

Creating an ethical and respectful learning community

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Starting points...

- Question 1:
 - Think for a moment of a positive experience you had in a course, thanks to a TA/ISA... What elements contributed to making that experience positive?
- Question 2:
 - What drew you to want to be a TA/ISA?
 - Why do you think you might be good at it?

5 keys to creating an ethical and respectful learning community... and why it matters

1. Make everyone feel comfortable, like they belong
2. Help students take ownership of their academic success
3. Create a climate where students feel comfortable taking “risks”
4. Be prepared, know your material, but expect there will be times you *don't* know, or that you make mistakes
5. Uphold high standards of integrity and honesty

1. Make everyone feel comfortable, and like they belong

- Get to know students' names and how to pronounce them
- Help students make friends in class
- Invite students to share privately with you any apprehensions or special considerations
- Share a bit about yourself
- "Talent scout"

2. Help students take ownership of their academic success

- Be clear about:
 - course (your?) goals/expectations/ consequences
 - criteria for judging students' work
 - process to follow if they think there has been an error
- Be particularly clear about “ground rules” and expectations for group work
- Provide timely opportunities for students to see how they are doing

3. Create a climate where students feel comfortable taking “risks”

- Risks may include:
 - Trying hard (What if I still don't succeed?)
 - Asking questions (Will I look dumb?)
 - Making mistakes (What will people think?)
 - Voicing a “different” opinion, or challenging something under discussion (Is that OK?)
- Provide “constructive criticism”
- Always model and insist upon respectful behavior

4. Be prepared, know your material, but expect there will be times you *don't* know, or that you make mistakes

- If you don't know the answer...
 - Don't just fake it
 - Talk through how one might find the answer
 - If you say you will find out, *do*
 - If you task someone else to find out, *follow up and acknowledge their effort*
- If you make a mistake...
 - Admit it
 - Don't make whoever pointed it out feel awkward

5. Uphold high standards of integrity and honesty

- Know the campus academic integrity policy
- Understand and clarify for students the parameters of assignments and activities in your class
 - Group work? Take-home exams? Drawing upon others' work?
- Have a plan, ahead of time, for what to do if you suspect someone has engaged any form of academic dishonesty
- Be consistent – don't play favorites

Thoughts...

Questions...

Comments...

Thank you!