TA Portfolio for CSE 599

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Course TA'ing for : CSE 258, under Dr. McAuley

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TA journal

Time spent? Celebrate! What can be improved?

Pre-quarter set-up / Week 0:

<<Include link to PDF / screen shot / summary of completed ASES form>>

APPENDIX "D"
REQUIRED FORM: DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

DESCRIPTION OF *Teaching Assistant* (TA) DUTIES

Term: F A 17 Supervisor name: JULIAN MC AULEY ASE (TA)name: SRINATH NARAYANAN

Course #: CSE 258 Course Title: Recommender Systems & Web Mining

Location: Peterson 108 Day/Time: M - W 6.30 - 8 pm

The job duties designated below are required of the Academic Student Employee.
(Please check the appropriate items and describe, as applicable):

____ Attend lectures

____ Present ____ lectures

____ Instruction of ____ sections/labs per week

✓ Preparation

✓ Hold _1_ office hours per week

____ Supervisor/ASE(s) meeting ____ hours per week

✓ Read and evaluate _50_ papers per student

✓ Proctor _1_ examinations

____ Perform individual and/or group tutoring

____ Class/faculty visits

✓ Maintain/submit student records (e.g., grades)

____ Perform other tasks as assigned. Please list: _____

A Teaching Assistant with a 50% appointment shall not be assigned a workload of more than 220 hours per quarter (340 hours per semester) or a workload of over 40 hours in any one week. The number of hours worked in excess of 20 hours per week may not total more than 50 hours per quarter or 77 hours per semester. This standard shall apply proportionately to other percent appointments.

In addition, a Teaching Assistant with an appointment of 50% or less shall not be assigned a workload of more than 40 hours in any one week or more than 8 hours in any one day.

This check sheet is designed to be distributed to all ASEs except those who are designated as the Instructor of Record for the course.

Instructor Signature _____

Date 3/10/17

Week 1:
Hours spent :
- Piazza - Wrote syllabus, office hours, introduction, and setup student accounts - 2 hours
- Attended lectures - 4 hours
- Piazza - Answered 4-5 questions after through research - 2 hours

Victory of the week :
- I was able to convince a student that her preconception was incorrect, and showed her a good analogue that convinced her why that path shouldn't be followed and why it is flawed. She seemed really happy about the answer and thanked me. I was happy that I was able to correctly justify my position as a TA not only from the technical stand-point but also from the inter-personal skill stand-point.

Opportunities :
- I should have introduced myself better during the 1st class meeting. Since the Professor caught me off-guard while introducing me, I just stood up and let the Professor introduce me. Since he didn't know much about my background, he couldn't give a proper introduction, and the students might not have felt any connect. I believe the first impression is very important and hence I should have practiced it before.

Plans for next week :
- I plan to be more concise and not waste student's time. I sometime go overboard with enthusiasm and try to give multiple examples, effectively confusing the student. Hence, I plan to be more thoughtful of what I say and make sure the student understands the answer.
- I also plan to ask thought-provoking and doubt-inducing questions which I believe will intrigue the student, to find his/her own answers, and improve the understanding of the subject.

Week 2:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 3 hours - Answered questions, cleared doubts and attended to issues with homework
Lecture prep - 2 hours
Homework assistance - 4 hours

Victory :
- Helped students understand a difficult issue with the homework. They had to apply a new technique to get a solution with the given data and that proved to be a hassle to implement. I was able to guide them to the right resources to handle the problem.
- Introduced them to cross-validation and bagging approaches

Opportunities :

- My co-TA missed her TA session by an hour. She had forgot to attend it, and the students complained that the room was empty in Piazza. I attended to their concerns and called the TA to remind her of the session. I also arranged a new room for an extended TA session to account for the time lost.

Plans :
- My TA session is upcoming so I need to prepare for it. Homework 1 submission deadline is up, and hence I plan to implement Homework 1 myself and get ready for grading next week by studying rubrics and attending to other issues with homework

Week 3:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 3 hours - Answered questions, cleared doubts and attended to issues with homework
Lecture prep - 2 hours
Homework assistance - 4 hours
Prepared Midterms - 2 hours
Held office hours - 3 hours

Victory :
- Helped students with the homework.
- Successfully held office hours.
- Graded HW1 with only 3 regrade requests out of 300 students

Opportunities :
- Had a great opportunity to talk to students, understand their inhibitions etc, during office hours..

Plans :
- Prepare for Homework 2. Prepare for midterm.

Week 4:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 3 hours - Answered questions, cleared doubts and attended to issues with homework
Homework assistance - 4 hours
Prepared Midterms - 8 hours
Held office hours - 3 hours

Victory :
- Helped students with the homework.
- Successfully held office hours.
- Prepared midterm questions. Brainstormed with other TAs

Commented [6]: Great save!

Commented [7]: Great job with grading!

Commented [8]: Appreciate your effort in being approachable!

Opportunities :
● Had a great meeting session with the instructors regarding midterm. Came up with innovative ideas on how to construct intriguing questions.

Plans :
● Prepare for midterm and help more students with the subject.

Week 5:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 5 hours - Answered questions, cleared doubts and attended to issues with homework
Homework assistance - 2 hours
Prepared Midterms - 2 hours
Grading - 8 hours

Victory :
● Submitted interesting questions to the midterm corpus. 2/3 questions got picked by Professor.
● Volunteered to proctor midterm for a student in need of assistance from the OSD office.

Opportunities :
● Created midterm questions that were intuitive, and I believe the students will find it intriguing and interesting.

Plans :
● Proctor midterm and help students, and grade midterms.

Week 6:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 2 hours - Answered questions, cleared doubts and attended to issues with homework
Homework assistance - 2 hours
Midterms proctoring - 2 hours
Midterm grading - 8 hours
Homework Grading - 4 hours

Victory :
● Successfully conducted midterm and graded the questions
● Helped a student with assignment codes.
Opportunities :
● Conducted a kaggle competition with data mining and recommendation system tasks.

Plans :
● Open midterm for regrades. Grade homeworks. Attend to piazza. Rough next couple of weeks.

Issue :
- Our Professor had reported a few students who were egregious in the submission of their midterms on time. They took nearly 10 min after the final call, and were noted down. The Professor asked for our opinion, and I suggested that we make a Piazza post and call out the issue (not naming students, of course), and make the Homework 4 compulsory for the reported students (It is optional for others).

Week 7:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 5 hours - Answered questions, cleared doubts and attended to issues with homework
Homework assistance - 2 hours
Homework Grading - 4 hours
Practical assignment 1, coding / help - 4 hours

Victory :
- Successfully conducted the practical Assg 1 - dealing with latent factor models for price prediction. Introduced a tricky concept and helped students code in office hours
- Successfully graded midterm and Hw3.

Opportunities :
- Had a lot of opportunity to interact with students for more than 4 hours, planning and executing PAs.

Plans :
- Finish Assg1 grading. Prepare for Assg2.

Week 8:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 2 hours
Office hours - 3 hours

Victory :
- Helped students with submission of Assg 1 on Monday.

Opportunities :
- Had a taste of being flooded with regrade requests

Plans :
- Not much. Just be open on Piazza during Thanksgiving holidays and help students on Assg2 and HW4 submissions.

Week 9:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 6 hours
Office hours - 1 hours

Victory :
● Designed questions for Assignment 2
Opportunities :
● Worked towards end-of-quarter requirements
Plans :
● Grading Assignment 2. Clean up grades, query students about regrades requests with any serious errors and finalize grades for all except Assg2

Week 10:
Hours spent :
Piazza - 2 hours
Grading - 8 hours

Victory :
● Helped students with submission of Assg 2 on Monday.
Opportunities :
● Provided students with thoughts on paper ideas for Assg2. Brainstormed, designed and walked through solutions.
Plans :
● Grade Assg2. Finish up class grades and send to Professor. Urge students to fill in course and instructor feedbacks.

Week 9 Practicum:

Question that kept me busy : Implementing a latent factor model with higher dimensional latent spaces for review prediction.
1. **Context** : The question appeared in the practical assignment 1 of the course. In HW3 we had a easier version of the question with 1D latent spaces that the students were directly able to solve. Since we extended it to multiple dimensions, it was tough to get an intuitive sense of the answer.
2. **The hard thing about the question** : It was its convergence. The algorithm is extremely volatile in the sense that, it would easily converge to a local minima, if not diverge, when it is not initialized properly. Also since it is a multi-dimensional case we need to take care in writing out the equations, since the latent-terms are not jointly Gaussian.
3. **Office hours** : I was able to lead the students to better initialization methods and convergence techniques, and to an acceptable answer. I truly believed that the office hour before the assignment submission, helped them a lot.

Teaching observations and feedback

Micro-video

<<Include link to video>>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XziAVxPCrI
<<Include PDF / screenshot / summary of completed Teaching Feedback Form>>

Teaching Observation Feedback Form

Instructor / TA	Topic	Date
SRINATH	Bayes Theorem	02-10-17
Observer	SRINATM (Self) N.S.	

Strengths
What aspects of the presentation were effective?

The topic was well organized, with a clear intro, transition and an example. I maintained good tempo, eye-contact, showed enthusiasm, connected with audience with good explanations. I paused at right times and had a clear learning objective. I connected the topic with the real world. Finished in 3 min; the ideal time period.

Suggestions for improvement
What changes could make the lesson more effective?

* I spoke when I turned towards the whiteboard, a novice error, I should improve upon it.
* I did not realize that the writing was not legible. Should write bigger and clearer.
* I stumbled and missed a couple of pointers. Need more practice
* Probably, should have been a bit clouder and articulate.
* The content could have been a bit more advanced.

Comment on these characteristics of effective teaching
DELIVERY pace, gestures, eye contact, volume, clear articulation, enthusiasm, confidence, time management.
STRUCTURE clear learning objectives, good explanations, content aimed at audience, transitions, effective visual aids.
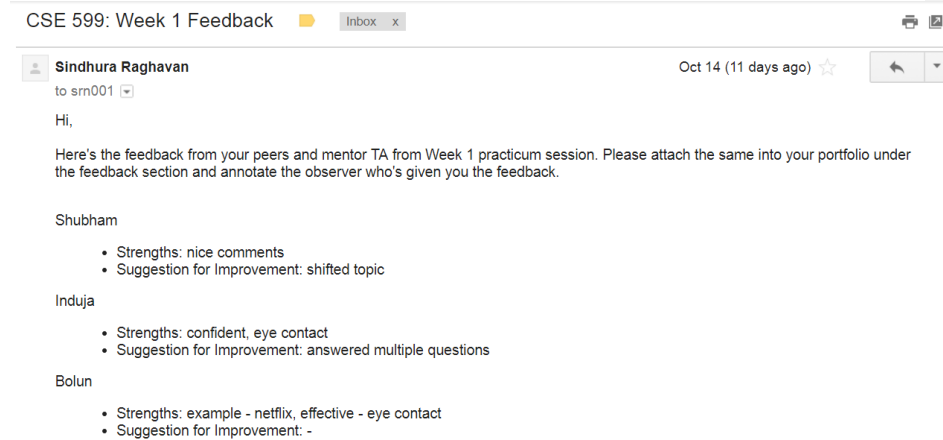*INTERACTIVITY* audience engagement, response time, active listening, quality responses, use of examples.
Remember: Effective feedback is descriptive, specific, and focuses on changeable actions.

Micro-teaching / Discussion section feedback

1. Week 02: observed by Group 8 members
   <<Include PDF / screenshot / summary of each completed Teaching Feedback Form you received during this teaching session; for practicum sessions, you should have at least 4 feedback forms>>

CSE 599: Week 1 Feedback 📁   Inbox   x   🖨 🗗

👤 **Sindhura Raghavan**   Oct 14 (11 days ago) ☆   ↩   ▾
to srn001 ▾

Hi,

Here's the feedback from your peers and mentor TA from Week 1 practicum session. Please attach the same into your portfolio under the feedback section and annotate the observer who's given you the feedback.

Shubham

- Strengths: nice comments
- Suggestion for Improvement: shifted topic

Induja

- Strengths: confident, eye contact
- Suggestion for Improvement: answered multiple questions

Bolun

- Strengths: example - netflix, effective - eye contact
- Suggestion for Improvement: -

2. Week 04: observed by Group 8 members
   <<Include PDF / screenshot / summary of each completed Teaching Feedback Form; for practicum sessions, you should have at least 4 feedback forms>>

   Bolan -

       Strengths - Clear articulation and organized lecture.
       Suggestions - Pace was fast. Less content for 5 minutes

   Shubham -

       Strengths - Well prepared
       Suggestions - Went too fast. Need to be slower

   Srinath (self) -

       Strengths - Eye contact was good. Good use of white board
       Suggestions - Lots of jumps between concepts since I was too excited. Tried to cramp the concept in.

   Indija -

       Strengths - Great articulation. Good response to questions. Time management and confidence.
       Suggestions - Fast paced. Probably needed a stronger objective

   Chester -

       Strengths - Clear examples
       Suggestions - Too rigorous approach
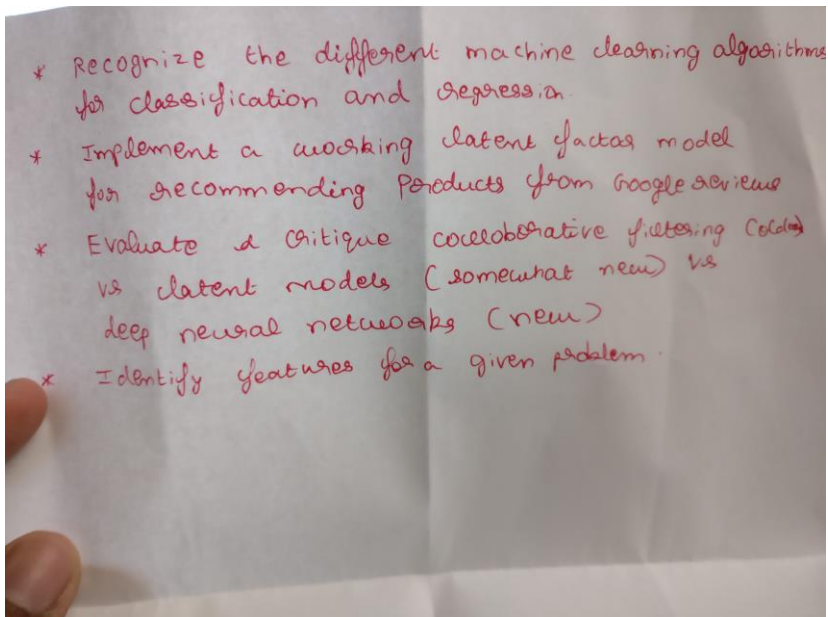
May include more than 2!

Observing Micro-teaching / Discussion section

1. Week XX: observed _____.
   <<Include PDF / screenshot / summary of completed Teaching Feedback Form>>
2. Week XX: observed _____.
   <<Include PDF / screenshot / summary of completed Teaching Feedback Form>>

May include more than 2!

Summary of teaching observations

Week 4 : How people learn - Learning objectives for CSE 258

Optional: Reflections on main themes

Jot down notes on CSE 599 topics and their connections to your experience

How People Learn

1. People learn by repetition and sustained suggestions
2. Should evoke a response from a student and not present answer in a platter

Communication and Feedback

1. Very important to understand the energy and intent of a student. Does she/he have a difficulty with a concept / a particular question / or the subject in general, and how do we do about solving it.
2. Stay within realms of professional TA decorum
3. Suggest changes, have an implicit feedback to the student. Don't be harsh in your comments; even incidentally.

Assessment

1. Very important to have a strong set of rubrics with instructor approval.
2. Fair grading is extremely important. Fair in terms of following rubrics, spending time on the paper, suggestions, and no nitpicking.

Inclusiveness

1. Evoke a response from all students. Make sure not to discourage enthusiastic ones, and still try to make the quiet ones respond.
2. Make sure to understand the implicit biases, the stereotypes and the support systems the students hold dear, and try to work around them in a professional way.