

The Conscious Teaching Assistant
ILTL Conference, Summer 2011

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Many legal writing programs have teaching assistants, but do they use them effectively? This workshop will explore techniques for getting your teaching assistants involved and active during and between classes. It will also provide sample programming ideas that will focus on honing the skills of your teaching assistants and giving them a realistic experience in academia.

Workshop:

Introduction – purpose, objectives, benefits

Agenda – discussion on effective use of teaching assistants covering the hiring, training, and use of TAs both in and out of class

Debrief – lessons learned and audience participation

Materials included:

Checklists – include possible topics to be used in training, sample semester schedules that incorporate TAs into curriculum, building in incentives and recognition

Hiring Teaching Assistants	Criteria: Grades Recommendations of professors Interview	When to do it: Mid-spring semester – so you have time to conduct interviews and have a meeting before everyone leaves for summer break
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Summer Preparation for Teaching Assistants	Possible topics for review	Possible tasks over the break
<p>Fall Orientation (hold one week prior to IL orientation)</p>	<p>Overview & Expectations</p> <p>Rules/Guidelines – handbook</p> <p>Responsibilities as TA</p> <p>Interaction with students – office hours, advising, answering questions, academic integrity, inappropriate relationships, setting boundaries</p> <p>Unusual situations</p> <p>Refresher: Case briefs Memo review Bluebook/citation Research</p> <p>Review syllabus - plan office hours to match assignments; discuss mini classes, brown bag lunches to be given by TAs (sign ups)</p> <p>Faculty panel – expectations for TAs TA panel – expectations/advice Q&A</p>	<p>Write, research problems Create, review, revise exercises Provide input for schedule and syllabus</p> <p>Work on mini- and brown bag lunch classes, examples: Case briefs Annotating outlines Extracting rules from cases Citations Common errors Research TA ideas?</p>
<p>Spring Refresher (hold a couple days prior to beginning of spring semester)</p>	<p>Review conduct of semester – plan out office hours according to assignments to see where most time will be needed</p> <p>Brief writing review</p> <p>Oral advocacy review</p>	<p>Review of spring problem – work out glitches</p>

Fall Semester	Predictive Writing Basics of Legal Writing		
Week	Class 1	Class 2	Teaching Assistant Duties
1	Introduction to LRAW Case briefs Identifying rules	Review case briefs Intro to Office Memo	Office Hours (OH) Additional case brief – each student must take one to TA to review(not the one we'll do in class)
2	Rules and legal reasoning Organization of legal writing	Synthesizing a rule, annotating rules	OH TA Brown bag class – cases & rules
3	Labor Day – no class	Review annotated outline Intro to Bluebook	OH TA meeting – check in and go over the next 3 weeks TA mini-class on Bluebook (given during regular class time)
4	Rule Explanations, turning the annotated outline into RE	Review REs Rule Applications Rules with multiple elements	OH TA Brown bag lunch – outlines for classes
5	Review RAs Questions Presented & Brief Answers	Common errors (memo drafts)	OH – expanded (memo due next week) TA Brown bag lunch – citations
6	Memo I due Intro to Research	Secondary source research	OH TA meeting – go over next 3 weeks, review research, exercises
7	Conferences – no class	Case law research	OH TA Brown bag lunch – research help
8	Intro to Memo II Research plan Client interviews	Fall Break – no class	OH – reduced (break)
9	Client Interview	Statutory research	OH
10	Internet research	Q & A for Memo II	OH
11	Citation review	Draft due Review big picture concepts	OH TA Brown bag lunch – review citations in preparation for Bluebook exam, or run in-class game/exercise that serves as citation review
12	Bluebook exam	Conferences – no class	OH TA meeting (last of the semester) – check in and go over memo turn in
13	Common errors Client letters	Q & A for Memo II Memo due next day	OH
14	IRAC for exams, exam prep	Thanksgiving – no class	TA mini class – exam preparation/tips (given during regular class time)

Spring Semester	Persuasive writing Nuance		
Week	Class 1	Class 2	Teaching Assistant Duties
1	Spring semester overview	Preparing court documents	OH – reduced (unless need is shown)
2	MLK – no class	Writing persuasive facts Point headings	OH –reduced (holiday) TA mini class (given during regular class time) – run exercise on facts, legal conclusions, inferences
3	Conferences – no class		OH TA meeting
4	Common errors	Trial level oral advocacy	OH TA mini class (given during regular class time) – give their own experiences with trial level advocacy – stories from summer, etc.
5	Trial brief due – no class	Trial level oral advocacy – practice and critique (video critiques)	No OH this week, instead may schedule oral advocacy practice or have TA Afternoon seminar style – oral advocacy practice sessions
6	Trial motions	Trial motions	OH – reduced TAs serve as bailiffs in class
7	Conferences on trial memo– no class		OH TA meeting – appellate advocacy, discuss weeks 12, 13, moot court competition
8	Intro to appellate practice Appellate brief	Standards of review	OH
Spring Break			
9	Legislative history	Parts of the appellate brief	OH TA Brown bag lunch –extra curricular activities – moot court, law review, etc.
10	Administrative law	Appellate oral advocacy	OH
11	Practice oral arguments	Final editing of appellate brief	OH
12	Practice oral arguments with teaching fellows/writing center – no class		Teaching assistants administer practice schedule for IL class; provide feedback, critique, dress rehearsal
13	Give oral argument for grade – no class		Teaching assistants continue to practice oral arguments with ILs
14	Moot Court Competition – no class	Last class – wrap up	Last TA meeting – recognition/wrap up, possible awards or certificates given out

Incentives & Recognition	Prestige of position
	Chance to further develop LRAW skills, leadership
	Resume builder
	Certificate of Achievement
	Awards
	Second year TA; Senior fellow position
	Bonding experiences – examples: introductory dinner; final dinner with new and old fellows, faculty