Juggling Manapua:
Being a Teacher and a Student at the Same Time

Orientation for International Teaching Assistants

Priscilla Chen Faucette & Kenton Harsch
English Language Institute
In groups of 4-5…
Write 2-5 things for each of these questions:

• What things are you most looking forward to about being a TA?
• What things about being a TA do you feel a bit of anxiety about?
Three major areas of concern:

- Dealing with a different academic **culture**
- Concerns about **language**
- Concerns related to **teaching**
Culture

• What is culture? (useful metaphors)
  • Roots vs. routes
  • The iceberg concept
  • Others?
Culture

• What is meant by “acculturation into the academic community”?
• Diversity and how it affects teaching, learning, and campus life?
• Getting advice and answers
Language

- Accent

- UH population - students & teachers
Language

• Good communication
  • Hints
  • Pronunciation
  • Rephrase
  • Visuals
  • Check understanding
Language

• Observe model teachers/communicators
• Pay attention to students
Language

• And finally... Be realistic - not too hard on yourself
Teaching

• If it’s your first time to teach, or first time as a TA:
  • Nervousness
  • Being a TA, not a “professor”
  • Can I teach well?

*Answer: Emphasize your strengths!*
Teaching

• Good teaching is good teaching
  • Be explicit and clear
  • Develop a comfortable learning atmosphere
  • Be organized, prepare well
  • Visual support
  • Leave time at the end for questions
  • Try to understand who your students are, and their level of ability in your field
Teaching

• Good teaching is good teaching
  • Use a variety of ways of getting student feedback
  • Do a mid-semester evaluation (e.g., CTE)
Teaching

• “Getting around” on the job
  • Talk to other TAs
  • Talk to your advisor (or other professors)
  • Get prior semesters’ syllabi and materials
  • **Be kind to the department secretary!**
Teaching

One last piece of advice…

*Set aside time for yourself*