

TA Manual

The goal of the TA Manual is to provide support to TAs in most of the aspects of their job. Below you will find general operating procedures, administrative details, contact information, tips and advice from the experts, guidelines and resources.

I. General operating procedures and administrative details

A. Payroll and Benefits

Contact: **Susana Landsverk**, payroll specialist, 7406 SS., slandsve@ssc.wisc.edu, 263-2440

Payroll and benefit FAQs:

- This offer of employment is contingent upon verification of identity and employment eligibility documentation on the I-9 form as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. New employees and first time TA's will receive an email with a link to UW-Madison's electronic system and login instructions. Section 1 of the electronic Form I-9 must be completed on or before the first day of employment. Identification documents must be presented in person within three days of your employment start date.
- First time appointees and those with one year break in service, is conditional pending the results of a criminal background check required by UW Board of Regents policy.
- TA appointments include remission of tuition. The charges will be taken off from your student account once your appointment is set up. Spring TA appointments get spring and summer tuition remission.
- You are still responsible for paying segregated fees. Check your student account invoice for amount due and [payment deadlines](#).
- Pay your fees online or at the [Bursar's Office](#).
- You will receive a stipend paid monthly and your first check will be available on October 1st.
- The contract follows the academic year. Ask for deadlines before you plan your travels. As a TA you should be available from the appointment start date.
- As a TA **you are eligible to enroll in health insurance through your assistantship appointment. Applications should be filled out and returned to the payroll office before September 1st to be effective September 1st. Therefore you do not need to sign up for [SHIP](#)** (the university's Student Health Insurance Plan), however do not ignore messages from the SHIP office.
- Plan to attend the Benefits Seminar & Drop-in Sessions for Graduate Assistants before you sign up for insurance. This seminar will provide you with an overview of your UW benefits package. The drop-in sessions are designed to assist you with the completion of your benefit applications Ask questions to your upper classmates for referral.
- There is now an online Benefits Walkthrough, it does not enroll you in your benefits but gives instructions on how to complete your benefits enrollment.
<https://uwservice.wisc.edu/ebenefits/index-new.php>
- International students cannot work over 20 hours/week (50%) when school is in session

- Payroll information can be found in your 'MYUW'>WORK RECORD>Payroll Information>Earnings Statement.

Contact your payroll specialist if...

- You are an international student and you are planning to get an extra job.
- You get married or have children, changes of status (Life events) have direct consequences on coverage of your health insurance benefits.
- You have any questions related to payroll and benefits.

B. Course materials, evaluations, room reservations

Contact: **Becca George**, Undergraduate Coordinator, 7238 SS, becca.george@wisc.edu, 262-6925

Teaching assistants are responsible for picking up supplies from the Undergraduate Office (7238) at the beginning of the semester. Supplies that will be available include the following:

- Boxes of chalk (white, colored)
- Legal pads
- Post-it note pads
- 3x5 cards
- Pencils
- Pens (black, blue, red)
- Manila folders

Our Undergraduate Coordinator will assist you with classroom assignments for exams, review sessions or extra sessions. Please contact her as soon as you know when you would like the extra room. Contact information: Becca George, becca.george@wisc.edu. Last minute requests often get less desirable room assignments.

****Please remember that Head TAs have the responsibility of making the calls for proctor services for the exams, make up exams and reserve rooms.**

As first-time TAs in the Department, you will get an early evaluation. These evaluations are routinely done for all new TAs with the purpose of helping you develop as TA. Your course instructor will also perform a written evaluation at that approximate time of the semester, sitting in your discussion section to observe and prepare written comments. At the end of the semester, along with all the other TAs, a final evaluation will be completed, which will become a part of your record.

C. Printing and the Faculty Services Office

Contact: Julie Anderson, Chair's assistant, 7470 SS, julie.anderson@wisc.edu, 263-2989

Faculty Service Office

Julie Anderson, the Chair's Assistant, is located in office # 7470. Julie can help you with obtaining supplies, copying, faxing, scanning documents, booking a conference room for a

meeting with your advisors, and general questions. If the office is closed, see Tammy Herbst-Koel in office # 7448 if you need immediate assistance.

Conference Rooms:

Julie CAN help you reserve a conference room for one of two reasons:

1. To hold a practice presentation
2. To hold a make-up/McBurney exam for less than 6 students

For class or course meetings or review sessions, please reserve a classroom by contacting Becca George becca.george@wisc.edu in the undergraduate office (7238 SS).

Keys for conference rooms need to be returned promptly either to room 7470, or the green lock box fixed to the wall outside of room 7470.

Copying:

- Copying is done in 7407 SS for instructional and administrative purposes only. The copy codes for each semester are established prior to the start of classes. If you need the copy code for your class, please ask Julie. Please remember that the department copy machine, located in room # 7407, should be used for a limited number of copies. The Copy Center on 6th floor has high volume machines capable of making multiple copies in a cost effective manner. There are staff members using the copy machine in room # 7407 also, so please plan on large copying jobs being sent to the Copy Center with a lead time of no less than 2 full working days. Submit these copy requests to Julie and she will work with the Copy Center on your behalf.
- Office staff will be happy to do copying for you. The guideline to follow is if you need 1-75 copies of single page documents, or 1-50 copies of multiple page documents, these can be made on the copy machine in # 7407. All multiple page documents will be duplicated as double-sided copies unless otherwise requested. There is a pink copy request form located on the counter top in 7470. Please fill that out, attach it with a paper clip to the original, and place it in the black tray (excludes exams - see the last paragraph.) Office staff will make your copies as soon as possible. Please be sure to leave a minimum of 2 days for copying if at all possible. Most times the copies will be ready well before that time frame.
- If more than 75 copies of single page documents or more than 50 copies of multiple page documents are needed, the request will be sent by office staff to the Social Science Copy Center. At least 3 days of lead-time in advance of the due date is required for normal service charges at the Social Science Copy Center. The only exception to this rule is for exams. A minimum of two days of lead time is requested for exams.
- Exams should be given only to staff personnel, not student workers, for copying. **Please do not take your exam or other materials directly to the Copy Center to be copied.** Department staff will be happy to handle the copy order. Exams are kept in a secure location. All completed copy jobs can be picked-up in 7470.
- Please be sure to check copyright rules before doing extensive copying of books or articles. You may contact Becca George with questions (becca.george@wisc.edu).

TA Printing Accounts:

Additional pages will be added to TA printing accounts for the printer in room 6411. TAs will be notified of the number of copies allotted around the second week of the fall and spring semesters by an email from the student liaisons.

The purpose of those additional pages (which is for instructional purposes only) is to allow TAs to make **one** copy of each teaching material prepared for instructional purposes. Follow instructions above for multiple copies of materials for class distribution.

PDF Scanning:

The department copier in 7407 now has color scanning and email capabilities. You are now able to scan and email the pdf directly from the machine.

To scan a document:

Start by pressing the "Scanner" button on the left side of the key panel. The screen will wake up and present you with your scanning options. Select the "To" field and type your email address with the touchscreen. Place your originals in the autofeed or on the glass and select 1-sided or 2-sided from the option panel on the left side of the touchscreen. At this point you may want to press the "Preview" button on the touchscreen to see the scanned document before it is sent.

Press the round green "Start" button to begin the scan. After viewing the preview, select "Send" at the top of the screen. To log out when finished, press the "Energy Saver" button on the right side of the key panel. Please see Julie in 7470 if you need any assistance.

Supply Room:

Blue books and Scantron sheets are available in 7470 SS. At the end of the semester or whenever it is convenient, please return all unused blue books or scantron sheets

Other materials in the economics supply room are for professors and staff use only. If you have a request for additional supplies for your course, please see Julie in 7470 Social Science.

A-V Equipment:

There are limited numbers of projectors and laptops available for check out. You are responsible for returning this equipment to the Faculty Service Office. Do not leave equipment in the classroom. If you find the equipment isn't working or is damaged, please report it.

II. Advice from the experts

Academic Misconduct and Grading:

Contact: Maria Muniagurria, Faculty Associate, 6418 SS, munia@ssc.wisc.edu, 263-3865

Academic Misconduct

Teaching assistants should immediately consult with their course supervisors (faculty instructor) if they suspect academic misconduct.

When administering classroom exams, there are a number of frequently used steps that can be taken to reduce the possibility of cheating:

- Seat the students in every other row and seat.
- Make sure that all books and other materials not to be used during the exam are placed out of sight of students.
- Stay in the classroom and observe students while they are taking the exam.
- Request additional proctors for exams if needed
- If students are crowded during exams, alternate versions of the test may be advisable.

If, while proctoring an exam, an instructor detects signs of possible cheating, he or she should first observe the student carefully; if the same signs are seen again (such as eyes directed at a neighboring student's paper or crib notes), the instructor should indicate discreetly to the student that he or she is aware of abnormal behavior and/or talk to the student as soon as possible after the exam. Instructors may want to compare the exams of two or more students to look for similarities. Depending on observations and judgment regarding the student's responses during the discussion with the student, the instructor may then decide to start procedures for academic misconduct.

Tips for Graders:

- Keep a professional attitude towards students, professors and TA's (give phone number and be available).
- Take the job seriously and be aware of cultural differences
- Find right balance between performance as a graduate student and your job as a grader
- Make sure you understand the material completely (spend time reading the assignment/exam carefully and ask the instructor/TA questions)
- Always check with professor/TA about his/her approach to partial credit, sample a few exams before deciding on partial credit rules (procedure vs. correct answer/algebra mistakes).
- Write down the rules and stick to them, keep consistency (this is very important when you are grading a large number of papers and for requests/complains), grade one question at a time
- Confirm the partial credit rule used with the professor before you start grading.
- Using specific characters to identify wrong answers (for example x), missing answer/blank space, etc. This will allow you to respond to ex post complaints and to be ready for possible misconduct violation

TA's 10 commandments; A short list to guide you as a TA

Contact: Elizabeth Kelly, Faculty Associate, 7416 SS, eskelly@wisc.edu, 262-8829

1) It's a job

- Punctuality: classes, meetings (no oversleeping, no cancellations!)
- Attend lectures: this is part of your job contract
 - Attendance is part of your workload
 - Attendance increases your credibility as well as knowledge
- Professional behavior
 - Dress
 - Actions

- Words
- Preparation

2) Communicate clearly and effectively

- With your professor
- With your students
 - "Cue" important words on the blackboard
 - Outline the day's activities on the blackboard
 - Write and announce administrative details
 - Use email (bcc) to communicate with students
- Learn student names

3) Prioritize what you do in section

- Time constraints
- Reinforce important concepts presented in the large lecture
- Pay attention to how students are doing

4) Do assigned work at a professional level: you are creating your BRAND

- Your reputation in and out of the department is being created now: pay attention to the quality of work you do on study questions, problems, test questions, etc.
- Grading: consistency matters
- Guard the integrity of graded material: do not teach to the exam
- Proctoring: safeguard academic integrity-communicate expectations, educate students as to the meaning, significance, and importance of striving at all times to be a person of integrity

5) In the classroom

- Think about and develop your own teaching style: think about alternative ways to teach the material
- Strong voice
- Eye contact
- Solicit and work for student participation: it's called a discussion section for a reason
- Be attentive to your body language and personality in the classroom
- Solicit feedback as needed
 - Can you hear me?
 - Can you read the board?

6) Loyalty to fellow TAs and the lecturer

- Remember that presenting to 400+ is different from presenting to 20
- Think about how you can present a "better" way

7) Know when to "buy time"

There are times when you need to think about your answer or consult the lecturer: get student contact information so that you can get back to the student with an answer after you have thought about the answer

8) Don't promise something you cannot deliver: GRADES

9) Be mindful of your relationship with the staff:

- Be respectful of staff's time and their resource constraints
- Turn in copying requests with plenty of time
- Don't monopolize the copier
- If you have questions ask Mary Beth or Dave: they often will have the answers you need

10) Enjoy the work

- You have the opportunity to really change another person's perspective and to arouse their curiosity and intellect-this is an incredible responsibility AND privilege
- You have the opportunity to do work that is creative and challenging: appreciate and engage in these aspects of the work
- Get to know your fellow TAs: they will provide a wealth of support and ideas

Remember the adage "Confidence is having done it once before": the tasks of being a TA will grow easier with time and experience-be patient with yourself as you navigate these first weeks of the experience

Expert Teaching Assistants

Kanit Kuevibulvanich

2016 L&S Teaching Fellowship Recipient

Andrew Kidd

2015 L&S Teaching Fellowship Recipient

Encouraging Participation in Quantitative Discussions

Teaching and engaging participation and discussion in quantitative-based courses can be a challenge due to the course material itself. Yet, regardless of what is being taught, bringing students into the conversation can be done so they better understand and internalize concepts and problems from these courses. This workshop will go through the challenges of teaching quantitative classes and discussion sections, develop techniques to encourage participation and engage students in these types of courses, and create a teaching plan personalized to your subject area.

Jose Antonio Carrasco

2014 L&S Teaching Fellowship Recipient

Patricia Abbot

2013 L&S Teaching Fellowship Recipient

Avoiding Lonely Math! Active classroom problem-solving with your students

Just because you're standing, with your back to your students, doing math for 50 minutes does not mean you can't have an engaging and maybe even fun discussion section! This workshop will discuss how to *create* and how to *maintain* an environment in which your students not only participate, but in which they will do so with a minimal amount of awkward silence. We will

discuss how to establish a participation-friendly classroom before the math even starts. We will also discuss how to encourage participation by the kind of questions you ask, by structuring participation in an unthreatening way, and by tracking your students' understanding.

[Avoiding Lonely Math, Four Key Strategies PDF](#)

Experienced TAs

We encourage new TA's to ask their peers. Get to know your fellow TA's. Their experiences and advice may help you solve issues you may face as a TA. Would you like to see how the experts do it? Contact an experienced TA and ask to audit one of their discussion sections especially if they are teaching the same course. They will be happy to help.

III. Guidelines

Contact: Kim Grocholski, Graduate Advisor, 7235 SS, kim.grocholski@wisc.edu, 262-3285

Criteria for Teaching Assistant Appointments

In making assistantship appointments, the Department of Economics seeks to make the best possible match between the background, abilities, and academic program of the students and the particular position being filled. Preference for teaching assistant positions is given to current Ph.D. students in the Department of Economics.

Priority in selecting Teaching Assistants is given to those students with existing long-term support guarantees. This priority is conditional on making "**Satisfactory Progress**" as outlined in the **Graduate Program Guidelines**. Students with existing long-term support guarantees, making "Satisfactory Progress," are assured of a teaching assistant position and the department tries to match to preferred choices (see below).

International students must take the **UW SPEAK TEST** and demonstrate proficiency in English in accordance with University guidelines to be considered for a TA position.

- A passing Speak Test score is 50.
- Students with a Speak test score of 45 can perform instructional duties only if also enrolled in a program to improve English skills.
- Students with a Speak Test score lower than 45 are not eligible for a TA job.
- Students will not be considered eligible for an assignment until a passing Speak Test Score is provided.
- Students must have a passing speak test prior the TA assignments in order to qualify for a TA support

Performing satisfactorily in prior teaching assistantships is part of the criteria that define **satisfactory progress**. In appointing Teaching Assistants, consideration is given to student and faculty evaluations. A teaching assistant with poor evaluations may not be considered for a teaching assistantship and/or may be placed at the bottom of the priorities for hiring.

Students who are not making satisfactory progress are not considered for teaching assistant positions unless approval is given by the faculty. Priority is given to all students with an existing support guarantee who are making satisfactory progress. Students not making satisfaction progress will be considered only after these priority obligations have been met. These cases will be handled on a case by case basis by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Being assured of a position does not mean you are assured of your choices. Factors such as length of teaching experience in the department, strength of teaching evaluations, and field of study are all important in determining assignments. The Department tries very hard to assign students to one of their top three choices for TA positions whenever possible. Unfortunately, this is not always possible.

English Proficiency

- **Pre-registration to the [Speak Test](#) is required.** Remember to place a request for your preregistration with the Graduate Advisor.
- [International Teaching Assistant Training](#) The course is offered every semester, fall, spring and summer. The course carries no credits. There are no fees and no required texts and is an excellent source to improve TAs' communication skills. Authorization from the Department is required. Contact the Graduate Advisor to request preregistration.
- You can schedule a classroom visit by an expert observer from the International Teaching Assistant Support Services. The observer will provide confidential analysis including strategies for improvement and an individualized follow-up. For more information or to schedule a visit contact ESL at 263 2814 or email gakibele@wisc.edu
- Greater University Tutoring Services offers an English Conversation partners program, as weekly English conversation group, and other opportunities to practice English: <http://guts.studentorg.wisc.edu/programs/ce.html>
- Madison Friends of International Students (MFIS) offers English classes for a fee: <http://www.mfismadison.com/english-classes/>
- MFIS also offers a global friends program: <http://www.mfismadison.com/global-friends/>
- Continuing Studies has an English language program: <http://continuingstudies.wisc.edu/english-language-program>

Website

A web page is a very useful tool for TAs. You can post material for the class there. DoIT (the central campus IT department) offers training workshops for students on a variety of topics. There's a section on website design: <http://sts.doit.wisc.edu/classlist.aspx> and <http://sts.doit.wisc.edu/index.aspx>

Most students use google (<https://www.doit.wisc.edu/services/google-apps/>) or word press (<https://wordpress.wisc.edu/uw-wp-theme/>) to create their website.

Teaching Portfolio

Did you know that more Graduate students report that colleges and universities often request portfolios from applicants for faculty positions? Faculty at an increasing number of institutions must develop a teaching portfolio as they approach tenure and promotion.

Teaching portfolios are created for the purpose of applying for an academic job or for the purpose of personal and professional development. Because your teaching experience changes as your teaching career progresses, it is a good idea to periodically update your portfolio(s) in order to keep current with your progress, and to give yourself a regular opportunity to reflect on your teaching. Start making your portfolio as early as possible. Do not wait until you decided to enter the Job Market. Preparing your portfolio in advance will save you time, especially at the end of your graduate studies when your attention should be focus on your dissertation. Every semester sort through, organize, and update information.

Some resources to make a Teaching Portfolio:

- [Basic example of a teaching portfolio](#) is in the index.
- Every semester, the [UW's Writing Center](#) offers some workshops related to Teaching Portfolios and Teaching Philosophy statements.
- [Developing a Teaching Portfolio: http://ucat.osu.edu/portfolio/](http://ucat.osu.edu/portfolio/)
This site from the Ohio State University aims to provide faculty and TAs with a practical and self-reflective guide to the development of a teaching portfolio.

Some functions of a Teaching Portfolio:

- It is a way to collect evidence of your teaching progress and ability.
- It provides summary data on your teaching in a simple, readable format.
- It provides an opportunity to identify your personal teaching style.
- It provides an opportunity to be unique and showcase your personal style of teaching.
- It provides an opportunity to assess your teaching strengths and areas which need improvement.

Some characteristics of a Teaching Portfolio:

- It is focused on quality, not quantity.
- It is well documented and organized.
- It is an ever-changing, evolving document.

Some ways to use a Teaching Portfolio in the job application process (for a teaching assistantship in a different department or any academic job):

- Make it an appendix to your curriculum vitae
- Provide a table of contents of portfolio materials, listing all as available on request
- Bring it to your job interview and refer to it as needed
- Make it an additional item in your application materials, which is referred to elsewhere (e.g., in a 2-3 page required teaching experience summary)

Some items that might be included in a Teaching Portfolio:

- Evidence of teaching effectiveness: department evaluations and summary of student feedback:
 - It is inadequate to provide a long list of student comments without any kind of explanation or organization.
 - It is important to include "representative" student comments; there is no need to include a large number of comments that target the same issue or all the comments you've ever received.
 - Choose the number of comments to include carefully. Too many can be overwhelming; too little can look sparse.
- Teaching awards and recognition (Letters from the TA Review Committee)
- TA References
- Statement of teaching philosophy

[Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement \(Ohio State\)](http://ucat.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/philosophy/philosophy2.html)

http://ucat.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/philosophy/philosophy2.html

The site has a carefully designed menu of topics (such as *what is a philosophy of teaching?* and *what are the components of a teaching statement?*) that are easy to navigate and give an overview of the teaching statement. The site also contains examples, a list of web links, and a bibliography.

[Writing Your Teaching Philosophy: A Step-by-Step Approach \(University of Minnesota\)](#)

Tutorial on writing a teaching philosophy with resources to help you each step of the way, including reflective prompts, a teaching philosophy template, and three different rubrics for evaluating your statement.

A portfolio can include a number of different types of documents, and which you choose to include will depend on the purpose for creating one, and the intended audience. You will need to make some decisions on how you will organize your information. If the portfolio is to be submitted for a job application, how much you choose to say and how much detailed data you include will depend on how much information you think the institution to which you are applying wants to know.

Student Privacy Rights (FERPA)

To make sure the students' privacy rights are respected, never allow students to pick up their academic work by sorting through stacks of materials that include classmates' work. For that reason the use of grad students' mail boxes is forbidden as "drop" or "pick up" site for academic work [Student Privacy Rights \(FERPA\) Brochures Available for Students and Faculty & Staff](#)

Students with disabilities or students who suspect they may have a disability should be referred to the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) if they want to request special accommodations. The most common accommodations for students with disabilities faculty is asked to provide are extended test time and/or a small group or private room testing environment.

Faculty rely on a variety of options to accommodate time and space accommodations in the department. Students who are recommended for **extended time only** may begin the test early and finish with the class or begin with the class and then continue after to the conclusion of the regular class exam. A departmental office or the classroom assigned to the course if it is vacant

before or after the class can serve as the location for the extended time portion of the exam.

When a student has an accommodation recommendation that includes **extended time and small group or private testing**, or when schedules prevent the above option, an alternative test space needs to be located and additional consideration for proctoring is made.

IV. Resources for Teaching Assistants

Campus Resources

[Instructor Access to eClass Roster - Instructions](#)

[Graduate Assistant Equity Workshops](#) – required for new TAs

[Reserves Information - College Library](#)

[Learning Support Services \(LSS\)](#) – for technology in the classroom

[Classroom media support](#) – for rooms with podiums/technology

[Writing Center](#)

[Teaching Academy](#)

[Teaching Improvement Plan](#)

[University of Wisconsin-Madison TAA](#)

Higher Ed resources

[Preparing Future Faculty](#)

[National Teaching and Learning Forum](#)

[Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

[Electronic Journal of Excellence in College Teaching](#)

[Higher Education Research Institute](#)

[Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education](#)

V. Index

Avoiding Lonely Math! Active classroom problem-solving with your students

Tricia Abbott, Department of Economics

Just because you're standing, with your back to your students, doing math for 50 minutes does not mean you can't have an engaging and maybe even fun discussion section! This workshop will discuss how to *create* and how to *maintain* an environment in which your students not only participate, but in which they will do so with a minimal amount of awkward silence. We will discuss how to establish a participation-friendly classroom before the math even starts. We will also discuss how to encourage participation by the kind of questions you ask, by structuring participation in an unthreatening way, and by tracking your students' understanding.

The following are four key strategies that will help foster an environment in which your students actively engage with you in problem solving.

1. Cultivate a relationship with your students.

- **Remember your role, be approachable.** As the TA, you are there to give small group instruction and one-on-one aid. This is an especially vital role to large lecture courses, as your students will likely have very limited access to the professor. So it is important for you to be gracious and patient with your students when they ask for help during discussion, during office hours, or via email.
- **Treat your students and your job with respect.** If your students see that you treat them with respect and they see that you put effort into your job (which directly benefits them), then they will be more inclined to show you the same respect. If students don't like you or if they feel like they are an inconvenience to you, they will not participate.

2. Set a tone of participation on day one and offer some first-day-of-class transparency about the methods you will use for getting participation.

- **Make your students talk during the first meeting.** You need them to feel comfortable talking, so it's important to break the ice the first time you meet for discussion. I have my students go around the room and introduce themselves. After everyone shares, I also have them re-introduce themselves to the people around them. This helps make your students more comfortable talking to you *and* to each other, both of which will foster participation.
- **Explain your expectations for participation and your methods for getting it.** For example, in the first discussion section I tell my students that (1) I am going to ask them a lot of questions during discussion, and those questions will often be very easy, and (2) the *reason* I ask so many questions is because if they are working the problems with me and staying engaged in the problem-solving process, then they will be getting much more out of section than if they just copy down what I write on the board.

3. Create an environment where talking is low pressure – minimize the fear of giving the wrong answer. A detractor from participation in math-oriented courses is that there are right and wrong answers and students don't like the "embarrassment" of giving a wrong answer.

- **Encourage your students to just “shout out” the answer instead of going through the formality of raising their hand and being called on.** A benefit to teaching a math-oriented course is that the answers to questions you ask will likely be short and fact-based (as opposed to longer and opinion-based). As a result, students can shout out an answer and be done speaking before a majority of their classmates even realize who is speaking. This method also increases the number of students who answer each question you ask. Both of these will diminish the perceived embarrassment of getting an answer wrong.
- **Ask easy arithmetic/definitional questions.** Asking easy questions will keep students engaged and make it much easier for them to participate. Fears of talking diminish greatly when instead of asking difficult, concept-based question, you ask things like “What are the total profits?” when the board has written on it “Profit = $30 - 45 =$ ”. Definitional and arithmetic questions are also beneficial to your students: arithmetic questions are beneficial if students cannot use calculators on exams; definitional questions are beneficial in helping your students memorize terms and equations.
- **Ask questions that involve only small steps for difficult problems.** When working through a problem that is difficult, ask questions that only require your students to make little steps in the process. As the semester progresses, problem-solving methods build on themselves and it is easy for students to be overwhelmed. Give your students the overall question, but immediately follow it up by asking your students where to begin. This tends to be the hardest step, so don’t necessarily expect many to speak up. After getting past the first step, however, students are typically very willing to participate.
- **Ask multiple choice questions (verbally).** Suppose you are working a difficult problem and you ask your students what the next step is only to get nothing but silence and blank stares. Instead of waiting in silence for minutes on end until someone answers, offer your students a few options as to what correct response should be. This keeps students participating and it keeps the class rolling much more smoothly.

4. Ask if there are any questions frequently, and pay attention to your students’ responses.

- **Constantly make sure your students are following along.** You should be sick of hearing yourself ask things like “any questions so far?”, “are you all with me?”, or “does this make sense?” by the end of a day of teaching. If you ask one of these questions and no one responds, ask it again. These questions are not meant to be rhetorical.
- **Take note of nonverbal communication from your students.** I realize this may seem counterintuitive in a discussion of how to increase participation. But, at the start of the semester your students will often be too shy to speak up. During that period, figure out which students will give you facial cues about whether or not they are confused and allow them to ask for help nonverbally! As students learn the value of getting clarification on difficult problems during section, they become more willing to ask for help *verbally*.
- **If you just did a complicated step in a problem, but no one is saying they don’t understand, go ahead and offer to walk through the step again.** A lot of times, students will accept your offer, but were either too embarrassed or too confused to ask. As with the previous point, this will actually increase their participation over time.

Bucky Badger Teaching Portfolio

I. Teaching Summary

At the end of every semester, standard evaluation forms are typically filled out by students. Students are asked to assign a numerical value to various aspects of the course, the instructor, and the TA on a scale of 1 (“poor”) to 5 (“excellent”). My evaluation scores are summarized in the following table:

Semester	Course	Course Title	Evaluation Score*	Department Average Evaluation Score*
Fall 2006	Econ 101	Principles of Microeconomics	3.55	4.00
Spring 2007	Econ 101	Principles of Microeconomics	4.10	4.11
Fall 2007	Econ 102	Principles of Macroeconomics	4.50**	3.96
Spring 2008	Econ 302	Intermediate Macroeconomics	4.80**	4
Summer 2008	Econ 101	Principles of Microeconomics	4.70	NA
Fall 2008	Econ 302***	Intermediate Macroeconomics	4.74	3.81
Spring 2009	Econ 101***	Principles of Microeconomics	4.2**	3.91
Fall 2009	Econ 302****	Intermediate Macroeconomics	4.83**	3.82
Spring 2010	Econ 101***	Principles of Microeconomics	4.72**	3.92
Fall 2010	Econ 101***	Principles of Microeconomics	4.90**	3.86

* The Evaluation Scores and Average Evaluation Scores are generated from the student response to the following question: “We know how the professor conducts the course often influences what a TA is able to do in a course. Given the professor’s role and the structure of this course, how would you evaluate your TA’s performance? (5=excellent, 4=good, 3=average, 2 or less =poor)”

** Designates that the Department of Economics Teaching Assistant Review Committee determined that I was a distinguished Teaching Assistant.

*** Designates that I was a Head Teaching Assistant.

**** Designates that I was the course’s Lecturer.

II. Selected Student Comments

As part of the evaluation process, students have the option to write comments in addition to the numerical ratings. The following table shows some representative students' opinions regarding my performance in the course:

<p>Fall 2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• His handouts are not too clear and he is a little messy with the board but he does a good job explaining concepts on the discussion sessions.• Good personality. Helpful when asking questions.
<p>Spring 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Material was very well organized and presented. Good at drawing clear graphs to illustrate the concepts.• Excellent TA. Probably one of the best at the university. Highly recommend him. Great preparation with his in-class sheets. Explained concepts much more clearly than the professor.
<p>Fall 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I thought you did really well. You took the time to explain all the basics and then backed them up with thought-provoking examples.• He always has a review sheet put together, which is very helpful. He is really good, one of my favorite TAs for all my classes.
<p>Spring 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I love the style of his teaching.• You were excellent in office hours. That was a great help for understanding the material better.
<p>Summer 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always had a positive attitude and was very easy to understand.
<p>Fall 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explanation of the IS-LM model was very easy to understand.• He clearly explains the material which was discussed in class.
<p>Spring 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TA took concepts into his own hands and explained them better than the professor, open to questions, genuinely cared about students, laid-back and down to earth, AWESOME!! Unsatisfactory: Honestly, NOTHING!
<p>Fall 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great job. Clear and helpful all the time.• His handouts were amazing!

- *It is inadequate to provide a long list of student comments without any kind of explanation or organization.*
- *It is important to include "representative" student comments; there is no need to include a large number of comments that target the same issue or all the comments you've ever received.*
- *You may also want to include a few comments that address a teaching weakness providing at the same time some commentary on what you have done or plan to do with this kind of feedback.*
- *Choose the number of comments to include carefully. Too many can be overwhelming; too little can look sparse.*
- *It's okay to make the students' comments better spelled and punctuated. No sense making the students sound illiterate or careless; it devalues their commentary.*

III. Awards and Recognitions

2009-2010 Academic Year. Recipient of the Anna Morris Ely Excellence Teaching Award. This Award is granted by the Department of Economics to TAs with distinguished history based on excellent evaluations from the students and supervising instructors.

Fall 2007, Spring 2008, Spring 2009, Fall 2009. The Teaching Assistant Review Committee of the Department of Economics gave me the highest commendation letters for a distinguished Teaching performance.

See the attached files for details.

You may want to mention only the highest commendation letters you have received. For example if you got 3 good letters and one excellent letter then only mention the excellent in this section: Fall 20XX "The Teaching Assistant Review Committee of the Department of Economics gave me a commendation letter for an excellent Teaching performance". Attach ALL your Letters from the TA Review Committee at the end.

IV. Teaching Philosophy

- [Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement \(Ohio State\)](http://ucat.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/philosophy/philosophy2.html)
The site has a carefully designed menu of topics (such as what is a philosophy of teaching? and what are the components of a teaching statement?) that are easy to navigate and give an overview of the teaching statement. The site also contains examples, a list of web links, and a bibliography.
- [Writing Your Teaching Philosophy: A Step-by-Step Approach \(University of Minnesota\)](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html)
Tutorial on writing a teaching philosophy with resources to help you each step of the way, including reflective prompts, a teaching philosophy template, and three different rubrics for evaluating your statement.

V. TA References Upon Request *(or you can make a list of your TA references here)*