

TIPS FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Teaching “First Year” Students

Teach Well

- Be Clear! Don’t be ambiguous.
- Teach complex content in smaller segments/steps
- Guide students to think more critically. This is a new skill for first year students.
- Help students see the relevance to personal experiences.
- Review important points. First year students need repetition.

Generate an Interesting Class

- Engage your students thinking and participation. Involve them as much as possible.
- Show enthusiasm about what you are teaching. Students will be more interested.
- Don’t jump right into your lesson, take time to build community. Get to know your students and let them get to know you.
- Be yourself and relax. Don’t try to memorize a “lecture”.

Increase Involvement

- Help students be active learners. First year students are more passive, waiting for you to tell them the “one, right answer”. Ask questions and facilitate discussion to get them to start thinking for themselves.
- Allow students to guide some of the learning/discussion. Their ownership with select instruction will help keep their attention.
- Help students feel a sense of belonging, to your class and to this institution. First year students are new to this campus and need to feel that they “fit in”.

Make Clear Assignments

- Communicate your expectations early.
- Get students to study more with smaller and frequent assignments.
- Give focused assignments versus general.
- Provide clear instructions. First year students need explicit directions.
- Help students plan their projects into smaller, manageable tasks. First year students are still developing this skill.

Provide Feedback

- Provide early and frequent feedback.
- Give encouraging, positive feedback along with constructive critique.
- Provide helpful guidance when pointing out errors.
- Don’t overload the student with too much to “improve” upon all at once.

