

# EFFECTIVE UNIVERSITY TEACHING: REFLECTING ON AND RESPONDING TO YOUR COURSE EVALUATIONS

Compiled for Stanford Faculty and Lecturers  
by the Center for Teaching and Learning  
Sweet Hall, Stanford, CA 94305-3087

Dear Faculty and Lecturers,

While it is true that some people are naturally inclined to teach well, it's also true that effective teaching depends upon a range of skills and abilities that can be learned and practiced. In this handout, we provide suggestions to help you respond to specific areas of teaching that may have been highlighted by your course evaluations. These suggestions are based on principles of effective learning drawn from psychology, education, observation, and practice. These suggestions are practical, not particularly difficult to implement, and have worked for others. We believe they can work for you.

This handout is specifically geared to the course evaluation forms currently used in the Schools of Humanities & Sciences, Education, and Earth Sciences. The forms in those Schools question students extensively about demographic information as well as seek detailed responses about a course's organization and clarity and the extent to which it promoted student engagement, instructor/student interaction, and section/lab integration. Results are summarized on a Teaching Evaluation Summary form, which you receive the following quarter. As you can see from the following Table of Contents, the brochure is organized for easy cross-reference to the Teaching Evaluation Summary. Use this as a guide to immediately address key facets of your teaching. *Because we do not expect you to read through this brochure from beginning to end but instead to sample those parts most complementary to your evaluation results, there is intentional repetition across sections.*

For more in-depth help, visit the Center for Teaching and Learning's (CTL) web site (<http://www-ctl.stanford.edu>) or visit us in Sweet Hall to peruse books such as Wilbert J. McKeachie's *Teaching Tips* or *Education Through Judgment* by C. Roland Christensen, David Garvin, and Ann Sweet. In addition, we encourage you to talk to one of our teaching consultants, who can discuss specific or general issues with you, and at your request, arrange the videotaping of a class session and review it with you. Call CTL at 723-1326 or email us at [TeachingCenter@stanford.edu](mailto:TeachingCenter@stanford.edu) to make arrangements. You may also want to consult a very useful on-line compilation of teaching tips made available by UC Berkeley at <http://uga.berkeley.edu/sled/compendium>.

Teaching can be as challenging as it can be fulfilling. We encourage and support you in your efforts to provide the best instruction possible to our students.

Sincerely,  
Michele Marincovich, Ph.D.

Assistant Vice Provost and Director, Center for Teaching and Learning

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# I. Organization & Clarity

In this section, we offer suggestions for improving organization and clarity in the *delivery* of instruction, such as during a lecture or class discussion. (See IV: Course Organization, Content, & Evaluation, for suggestions related to organization and clarity in *course planning*). Often, a well-planned lecture can appear to be disorganized and/or unclear because the instructor:

- 1) fails to leave adequate time to cover new material and ends up having to race through the last part of a class,
- 2) does not clearly signal shifts in topics or the progression of key ideas within various topics,
- 3) is so well-versed in his or her subject matter that he or she makes assumptions that students will understand critical links intuitively,
- 4) does not anticipate something in students' background or facility with the terminology that results in unanticipated confusion or misunderstanding.

Delivering well-sequenced lectures and class presentations is essential, since concepts presented in an unclear manner can result in misinterpretations that are difficult to untangle. You can learn a lot about your presentation style by having yourself videotaped during class. You can then observe physical gestures, eye contact, board work, interaction patterns, as well as your use of your voice and your pacing. Taping almost always yields surprising and valuable insights; to request free videotaping, call the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at 723-1326 approximately a week in advance of your desired date.

## A. Setting & Meeting Clear Objectives

For each session, identify up to three critical points that you want students to leave class understanding. Points are not mathematical formulas or historical facts, but the reasons for understanding them, as well as an explanation of how these points relate to overall course goals (i.e., "Students will learn syllogistic reasoning and understand its value for structuring an argumentative essay. Syllogistic reasoning relates to the overall course goals of learning clear, logical, and persuasive exposition"). These points are your objectives for the session. This is even important for class discussions—students (and instructors) should know why a particular topic is worth discussing in terms of overall course goals. Some teaching experts go even further in asking you to develop instructional objectives that are specific, observable, and measurable, so that it is possible to determine if students have met your goals for them. R. M. Felder and R. Brent in *Effective Teaching* (North Carolina State University, 1999) suggest that instead of indicating students should "understand the principles of pollution control" you would specify that students should "if given the flow chart of a chemical process production plant, be able to:

- a) identify potential hazardous pollutants.
- b) estimate the likelihood that their emission rates will exceed EPA regulations.
- c) select monitoring devices for each emission source and justify the selections.
- d) design a system for reducing an unacceptable emission level and identify its possible flaws."

Outline how each objective will be addressed during the session. Initially, you will want to take the time to actually write the connections. After that, the old journalism rule applies: *Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em, tell 'em, tell 'em what you've told them.* During the session, highlight each objective to students as points

Also, advertise your email address and encourage students to use it. Not all will, but email conversations, which take place in a less formal register than class meetings or even office hours, are often an ideal means by which students can establish individual contact with an instructor.

-Students value professor feedback. Provide enough written feedback about students' assignments and exams that they know how to do better next time. Consider scheduling one office hour session with each student in the course, if this is feasible. Alternatively, you can create study groups for assignments and projects, and schedule meetings with the group.

-listen carefully to students' questions and make sure you are interpreting them correctly. Ask students whether your response has clarified their confusion. Distribute a mid-quarter course evaluation, assessing the extent to which the course content meets students' needs and expectations, the value of readings and assignments, the reasonableness of workload, and how students feel about participating in class and approaching you for help. Alternatively, you can ask the Center For Teaching and Learning (723-1326) to do a Student Small Group Evaluation at midquarter.

-Help students review course material. Ask them to gather all or some of their work from the quarter (papers, exams, homework) and organize them into a portfolio. Schedule meeting times with students to review their portfolios and discuss their progress (if the class size permits). Organize review sessions before exams.

## B. Motivating Student Interest

-Learn and use students' names (depending on the size of the class). This can help students feel recognized and more involved in the class. Help students learn each other's names.

-Give students the opportunity to evaluate their own progress with quizzes that they grade themselves, or assignments in which they write long and short-term goals and record their progress towards these goals.

-Wait longer for answers after asking questions that require more synthesis---even 30 seconds to one minute (this may take some practice on your part). If you intend to provide longer "wait time" for students to think about their answers, tell them that you are going to do so. This can reduce the anxiety which is sometimes caused by silence, and it will more likely encourage students to actually think. Show that you are listening to students' comments by asking followup questions or paraphrasing their remarks.

-Make your expectations for student work clear. Create handouts that detail requirements and expectations for assignments, including due dates and criteria for grading. Then provide regular and timely feedback to students. Return assignments promptly Give students the chance to rewrite papers and redo problems so that they can correct their mistakes and learn from them. Recognize students' efforts and achievements so that you build their confidence.

-Be clear about what are correct and incorrect responses to questions. Use incorrect answers as opportunities to examine misconceptions. Remember to balance critical or negative comments with genuine positive feedback. Avoid correcting students in ways that embarrass them. For example, suggesting that a concept is "clear," "simple," or "obvious" to students for whom it does not seem clear, simple, or obvious can inhibit their motivation and prevent them from asking or answering questions in your class.

-If teaching a large lecture course, try to attend a lab or section meeting to

regarding a particular concept, review it in class.

- Encourage students to ask you questions by email or even require students to send you a certain number of questions by email on the assigned reading. Some faculty also set up electronic discussions to enable students to carry on exchanges about material outside of class. For this, you can use the Stanford Learning Lab's Panfara (see their web pages at <http://www-sll.stanford.edu>) or ask Clt's assistance in setting up CourseInfo (a commercial product for which Stanford has a site license) by calling 725-4164.

#### D. Distinguishing Between More vs. Less Important Topics

- Highlight critical information. By voice modulation, repetition, or your choice of vocabulary (for example, by saying "now this is really significant"), let students know which topics are most important. Emphasize those topics in the course syllabus and during class sessions; feature them in an outline you show at the beginning or throughout your lecture. Use the board, overheads, and handouts to highlight and summarize important points. Spend more time on important topics, less time on less important topics. Identify concepts that are most likely to be addressed on a test, or that should be utilized/referred to in a paper.
- Avoid getting side-tracked by less relevant questions and comments. Write them down on a side board or large piece of paper and return to them if time permits at the end of the session or at the beginning of the next session. Offer to meet with the students who ask these questions/comments after class or in office hours.
- Recognize that students will strategize in determining the attention paid to various reading material. Highlight the readings that they should attend to more carefully.

#### E. Presenting Material at an Appropriate Pace

- Leave more time than you think you need to cover new or complex material. Rushing through information is a sure way to confuse students. Consider dividing your lecture into 10-minute segments. This will break big topics into bite-sized chunks.
- Use a mid-term evaluation of your own design or CfI's Student Small Group Evaluation technique early enough in the quarter that you can check out the appropriateness of your pace and adjust it if need be.
- Check for understanding. Stop once or twice in lecture and ask students in pairs or small groups to take five minutes to explain material to each other or to solve a relevant problem. Use quizzes (even if ungraded) or Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS—for a discussion of these techniques, see Angelo, Thomas, & Cross, K. Patricia. Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers [2nd ed.]. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993) to ensure students are "with you" as you cover new material. During lectures, leave time for students to ask questions. At the beginning of a session and periodically in a lecture, don't just ask students if they have questions, ask them what questions they have. Assume that an absence of questions could indicate that students don't understand enough to generate questions rather than they understand it all. If a number of students approach you after class or during office hours regarding a particular concept, review it in class.
- Build short breaks into classes that meet over an hour. Even a five-minute break can restore students' focus.
- Particularly if you are new to teaching, check out early on that your assumptions about students' background and abilities are realistic. Don't use your own experiences as a student as your

sole guide since you wouldn't be a professor if you were a "typical" learner in your discipline.

## II. Engaging & Challenging Students

Engaging and challenging students are essential in helping them internalize course material. When students can link information or concepts to prior knowledge or experiences, they can more easily grasp new ideas. In fact, some would define learning as this very process. Similarly, when students grapple with new ideas, they are actually finding ways to fit them into their existing knowledge. From this perspective, "engagement" means more than entertaining students. It means finding the intellectual hooks upon which to hang new concepts and ideas. The suggestions below will help you think about how to provide opportunities for students to internalize learning.

#### A. Emphasizing Conceptual Understanding & Critical Thinking

- Explore students' prior knowledge early in the course (perhaps by asking them to fill in a questionnaire at the first class on their background and reasons for taking the course) and as you present new ideas. This allows you to meet students where they are intellectually, helping you to link new knowledge to existing understanding.
- Be sure to leave time during class for questions and discussion. Before class, when you can think clearly about it, draft critical questions you can ask students in order to reinforce material. Ask both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions (those that can't be responded to with a simple "yes" or "no") tend to increase participation and reveal student thinking. Closed-ended questions can quickly test basic understanding of specific points. Also, identify low-level questions that address basic knowledge and facts as well as high-level questions that require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Avoid asking leading questions for which only one answer is expected. You can further students' present knowledge by asking them to expand upon their responses to your questions. Ask students to verbalize their ideas and thought processes. This can enhance their critical thinking skills and enable them to notice flaws in their reasoning.
- Model your thinking processes and how you approach the material or problem by working through actual examples during class. Follow up by having students do problems as well. Identify and explore with students the unanswered questions in your field.
- Take time during a lecture for students (in pairs or small groups) to discuss a question, summarize, or compare notes with one another. Providing students with application problems can raise their level of comprehension. Faculty in business, education, law, and medicine have students discuss actual or hypothetical cases to which they can apply course concepts. Commend students in class and during grading for critical and analytical thinking.
- Actively involve students in learning. Create assignments or exams that give students choices for topics to explore and/or options for demonstrating competence. Request that students prepare questions (perhaps even exam questions) about the material that they can send you by email before class or turn in as homework.
- Have students keep journals to record their ideas and thoughts, difficulties

in understanding the material, etc. Read, but do not grade, these journals. Ask students to complete a mid-quarter questionnaire to assess whether your class is engaging and challenging.

### B. Relating Course Topics to One Another

- Give students opportunities to reflect on course material by allowing time to discuss their initial reactions to assigned readings, especially as they relate to current or prior topics covered in the course. (This can also be done by email or by an electronic discussion forum.) Allow students to paraphrase and/or brainstorm and/or ask questions about topics covered in the previous lecture. Give students a task, such as creating a chart, an outline, or a concept map, to organize the important ideas.
- Draw links between assignments. If the course includes a final or on-going project, refer to the applicability of new and prior concepts to the project throughout the term.
- Give students opportunities to wrestle with course concepts. You can do this by writing exams that include questions that call for synthesizing, analyzing, and applying concepts (although you should be careful to model all these approaches and give students opportunities to practice them before expecting students to demonstrate their mastery in an exam). Also, avoid providing the answer to your own questions; continue probing to allow students to build upon what they know so they can arrive at answers on their own.

## III. Interacting With Students

If human interaction were not essential for learning, computer-based instruction would be much more successful than it has turned out to be. Students at all levels learn better when their instructor demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject matter and appears to care whether students learn or not. At Stanford, we can expect students to take the initiative for successful learning. We can also expect instructors to be prepared to support such initiative, and to encourage those intimidated either by the subject matter or the thought of approaching a course instructor. Interacting with students can be the most rewarding facet of teaching. At the least, all students appreciate instructors who are approachable and show genuine concern about their success. For some students, these elements of your teaching will actually determine the difference between success and failure.

### A. Demonstrating Concern for Student Learning

- Define your instructor's role as being part of a "community of scholars" rather than simply as an authority figure. If students see you only as an authority figure, they will be less likely to develop a deep understanding of the material and will only look to you to judge the "correctness" of their answers. If you are teaching students who are new to the university (undergraduates or graduates), take time during the first day of class to tell them about relevant academic advising services and university policies.
- During the first class period, collect information from students about why they are taking the class and what they expect to learn from it. You can then adjust your approach to better address students' expectations. Show that you are interested in your students' progress and learning by asking them how they feel about assignments and which aspects of the course present problems for them. Encourage students to visit your office hours. Advertise the hours on the syllabus and in class.

Do not schedule student meetings only "by appointment only." only "by appointment only." Also, advertise your email address and encourage students to use it. Not all will, but email conversations, which take place in a less formal register than class meetings or even office hours, are often an ideal means by which students can establish individual contact with an instructor.

- Students value professor feedback. Provide enough written feedback about students' assignments and exams that they know how to do better next time. Consider scheduling one office hour session with each student in the course, if this is feasible. Alternatively, you can create study groups for assignments and projects, and schedule meetings with the group.

- listen carefully to students' questions and make sure you are interpreting them correctly. Ask students whether your response has clarified their confusion. Distribute a mid-quarter course evaluation, assessing the extent to which the course content meets students' needs and expectations, the value of readings and assignments, the reasonableness of workload, and how students feel about participating in class and approaching you for help. Alternatively, you can ask the Center For Teaching and Learning (723- 1326) to do a Student Small Group Evaluation at midquarter.

- Help students review course material. Ask them to gather all or some of their work from the quarter (papers, exams, homework) and organize them into a portfolio. Schedule meeting times with students to review their portfolios and discuss their progress (if the class size permits). Organize review sessions before exams.

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- If teaching a large lecture course, try to attend a lab or section meeting to observe your students' participation and help you assess their progress. Doing so also sends a message to your students and teaching assistants that you are interested in their work.

-Demonstrate your enthusiasm about the subject matter-don't be afraid to infect your students with it. Begin classes with thought-provoking questions or recent news events that relate to the topic of discussion. Show students how the course material can be applied to real life. Provide and ask for application examples. Use multimedia presentations to enhance the learning experience and help students conceptualize the material in different ways.

-Require active student participation by asking students to work in pairs or small groups.

### C. Making Yourself Available Outside of Class

-Encourage students to visit during your office hours (then be sure you are in your office during those times). Advertise the hours on the syllabus and in class. Do not schedule student meetings only "by appointment On1)!" Advertise your email address and encourage students to use it. Not all will, but email conversations, which take place in a less formal register than class meetings or even office hours, are often an ideal means by which students can establish individual contact with an instructor.

-Use a suggestion box for students to leave questions and comments about the class. Or ask for a small number of students to volunteer as teaching consultants to meet with you every two weeks or so to discuss how the class is going and to serve as a conduit for suggestions and comments from the rest of the students in the class.

## IV. Course Organization, Content, & Evaluation

Course planning involves a sophisticated knowledge of what's most important about and in your subject matter; an understanding of the background, needs, and abilities of the students in the course; an appreciation of the role of your course material in the curriculum of your field or in the general education requirements; and an awareness of a variety of effective teaching methods, especially when covering concepts that may be particularly difficult for students. It is not unusual for instructors to wrestle with a course's organization, content, and evaluation methods the first several times they teach it-and to continually refine it each time it's offered.

### A. Selecting Valuable Content

-Carefully pick the overall goals of the course, and outline specific objectives for each session. Talk over your ideas and approaches with colleagues and former students. Attend to previous course evaluations when planning (see IA. Setting and Meeting Clear Objectives).

-Choose textbooks and readings that relate to your goals and the goals of the course. If several texts seem appropriate, consider the following: accuracy of content, viewpoint, clarity, level of difficulty, format, price, and layout. Actually use (refer to, assign reading in, or use problems from) the texts you require students to buy.

-Choose readings and assignments that directly address critical goals-do not include a lot of reading or activities that might be relevant but not central. If you do not intend to refer to a reading during class, question whether it really ought to be assigned.

-Ask students' opinions about the quality of the textbook and readings, and use student feedback to judge whether you should continue using the material the next time you teach the

course. This can easily be done at the end of the term by providing copies of the syllabus (that includes readings and projects) or the table of contents of a reader, and have students rate each reading and assignment for a) relevance to the course, b) value, and c) interest.

-Keep a teaching journal for each course. If you take 10 minutes right after each class session to note topics and methods that were effective or ineffective, you'll have a valuable resource the next time you plan the course. Put these notes right at the front of the file you keep on each course.

### B. Organizing Topics in a Coherent Fashion

-Review all your course materials BEFORE the course begins so that you have in mind a clear "road map" of where you are going and how you intend to get there. Review your course organization with a colleague. Then, before each class session in addition to preparing current material, review your notes from the previous session and the upcoming one. Make explicit links to prior material. Foreshadow upcoming material.

-Guide your students through the readings-state your goals for assigning particular readings and how they relate to the goals of your assignments and the course overall. If students have had little or no exposure to your field of study, you might also want to give them tips on how to approach the reading (e.g., important terminology and major themes to pay attention to).

-When students come to office hours or approach you after class, engage them in discussions about the material. Note gaps and confusions that may affect many students and address those issues in class.

-In designing handouts and overheads, highlight important points with different fonts or with color. Use graphic displays to represent ideas. Leave blanks in outlines or charts for students to complete. Ask for student feedback on handouts that were unclear.

-Periodically give students one to three minutes at the end of class to summarize main points of a lecture in their own words. Have students hand these in anonymously. It doesn't take long to skim a class's response to such an exercise, and the results can be illuminating.

### C. Choosing Assignments that Solidify Understanding

-Choose assignments or test items that relate directly to your critical goals and objectives. Consider the course materials students will have to use in order to complete these assignments-will the most important information be reviewed in the process? Also, talk with colleagues about assignments they have found successful. Ask other instructors or teaching assistants to review assignments before they are given to students in order to help you determine whether they are pitched at an appropriate level.

-Analyze the comprehension level tested by assignments and exams and try to incorporate problems that require basic knowledge in addition to those which require synthesis and a deeper comprehension of material. Include assignments that focus on comprehension, application, problem solving, and synthesis. Assignments that require students to review their thought process help both you and them.

-Vary the methods of evaluation you use so that different skills are exercised. In-class quizzes and exercises, out of class assignments, term projects, short papers, and exams require students to internalize information and employ knowledge at varying depths and breadth. Use multiple testing methods (multiple-choice, essay, open-book, projects) because different students prefer different formats. Consider combining formats as well, for example, by having students explain the rationale for their answers to multiple-choice

to multiple-choice questions. Research has shown that allowing students to explain their answers on tests can relieve anxiety.

-Students' understanding will improve as they are provided increased opportunities to internalize course material. Ask students to create a good question or problem for an exam and grade them on the level of difficulty and quality of their question. Have students retake exams in small groups (after completing the exams individually) to give them another learning opportunity. Give students extra credit for scoring well on the group exam. Also, you can create assignments or test items that ask students to relate topics to their own lives and/or prior knowledge.

-The following tasks can enhance critical and creative thinking: Examine case studies, debates, or controversies in the field of study; ask students to explain relationships among topics to help them integrate information; create hypothetical situations for discussion; ask students to explore both sides of an issue; have students invent dialogues among important characters or figures that you have discussed.

-Review returned tests and assignments in class. Spend time summarizing what you learned from grading students' assignments (points most understood, common misconceptions).

#### D. Explaining Clearly How Students Will Be Evaluated

-Identify clearly in your course syllabus the assignments that will be required throughout the term and how they are weighted. Review this in class. Clearly explain exam formats and evaluation procedures in advance. Provide handouts that clearly detail the background, requirements, and criteria for evaluation for each paper or project you assign. Provide students with examples of successful reports, papers, projects, and written responses in exams. Be sure to clearly signal if assignment requirements, due dates, and/or grading criteria change during the quarter but avoid such changes if at all possible.

0-Advise students how to study for and how to approach your tests. Give students a practice exam including questions similar to those you will ask on the actual test. Provide study questions and review sheets before exams.

-During class, be explicit about the important points students need to remember and why they are important. At the end of each class session, write down a few questions that could be used for assignments and tests. This will ensure that your assessments relate to the material discussed in class.

#### E. Designing and Using Fair Grading Procedures

-Teach students what you want them to learn. As you draft assignments or test items, ask yourself if you have taught this material. Some students may be able to glean the implications and extensions of material covered, but students should not be expected to do so in order to succeed in the course. For example, when creating assessments, use problems similar to those in homework assignments. Also, if many students do poorly on a quiz or test, consider reteaching and re-testing.

. Think carefully about the grading standards (absolute vs. curve) you intend to use. Grading on a curve (for one student to do well, another must do poorly) tends to promote a competitive atmosphere in the class, decreasing incentives for students to collaborate.

-Provide clear, direct, and specific feedback that informs students how they

can improve. Written (and verbal) comments should relate to the student's work, not to his or her abilities or your assessment of his or her effort. For example:

Inappropriate: You don't seem to grasp this concept.

Appropriate: Your summary of this topic reflects confusion about the main ideas.

Inappropriate: You didn't put sufficient time into this assignment.

Appropriate: The quality of writing and content of this assignment fall below the expectations of this course.

- Don't rush your grading-allow yourself enough time so that you are thoughtful and consistent when responding to students' work. Being consistent is essential, especially in evaluating papers, projects, or essay exams. One way to ensure consistency in subjective assessments is to create rubrics that specify the expectations of content and identify characteristics of exceptional, adequate, and inadequate work. These should be included in or strongly suggested on assignment sheets. In classes with multiple sections, discuss grading policies and criteria with teaching assistants. "Norm" evaluation procedures by grading a number of essay questions or papers as a group. Lack of consistency from section to section is a perennial problem and a source of frequent student complaint.

-Consider multiple methods of feedback: Provide tape-recorded responses to students' work or ask students to turn in work electronically so that you can insert comments; ask students to turn in memos, along with their assignments, that describe their concerns and problems with assignments, so that you can respond to their needs. Ask students to comment on the content, format, and fairness of exams and assignments.

#### v. Integrating Sections and Labs into Course Structure

-Teaching assistants should be aware of topics covered in lecture, either by attending lectures or (less desirably) through lecture notes you provide. Therefore, work closely with your teaching assistants. At least one week before class begins, and preferably much earlier if you know in advance which TAs are assigned to you, give your teaching assistants copies of the syllabus, handouts, and other course materials. Check that your TAs have taken advantage of training opportunities offered by the department or CfL. If they haven't, require them to take the soonest opportunities available to them. Schedule a meeting for new teaching assistants to meet with TAs who have taught the course in previous years. During the quarter, meet regularly with your TAs (preferably weekly) to discuss section/lab coordination, previous weeks' experiences, important topics to be covered, activities and/or assignments that could be useful in teaching the material, section and/or lab adjustments, and feedback by and about students.

-If you teach a large lecture course, occasionally attend the section or lab meetings. Ask teaching assistants to visit the sections of other teaching assistants to share approaches and give each other advice.

-Discuss grading policies and criteria with teaching assistants. "Norm" evaluation procedures by grading a number of essay questions or papers as a group. Lack of consistency from section to section is a perennial problem, and a source of frequent student complaint.