



Classroom Management

SIUE Graduate School
Graduate Assistant
Orientation



Classroom Management

- **Classroom management** refers to a variety of skills and techniques that instructors use to ensure that **classroom** lessons run smoothly.



Your Role as a Teaching Assistant (TA)

- The role of a TA varies by department
 - Science and Engineering TAs are usually Laboratory Instructors.
- Some TAs function independently with minimal supervision.
- Some TAs work directly with a faculty member in the room.
- Most TAs have responsibilities between these extremes.



I am a New TA what do I do?

- New TAs may feel overwhelmed. How can you overcome this feeling and manage?
 - Most departments have some form of TA training.
 - Apply the Boy Scout Motto: “Be Prepared”
 - Being well prepared and having a positive attitude will help tremendously.



Meet with your course coordinator

- Meet with the faculty member in charge of your course as soon as possible *prior* to your first class meeting.
- Many of your concerns will be covered in the course syllabus/outline, but be prepared to ask some important questions.

Important Questions

- Do I need to attend the lecture sessions?
- Will I be grading lecture quizzes, exams or homework assignments?
- Will I have a tutoring assignment?
- Am I required to hold office hours? If so, how many hours per week?



Important Questions

- How should I deal with late or unprepared students? Are they allowed to participate?
 - Late students may miss important information provided at the beginning of the session.
 - Unprepared students may not have completed certain pre-lab assignments.
- What are the emergency procedures?
 - Fire alarm, tornado, other

The First Day

- Arrive Early!
- Greet your students as they enter the room.
- Introduce yourself and provide students with your contact information. (usually email)
- Go over the syllabus/course outline. Assume your students know nothing about the course. Cover every point.

In Class Communication

- Work to avoid miscommunication.
 - When students ask a question, restate the question before answering it to ensure you understood.
 - Tell students to stop and ask if they are unsure.
 - As you circulate through the room, offer positive feedback and suggestions
 - Be excited about the subject. Students are more comfortable when the TA shows excitement.

In Class Communication

- If you have an accent, some students may find it difficult to understand you. This becomes less of a problem with time.
 - Speak slowly
 - Write on the board
 - Let students know that you want them to ask if they don't understand you.
 - Show concern for how students are doing.

Grading

- Be fair!
 - Follow the course syllabus
- Be prompt
 - Return assignments as soon as possible (~1 wk max)
- Don't get behind with grading.



Grading

- Be consistent
 - Students compare their work. Make sure you have applied a consistent standard to each.
 - Grade 1 question at a time or 1 page at a time
 - Otherwise its too easy to be harsh with the first papers and too easy with the last few.
 - Avoid looking at names while grading
 - Make helpful comments

Grading



- Keep good records
 - Use a grade book (electronic or paper)
 - Keep a backup copy
 - Keep student grades private
 - Encourage students to track their own grades and to keep all graded assignments until the end of the term.
- Discuss any students that are struggling with your supervisor and develop a plan to improve student performance.
 - The faculty member should always be included in any new decisions or procedures you choose to implement in the course.

Teaching in a Lab: Before Your Lab Meets

- Keep in mind the safety requirements for the lab
 - Clothing, special equipment (e.g. goggles, aprons, etc).
- If possible, do the lab yourself.
 - This will help you become familiar with the equipment and to anticipate difficulties.
 - Take Notes.
- If doing the lab is not possible, imagine yourself carrying out the experiment step-by-step.
- Be sure you have a clear understanding of all procedures and how to analyze the data.




Teaching in a Lab: At the Beginning of the Session

- Arrive Early
- Check to see that all necessary equipment and supplies are present and in working order.
 - Students are quickly annoyed when equipment doesn't work or if supplies are missing.
- Go over the safety rules for the day's activity.
- Go over the general procedures including how to use special equipment.
- Answer questions.

Teaching in a Lab: During the Lab Session

- Circulate through the room to monitor student progress and answer questions.
 - This helps keep students on track.
 - This also helps monitor safety matters.
- Do not stay in one spot at the front of the room.
- Do not leave the room during the lab session.

 Good classroom communication is vital in the laboratory setting for learning and safety reasons. Laboratories can be dangerous. Safety must be your highest priority.

Teaching in a Lab: At the End of the Session

- Ensure that students clean up their stations.
- Ensure that all equipment has been reset for the next lab session.



Teacher/Student Interaction

- As a TA you hold a position of power in the classroom and must be mindful of relationships you build with your students.
- Be sure to discuss any restrictions or recommendations your department has when interacting with students both in and out of the classroom.



Cheating

- Some examples of cheating include:
 - Submitting data not collected during the lab session
 - Partners having identical lab reports (other than data)
 - Using reports from previous semesters

Cheating

- Minimize cheating by making sure you observe students actually doing the experiments and collecting the data.
- The University has procedures in place to deal with instances of academic misconduct. If you suspect this has occurred in your, you should retain the original reports and discuss the issue with your course supervisor.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is presenting another existing work, original ideas, or creative expressions as one's own without proper attribution.
- If you suspect a student of plagiarism, please follow the instructions on the [SIUE Plagiarism Policy](#) page.