FRIDAY TEACHING TALK

GRADUATE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE, TA EXPERIENCES & THOUGHTS

AGENDA

- BEFORE – DURING - AFTER
- TA Experiences
- Job Market Thoughts
- Student Posed Questions
- Open Q&A

BACKGROUND

- Jason Beasley
  - TA: AEC 250 (online)
  - Instructor: AEC 250 Summer
    - 13 Students
    - 5 weeks
- Tu Nguyen
  - TA: AEC 250, AEC 253, AEC 352
  - Instructor: AEC 250 Summer
    - 12 Students
    - 5 Weeks

"BEFORE"

- Course Structure
  - Homework volume
  - Quizzes vs Exams
  - Final Exam

Is emulating "best" courses from your past the ideal strategy?

Should this change based on the level of the course?

"BEFORE"

- Delivery Style
  - Lectures (Slides, Handouts) – "No more than 20 minute stretches"
  - Use technology (Videos)
  - Engage the class (Discussion)

Do we often follow the advice of limiting lectures?

Are there strategies to follow for core courses?

Are there strategies for non-traditional courses (weekly meetings, 2 hr meetings)?

"BEFORE"

- Course Materials
  - Syllabus
    - What is required? Where are guides?
  - Homework
  - Exams
    - Format?
  - Slides
    - Detailed? Animation heavy lectures?
  - Games
- When should I have these materials ready
  - e.g. summer session versus regular 10-week quarter

"DURING"

- Classroom Discussions
  - Managing Responses / Political Ideologies
  - Engaging Students with Questions
    - Open ended question
    - Silence vs Calling by Name

Strategies for getting more student interaction?

How to handle no response? Silence?

Does calling students by name have merit and how does this work in large courses?

Should participation be graded?

"DURING"

- "Contextualizing" course work
  - Helps with diversity and inclusion
- Group Work / Think-Pair-Share

How do group projects work at undergraduate levels?

Other strategies to engage students?

"DURING"

- Creating an Exam
  - Where to start?
  - How to measure difficulty?

What guides my decisions on answering the extra credit requests?

"DURING"

- Managing delivery to a distribution of students
  - Some are heavily engaged, "better at math."
  - Some are uninterested, or want to learn but struggle with the intuition or with math.
  - How to deliver lecture that most can follow while still being interesting?

“DURING”

- Balancing fun and boring required activities
  - “Fun”:
    - Games, group work, discussion
    - Engage students, help with intuition
  - “Boring”:
    - Anything that has math in it
    - Is required

"DURING"

- Managing classroom discussion to stay on topic
- Getting struggling students help
  - Encouraging them to reach out, but is that enough?
  - Sometimes students who struggle seek help quite late
  - Accommodating students with disabilities

“AFTER”

- SET Feedback
  - Ask questions along the way – Don’t be shocked by scores
  - How to encourage students to participate?
  - How to reflect on responses?

“AFTER”

- Sharing information with other graduate students (repository)

TA EXPERIENCES

- Proper use of a rubric
- Proper use of Canvas

TA EXPERIENCES

- Giving feedback to students
  - Balance load vs impact
  - Utilize different means of communications: face-to-face, email, Canvas, Skype
- Office hours
- Student – Teacher – TA communications

JOB MARKET PERSPECTIVE

- Be prepared to answer broad questions such as "What is your teaching philosophy?" or "What is your teaching style?"
- Document how you dealt with difficult situations and students
  - STAR (situation, task, action, result) appraisal
- Utilize voluntary actions to mitigate the competitive disadvantage of not teaching often
  - Brownbag teaching talks
  - CLT teaching certificate
  - Teaching certificate
- Be prepared to give a teaching demonstration

QUESTIONS POSED BY STUDENTS

- TA notices students struggling in class/lab activities, how to approach the professor with this information?
  - How do professors view the graduate student TA role?
- Can TA's be involved in curriculum development?
- Guides on developing a new course?
- Best practices or a guide on "How to TA?"