Teaching Workshop for Quantitative Disciplines (Math, Stat, Public Health/Biostat)  
Part I  

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Fall 2009 Teaching Conference for new GSIs  
UC Berkeley, Teaching & Resource Center
Why are we doing this?

- Teaching for the first time is a stressful experience
  - But there are some concrete steps that can be taken to ease fears and worries

We want to:

- Give you some advice on how to get started as a teacher at Berkeley
- Discuss teaching strategies
- Address logistical or teaching-related question
- Encourage reflection on the role of GSIs and long-term development of a teacher
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Motivation
Managing fears
Before the semester starts
Lesson plan for the first day
Group activity

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Attending the teaching conference may seem a burden at first..

- “I could have been at the beach for the whole weekend, if I didn’t have to go back to Berkeley for the conference.”
- “I taught for years at other colleges and still they asked me to attend the conference.”
- “I don’t want to become a teacher. I only need some money for a semester and I have to go through all this.”
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- The week before classes start is one of the most important moments of the semester
- Teaching experience at other colleges is useful, but lots of things may be different at Berkeley
- Learning teaching strategies is a continuous process
- Teaching helps developing skills that are valuable in lots of professional settings
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What are we doing today?

• **Part I**
  - Strategies to deal with fears and worries
  - Preparation before the semester starts
  - First day of class
  - Combination of slides, discussion, group activities

• **Part II**
  - Evaluating teaching
  - Time management
  - Strategies for effective teaching
  - Practice scenarios
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Everyone has some worries before teaching for the first time

What if..

• Students ask me questions I don’t know how to answer?
• I gave the wrong answer?
• Students don’t understand me or don’t want to listen to me?
• Students add me as a friend on Facebook?
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Exercise

- Please write on a piece of paper one or two of your worries about the first day of class, or teaching in general
Resources for managing fears

- Today’s focus sessions on:
  - Hot topics in the classroom
  - Oral presentation skills
  - Problem solving for teachers: scenarios

- Campus teaching resources (see http://gsi.berkeley.edu)
Preparation is key to a smooth semester

- The first meeting with the class sets expectations for the whole semester
- Preparation before the semester drastically reduces the amount of work needed during the semester. Postponement may be painful.
- How to get started?
  - ⇒ Pre-semester checklist handout
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  • ⇒ Pre-semester checklist handout
  • ⇒ More detailed checklist available in the teaching guide (http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide2009/GettingStarted/getting-started-checklist.pdf)
Exercise

- Please go over the checklist handout and mark the activities that you still need to work on
Most important activities from the handout

- Meet with the professor and discuss the function of the section, the role of the GSI, reciprocal expectations and the goals of the course
- Talk to past and present GSIs
- Study the syllabus
- Communicate with departmental staff
- Prepare a lesson plan for the first day and, in case, a section syllabus
- Check bspace: http://bspace.berkeley.edu
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The section syllabus

- It is a document that clarifies the role of the GSIs, expectations for students, policies and guidelines for the class.
- It provides all the necessary information about office hours, how to contact you, policy about late assignments or grade disputes, etc.
- Many of the U.C. policies are outlined in the online ethics course: http://gsi.berkeley.edu/ethics
- Even if you don’t have to prepare a written document, it is useful to think about the content of the syllabus.
Sample section syllabus

Please work in pairs:

1. Identify the components of the sample section syllabus;
2. Read the guidelines to make class time more productive;
3. Think of a couple of guidelines or policies that are appropriate for the section/computer lab you are teaching and that you will want your students to know since the beginning of the semester.
Preparation for the first day of class

The first day of section sets the tone for the class:

- It is the beginning of the teaching/learning relationship
- Think of the environment you want to create during section (formal vs relaxed, etc.)

Writing a lesson plan will help you to:

- clearly think of contents and objectives of a section
- manage the time of a section
- provide a written record of material covered
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Let’s go over a sample lesson plan for the first day of class
Reminder for the first day of class

- Bring your lesson plan
- Bring any handouts, attendance sheets, section syllabus, etc. that you may need
- Bring your own good chalks or board markers, if needed
- Bring water
- Bring a watch
- Dress in layers
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Group activity

1. Reflect on your own experiences and list some of the characteristics of your best ever discussion sections

2. Design an activity for the first day of class (the handout may be of help for your reflections)

3. Choose one person in the group that will summarize the outcome of your group work to the class
Before the break.. Assessment

- On one side of the index card, please list the 2 most relevant things that you have learned today
- On the other side, please write down a question you have