Teaching Assistant In Residence
A Peer Mentorship Program for Teaching Assistants

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The Worries

What if no one shows up?
What if I don't know the answer?
What if the room catches on fire?
What if they don't understand?
What if I don't understand?
What if someone cheats?
What if I've never taken the class?
What if the projector breaks?

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 TAs.

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 TAR 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 Skills and the Confidence

The program boosts TA confidence, provides an environment to share what I’ve learned as a TA, and classroom observations are really useful for improving my teaching skills.

Helping other TAs helps you too!

There are times when I’m not excited to teach, and it can help to talk to somebody who’s encountered similar obstacles.

Ben Stephenson  Leanne Wu  Tyson Kendon

References


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