Slides at https://duke.is/6ym2w.

TA Training

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Introduction

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Introduction

Meet at least two people around you,
make sure you learn how to pronounce their names correctly.

Please sign in!

https://duke.is/5scwg

Raise your hand if…

- ➔ This is your first time TAing…
- ➔ As a student, you've never had a TA before…

Duke StatSci

- ➔ We are one of the best statistics departments in the world
- ➔ As one of the best departments in the world, one of the most important things we do is education
- ➔ This semester we have over 1,500 students enrolled in our courses!

Why should you care?

- ➔ Think about what happens with a quantitatively illiterate leadership.
- ➔ Starting today you are now partially responsible for the quantitative literacy of Duke students and it's partly on your shoulders how much they know and what skills they take with them when they graduate.
- ➔ Your TA responsibilities will be one of the most important responsibilities you shoulder while a student at Duke.

Today's agenda

- ➔ *information* on things you need to know
- ➔ some *expectations* for doing your job
- ➔ some *advice* for surviving the experience

“What’s in a TA?”

Types of TA roles

- ➔ Lab TA
- ➔ Non-lab TA
- ➔ Head TA
- ➔ *Others?*

Lab TA

- ➔ “Lead” or “help” at least 1 lab session per week – more on these shortly!
- ➔ Hold 2 office hours per week
- ➔ Provide support on course discussion forum
- ➔ Attend weekly TA meetings
- ➔ [Most likely also] Do grading

Non-lab TA

- ➔ Hold 2 office hours per week
- ➔ Provide support on course discussion forum
- ➔ Attend weekly TA meetings
- ➔ Do grading

Head TA

- ➔ 1 for each large course
- ➔ Generally a graduate student (PhD or MS)
- ➔ Roles vary: See https://github.com/DukeStatSci/head-ta-training/blob/main/Head-TA-Responsibilities.pdf for more

* Not focusing on this more today, attend Head TA training next week.

Labs

What does a lab leader do?

- Generally:
  - Your role is not to be the *sage on the stage* (though every once in a while this can be helpful!), your role is to be *guide on the side*.
  - Start with a 5-10 minute introduction to the lab assignment, then let students work on their own/in teams, walk around and provide just-in-time help, bring the class back together when common questions arise.
- Course differ in how they define “lab leader”, so the best person to define this for you is your course instructor.

What does a lab helper do?

- ➔ Some courses (generally intro, larger ones) also assign a lab helper.
- ➔ The lab helper is generally the second “guide on the side”.
- ➔ Ultimately, the course instructor will define this for you as well.

Tips for teaching R (or any computing language)

- Live code, early and often
  - Watch out for: Screen resolution, font size
  - Tip: Check how the screen looks from the back of the classroom
- Help with finding help
  - Watch out for: Scrolling too fast,
  - Tip: Narrate each step, as if you're talking to yourself
- Define and pronounce
  - How does one say dplyr anyway?
- Help with asking questions
  - Must provide at least the actual code, the output, the error
  - In R: reprex 📦
- Resist the urge to touch the student's keyboard!

Troubleshooting

- Bring your own laptop
- At the beginning of the semester, find out who to call for AV help
  - Most likely: TTS - 919-684-3088
  - But depends on the building you're in!
  - Ask Dr. Durso if you need help figuring this out

Computing

Types of computing approaches

- ➔ Local install
- ➔ OIT Containers
- ➔ Departmental servers

OIT containers

- ➔ Maintained by OIT
- ➔ Used in undergraduate courses
- ➔ If a student cannot access their container
  - ◆ Check if it's a student-specific issue by trying to log on yourself. If you can log on, but the student can't, verify in person/on Zoom and then try restart browser, try a different browser, try a different network, reboot computer, and clear cache. If nothing helps, report to Joan.
  - ◆ If you also can't log on, check status.oit.duke.edu, if not reported there, report to Joan.
- ➔ What to report: Net IDs, URLs of containers, error messages

Departmental servers

- Maintained by the department
- Used in MS and PhD courses
- Troubleshooting:
  - Email stat-help@duke.edu, if you don't hear back within a day, escalate to Dr. Colin Rundel (colin.rundel@duke.edu)
  - If URGENT, put that on the email subject, email stat-help@duke.edu and cc Dr. Colin Rundel
  - Describe in as much detail as possible!

Office hours

Sign up!

- ➔ Go to https://duke.is/nbm49 and sign up
- ➔ The sheet will be closed to editing on Day 1 of classes (Wednesday). If you need to make updates after then, request edit permission.

Running office hours

- ➔ Be prepared – keep up with course material
- ➔ Be empathetic – for majority of the students, it's the first time they're seeing this material
- ➔ When you don't know how to work to the answer, do NOT fake it. Be honest, and seek another TA or the instructor
- ➔ Let the instructor know if you have students who are struggling with the material or who don't know where to begin or if you're seeing common questions come up frequently

Grading

Grading

- ➔ Be prepared – keep up with course material
- ➔ Be empathetic – for majority of the students, it's the first time they're seeing this material
- ➔ Be constructive – nobody wants to see just "-5", comment on why the points were deducted
- ➔ Grade within one week or within the time set by your instructor – feedback that is late is much less valuable!

Other tools

Sakai

- Two Sakai sites you must be in:
  - Your course's Sakai site
  - STATSCI TA Sp23
- You may or may not have access to Gradebook

Zoom

- ➔ Use Duke account
- ➔ Make sure “Only open to @duke.edu participants” is checked
- ➔ Keep Zoom links on Sakai, avoid posting them publicly

Gradescope

- ➔ Your course might be using Gradescope
- ➔ Training should be provided within the course or can be provided by Dr. Durso upon request
- ➔ How Gradescope looks to you as a student is different than how it looks to you as a TA!

Discussion forums

- Faculty choose which discussion forum they want to use, could be something in Sakai (Ed Discussions, Conversations, etc.) or something like Slack
- Make sure you're on it! And make sure you're responding (at reasonable hours).
- Golden rules:
  - Wait a bit before responding to a question, but don't wait too long.
  - Avoid giving full solutions but help the student out of a rut.

Further training

Further training

- **Required:** All TAs must complete the following training modules before they TA the first time:
  - Coursera TA Training module
  - Harassment Prevention training

If you haven't done these, Dr. Durso will reach out with instructions.

- **For Head TAs:** To be scheduled for next week!
- **Optional:** See https://dukestatsci.github.io/ta-manual/training.html#further-training for more training opportunities.

Guidelines

Guidelines

https://dukestatsci.github.io/ta-manual/students.html

- ➔ Academic misconduct
- ➔ Teamwork
- ➔ Students with disabilities
- ➔ Diversity and inclusiveness
- ➔ Harassment
- ➔ Relationships with students
- ➔ Emergency conditions
- ➔ Mental health and wellness

Payroll and timekeeping

Payroll and timekeeping

- ➔ PLEASE answer any email or requests from Mrs. Nicole Scott immediately
- ➔ Biweekly employees must submit their timecards per the posted schedule
- ➔ Post your hours and save them each time you work
- ➔ Then check, save and submit before the deadline
- ➔ Employment paperwork is crucial; communicate quickly if needed
- ➔ Students may not work more than 19.9 hours in total across all campus jobs

Parting remarks

Important dates

- ➔ Wednesday, January 11 - First day of classes
- ➔ Wednesday, April 19 - Graduate classes end
- ➔ Wednesday, April 26 - Undergraduate classes end
- ➔ Saturday, May 6 - Final exams end

TA manual

- ➔ Updated once a semester
- ➔ Posted on Sakai
- ➔ HTML version at https://dukestatsci.github.io/ta-manual/
- ➔ Repo at https://github.com/DukeStatSci/ta-manual – feel free to PR if you catch typos :)

The Fundamental Rule for TAs is…

- ➔ Always talk with your instructor if you have questions, concerns or suggestions.
- ➔ Talk with the other TAs.
- ➔ Talk with the DUS, the Undergraduate Coordinator, and the departmental staff.
- ➔ Ask for help if you need it, ask your questions, and keep asking.
- ➔ Let us know what you need in order to do your job and to do it well.
- ➔ We’re glad you are here and willing to help out.

Any wisdom from experienced TAs?

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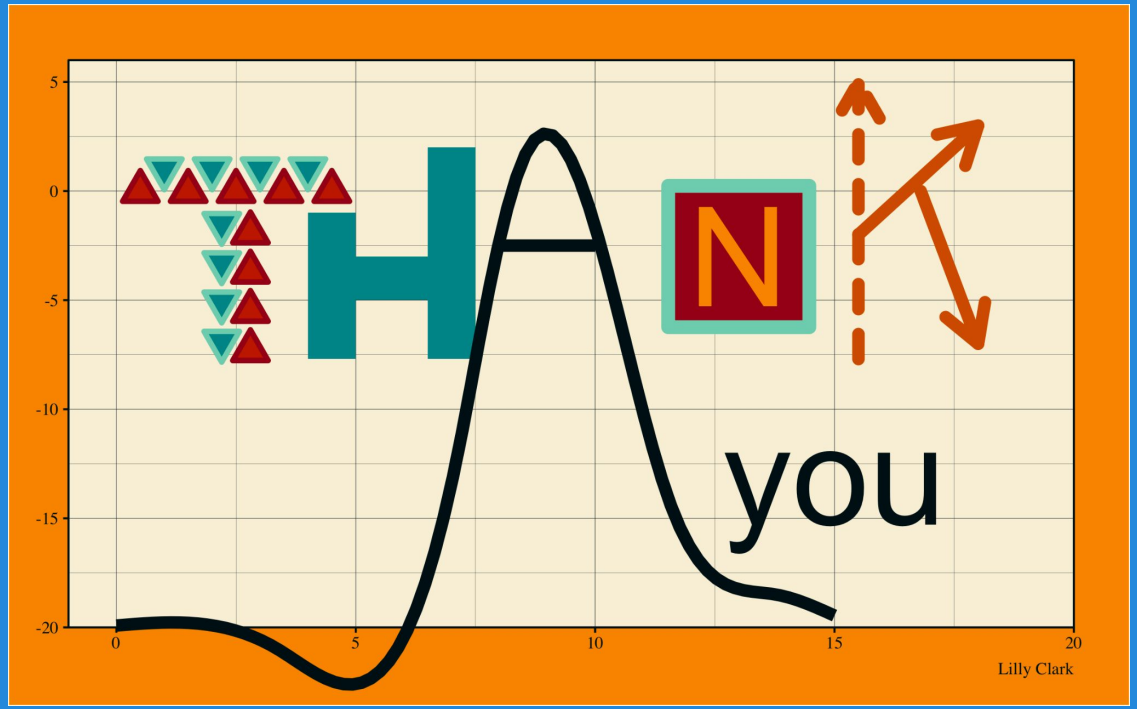

Questions?

Think, pair, share

Think, pair, share

- Grab a partner.
- Pick your role: One of you is a TA, one of you is a student.
- Setting: It is 15 minutes before a homework is due.
- Students: You aren't finished, and you don't have a clue about the material. You are desperate not to lose points on the homework, because this is the easiest part of your grade. You go into office hours and try to get the TA to give you an answer to the following question: ***Test scores follow a normal curve with mean 75 and standard deviation 10. What percentage of the class scored 65 or less?*** You are focused on time, 15 minutes until class, and you just want an answer.
- TA: Your goal is for the student to learn the material and do the question on their own.

Recap

- ➔ How many TAs think they were able to handle it well?
- ➔ How many students think their TA was able to handle it well?
- ➔ Share your strategies, students first, TAs second.

Reverse roles

- Setting: Class in which late homework is not accepted.
- Students: You are late on the homework because you opted to watch the basketball game and drink in celebration of Duke's victory, but you can't afford to get a zero on the homework. Your goal is to manipulate the TA into grading your homework without telling anyone that it was late.
- TA: You need to make the student understand the course policy and why you aren't willing to forgo the course policy.

Recap

- ➔ How many TAs think they were able to handle it well?
- ➔ How many students think their TA was able to handle it well?
- ➔ Share your strategies, students first, TAs second.