How I Survived as a TA or New Instructor

A Beginner’s Guide to Basic Survival in Academia

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Hello there.
Let’s consider your timeline...

- Pre-semester Prep
- During the Semester
- End of Semester
- And Beyond
Pre-semester Prep  During the Semester  End of Semester  And Beyond
Survey Says?

Faculty #1

- Take initiative
- Exceed expectations
- TA = ungraded, but **not unnoticed**
- $+ \text{ experience } = \text{ detailed faculty reference}$
- Manage new preps - use a textbook (curricular arc and structure) - teach again = time to innovate/deviate
- **Block out your time and stick to it** - do a good job, but graduate.

Faculty #2

- **Timely responses to emails**
- Contribute to class discussions
- **Be willing to meet with students**
- Communicate student feedback and student needs to the professor

Faculty #3

- Take initiative
- Get things done
- Be active and engaged in class
Survey Says?

Faculty #4

- Basics of professionalism: be early, don’t miss class, interact professionally with students in person/online, be care and comprehensive in any interaction you have in gradebook, be autonomous, set up study sessions, encourage students to read/work, be ethical, etc.
- Engage with students and get to know as many names as possible. Connect with students before class.
- Communicate feedback from class - don’t be afraid to call out a dud lesson or confusion

Faculty #4 cont.:  

- Dream TA = positive, engaging, knowledgeable, desires to help students, has a passion for the material, **brings a positive and intellectually stimulating energy to class**, is willing to fly up to the podium in less than 10 seconds and solve every last one of my technological issues :)

Survey Says?

Faculty #5

- Share your ideas (on content, material, presentation techniques, etc.) - be the spark of youth to keep things lively and current
- Be willing to read over quizzes and assignments before sending out to students - be a barometer for balance of content, any confusion, typo/goofs check, etc.
- Be actively engaged in the class, take notes, connect with students
- **Feel empowered to be a functional part of class** and not just checking boxes. Training for the real thing.

Faculty #6

- Use your outlook calendar - know deadlines and responsibilities
  - Break up projects into manageable pieces and set reminders
- Ask questions! Understand expectations.
- **Have regular meetings with faculty advisors to share updates, discuss challenges/set-backs, and successes. Ask for advice/help.**
- Make a good impression! You represent the U and folks you work with are your references for your next steps.
- Own up to your mistakes - learning opportunity
Survey Says?

Faculty #7

- Know the material - empowers you to help students and answer questions
- Be in class (hear the dialogue, housekeeping items, hear content discussed, pass out assignments, run to get a forgotten item, etc.) Be there.
- Be willing to teach
- Essential: grading, proctor a quiz - carefully and accurately
- Respond to emails quickly
- Bring new ideas, offer suggestions

Faculty #8

- Three preferred traits:
- Prepared
  - Free up mental space to focus on teaching strategies - beyond just recalling material
  - Anticipate questions
  - Study the topic
  - Plan the flow of information
- Confident
  - Comes with time and experience
  - Project it (“Fake it 'til you make it”)
  - Be comfortable saying, “I don’t know”
- Caring
  - Serve best interests of students
  - Motivates preparation
Pre-semester Prep  During the Semester  End of Semester  And Beyond
Resources

CTLE: observations, consultations, workshops, HETS certification, CTLE 6000-Teaching in Higher Education, CTLE 6510-Cyber Pedagogy

Teaching & Learning Technologies

Faculty Information & Support

Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Title IX (OEO)

Graduate Career Counselors

Grad Career Collaboratives

Behavioral Intervention Team & SafeUT

faculty.utah.edu

Mentors/Peers

OTHER:

National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity

Tools in Teaching by Barbara Gross Davis
Questions?
Any final advice?
You must have a clear vision.
Thank You