Teaching teams and student interaction

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Outline and objectives

Learning objectives
You will be able to...

- Describe the structure of a typical teaching team
- Appreciate your role within a team, and what you can expect from others
- Foster a sense of belongingness for your students
- Manage contact time with your students
- Give actionable feedback to your students
Broad view of a teaching team

Common roles

- Instructor of record
- Teaching assistants
- Readers/graders
- Students?
Broad view of a teaching team

Common roles
- Instructor of record
- Teaching assistants
- Readers/graders
- Students?

Additional roles
- DRC assistants
- Tutors
- Observers
The instructor of record

Responsibilities

- Delivers lectures
- Sets course content and policies
- Designs course deliverables
- Generates the *description of duties* (DOD)
The instructor of record

Responsibilities

- Delivers lectures
- Sets course content and policies
- Designs course deliverables
- Generates the description of duties (DOD)

What you can expect

- Weekly meetings to discuss student progress and necessary work
- Should respect what is outlined in the DOD
- Should support you as an educator
Responsibilities

- Whatever is listed on the DOD
- Leading sections
- Proctoring exams
- Grading assignments/exams
- Holding office hours
- Managing undergraduate readers/graders
Teaching assistants
That’s you!

Responsibilities
- Whatever is listed on the DOD
- Leading sections
- Proctoring exams
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- Holding office hours
- Managing undergraduate readers/graders

What you can expect
- You may interact with students more than anyone else
Responsibilities

- Grade assignments
- Generally no contact with students

What you can expect

- May report to you, or the instructor
First section

- Recall importance of belongingness
- Say a bit about yourself and your experiences
- Be explicit about how section works, and what is expected of students
Managing contact time with students

Sections

First section
- Recall importance of belongingness
- Say a bit about yourself and your experiences
- Be explicit about how section works, and what is expected of students

Remaining sections
- Gather feedback from your students
- Experiment with different strategies
- Pay attention to when your students are most/least engaged
- Be aware of a few students dominating any discussions
Managing contact time with students
Office hours

Again, be explicit when saying what office hours are for. Try to ensure that all students are comfortable coming to office hours.

Balancing the needs of your students

- Ensure that you are giving attention to all students present
- Don’t let one or two students dominate the discussion
- Alternatively, some students may just want somewhere to work and listen to the other questions
Giving feedback

Feedback as a learning tool

- Grading does not exist just to quantify your students
- Students need to know why something is wrong in addition to what was wrong
- Timely feedback allows students to incorporate it into future assessments

Feedback gotchas

- The good-bad-good sandwich is not actually that effective
- Useful feedback is specific and actionable
- Don’t let grading consume your life, and if it starts to consider meeting with the instructor
Giving feedback

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Guiding principles

- Start with actionable and direct actions for improvement
- Express high expectations of the student
- Show that you believe in the student’s ability to meet those expectations
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- Express high expectations of the student
- Show that you believe in the student’s ability to meet those expectations

Benefits

- Helps mitigate the “stereotype threat”
  - This is when a student believes that their instructor/TA may be viewed by them in a stereotypical way
- Builds trust between you and your students
- Students are much more motivated when they feel that their instructors/TAs believe in them
Provide actionable feedback

- Be concise and direct
- Say how to fix an issue rather than focusing on what is wrong
Provide actionable feedback

- Be concise and direct
- Say how to fix an issue rather than focusing on what is wrong

Setting high expectations

- Acknowledge the challenge present in the assignment/assessment
- Put the challenge into perspective across the discipline
Wise feedback
How to apply it

Provide actionable feedback
- Be concise and direct
- Say how to fix an issue rather than focusing on what is wrong

Setting high expectations
- Acknowledge the challenge present in the assignment/assessment
- Put the challenge into perspective across the discipline

Belief in your students
- This can be as simple as just saying “I know that you can succeed in this course”
- You could also relate to their progress so far
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Resources and references

- https://citl.ucsc.edu/resources/teaching-team/
- CMA as an intervention, Bhattacharya et. al. (2021)
  - https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12573
- https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/giving-wise-feedback/
- https://teaching.temple.edu/edvice-exchange/2020/03/wise-feedback-using-constructive-feedback-motivate-learners