TA Tips: Working with your students

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General Tips

- Be positive!
- Communication!!!
- Consistency!
- Preparation!!!
  - Sit in on a lab before you teach it
  - Know the lecture material and relate it to the lab/seminar
- Emphasize resources available to students (help room, office hrs etc).
- Make yourself available during the lab/seminar
How do I maintain control of my lab/seminar?

- Lead by example
- Give consistent instructions
- Be assertive!
- Circulate often - students are less likely to goof around right in front of you
- No ipods or cell phones
What do I do if: my student is crying in the lab?

- Avoid making a scene
- Encourage student to compose him/herself outside of the lab
What do I do if:
my student complains about marks?

1. **Student is comparing grades with a student in another section**
2. **Student in danger of failing - asking for mercy**
   - **You should**
     - Establish set of criteria when you are grading and explain that criteria to your students
     - Establish a policy/procedure for how to deal with grading complaints
       - 24 hour rule
     - Avoid making a scene during the lab
What do I do if: I struggle with speaking English?

- This KILLS evaluations... practice!
- Preparation is even more critical
- Attend a senior TA’s lab
- Use your board space effectively
- Refer to lab manual when possible
- Circulate more - it’s easier to communicate with smaller number of students
What do I do if: I don’t know the answer to a student’s question... and I should?

- It’s okay to admit you don’t know, but you’ll get the answer
- Ask another TA or the course instructor when appropriate, then explain to student
What do I do if: I’m attracted to my student/my student wants me?

- Wait... At least until you are no longer his/her TA
- Don’t touch your students!
- Be approachable/friendly but establish & maintain boundaries
Protect Yourself

- Hold office hours in appropriate spaces at appropriate times
  - Always keep your door open & document meetings
- Use a sign-in sheet when receiving assignments/labs
- Know the “chain of command” for your department
Misc. Suggestions

- E-mail reply all
- Do not undermine/correct other TAs or course instructor/lecturer in front of students
- Be yourself