<http://www.austincc.edu/hr/eval/procedures/ClassObservCheck.pdf>