PRINCIPLES OF UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Sessional Teacher Orientation

Presented by
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Departement of Government and International Relations and Department of Philosophy
## Schedule

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<td>Social Inclusion in Teaching [Dr Huw Griffiths]</td>
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Welcome to Tutoring!

— “Tutors [more than lecturers] provide the opportunity to students to interact, communicate and ask for help directly.

— “Tutors become central to the first year student’s experience and integral to the engagement of the students with the university, the course, other students and the quality of tutorials.”
  
  — James & Baldwin, 1997

— “Tutors have a strong influence on students’ academic perceptions and performance because tutors are usually the first academic that students have any form of personal interaction with. The tutor is fundamental to the students’ engagement with the academic challenges of their course.”

  — Kift, 2002
The Tutor

— FURTHER:

“The undergraduate tutors’ student status may well engender more learning in students than if the students are taught only by more experienced teachers.”

— Sutherland, 2009
The Tutor

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“The undergraduate tutors’ student status may well engender more learning in students than if the students are taught only by more experienced teachers.”

— Sutherland, 2009

— How is this possible?
Because Sutherland’s emphasis is clearly less on the tutor as expert/authority/know-it-all within a discipline, than as an effective communicator/facilitator.
Useful Teaching Resources

– FASS Education, the one-stop shop for support and development in the Faculty.
  http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/

– University Resources on Assessment (includes policy, and support and development).

– University Teaching Insights (useful one-page practical advice on various topics, e.g., groupwork, academic honesty, etc.).
Teaching Development Program (TDP)

– The TDP is a professional development opportunity that’s available to all teachers in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. It’s a 5-week long course where you’ll be required to attend a 2.5 hour session in each of those weeks, more information can be found under session details.

– Topics (all sessions Friday mornings):
  – Teaching Design and Practice (March 10th)
  – Tutorials (March 17th)
  – Diversity and Constructive Alignment (March 24th)
  – Assessment (March 31st)
  – Professional Development (April 7th).

– Why do it?
  – Training: a forum to deepen your understanding of what is involved in high quality teaching.
  – Community building, networking, and peer learning: listen and share experiences with other academic staff.
  – CV building: recognised training and rewarded with a certificate.
Teaching in Tutorials

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Question: What is a tutorial meant to do?

Answer: The aim of a tutorial is to provide small-group learning for students to engage in problem solving or discussion of ideas introduced in lectures or readings.
Good Tutes and Bad Tutes
Good Tutorials

- Students show up.
- Comfortable, friendly atmosphere. Students are respectful.
- Most/all students contribute to discussion regularly and thoughtfully.
- On-topic, engaged conversation.
- Builds enthusiasm and excitement for the unit/discipline.
- Ability to roll with digressions, but keep them in rein.
- Students hone skills, both on material and, more generally, graduate attributes.
- Useful prep and information for assessment.
- Feedback is constructive and timely.
Bad Tutorials

- Low attendance.
- Low participation. Dominated by a student or two, or the tutor.
- Tutorials only allow those who have done all the reading to contribute.
- Students only speak to the tutor.
- Students regurgitate information in readings and lecture.
- Zoning out, bored.
- No guidance for assessment.
Our three topics:

1. The first tutorial
2. Preparing tutorials
3. Leading tutorials
First Tutorial

The Tutorial ‘Space’ – the obvious things:
1. Prior knowledge of where the classroom is and what it is like.
2. Equipment and Room Resources.
3. Copies of the Unit of Study Outline and other relevant materials.
4. Check eLearning/Blackboard and Timetable sites – familiarity with online resources.
5. A list of all the students currently assigned to your class. You can get this information (with Unikey) at: http://web.timetable.auth.usyd.edu.au/index.jsp.
6. Whiteboard Markers, or Chalk, or USB stick with material – be prepared!
First Tutorial

- Building the tutorial environment:
  - Introductions, Introductions, Introductions
    [Remember – introduce yourself as well]
  - Icebreakers and building the learning community

- Take care of tutorial administration: UOS outline, rolls, etc.
  (for reassurance)
- Discuss ground rules for the semester
  - 50% attendance requirement for tutorials (80% is “expected.”
    C2014/345&RendNum=0)
- SSESW -
  http://sydney.edu.au/education_social_work/current_students/assistance_forms
  /resources/The-Little-Blue-Book-current.pdf
- Being prepared for each class (your commitment and expectations)
- Participation and contribution: all students expected to actively contribute in every tutorial.
First Tutorial

Optional: anonymous student survey in the first tutorial. For example, you could ask 1 or 2 of the following:

- I enrolled in this course because ...
- I hope that tutorials will help me to ...
- I expect that the tutor will ...
- The biggest question I have as we begin is ...
Preparing STUDENTS for tutorials

A few non-assessment based suggestions:

- Post a quiz on eLearning that doesn't count for marks.
- Post a news item that might generate enthusiasm and critical skills.
- Flag a potentially important passage or set of pages.

- **Nb.** make sure you follow-up on whatever prep you had students do. Otherwise, they’re not likely to do it again.
The Need for a Lesson Plan

Matilda:

I like it when tutors actually spend time "teaching" - I don't know if that makes sense, but it is great when tutors actually go through some of the material from the lectures again (maybe with a different perspective to the lecturer) and not leave it all up to just class discussion which often is just people speaking for the sake of speaking to get participation marks.
The Need for a Lesson Plan

Bianca:
For me the most important element of a tute is structure. It lets me know that I can't slack off and creates direction to the hour so that I walk out thinking: 'this was the point, this is what I learned and this is the importance of the literature to the content of the course'.

Walking out of an unstructured tutorial is like waking up after a big night out: you have things written down that made sense at the time but seem completely random now, you don't quite know what to make of what happened and you don't really want to think of that blur ever, ever again.

My notes from a good tute will blend seamlessly with my lecture notes. More importantly, I take notes all! A sense of structure involves clear statements that are worth writing down. If we are just waffling on I often can't summaries the random comments into a succinct point so I either don't write anything or I end up with a jumble of random phrases.
Tips to Prepare a Tutorial

1. Plan backwards. Think of the result/goal of the tute and plan from there.
2. Generally, plan for no more than two learning outcomes or big take home points per tute.
4. Build in activity diversity. A. It keeps students engaged and on their toes. B. If something doesn’t work, you can switch up.
5. Try to get everyone to talk early on in the year.
6. The degree of structure can change over time. Early on more structure may be helpful to provide guidance/leadership and build up a discussion space.
Leading a tutorial, 3 parts

1. First 10-15 minutes, recap:
   A. Recap the tutorial and material from last week and suggest how it leads into the present session (5-7 min).
   B. Recap this week’s lecture, drawing out some key points for discussion today (5-7 min).

2. Activities (35-40 minutes).

3. Summary of the tutorial, driving home the 1 or 2 learning outcomes you had hoped to achieve.
General Tutorial Activities

- **Buzz Groups**: Students work in pairs on a task for 2-3 minutes
- **Problem Centred Groups**: Students work in groups of 3-6 on a substantial problem
- **Small groups to feed large group discussion**
- **Blackboard weekly discussion groups**
Specific Tutorial Activities

– Write out a question and have students discuss and answer it in small groups (and perhaps reconvene as big group).
– Write out a series of questions and assign each small group one question to present the answer at the end of class.
– Have students write a focused list of all they know about a topic, either individually or in groups.
– Write conflicting statements on the board and have students take a position, which would then lead to a class debate.
– Write a quote up on the board and carefully examine it as a big group, building out towards the themes of the week.
– Bring in an image of news story as a hook for the topic at hand.

One simple trick to ruin a tutorial:

Will: What can also be really stressful is when the tutorial scene gets competitive. This often occurs when the tutor puts a mark next to your name when you raise a point (oh yes, we notice!). And then comes the moment when you say something and they don't reach for their pen... I know it must be difficult to remember who participated etc. but this whole tally system really gives a feeling of competitiveness, so instead of engaging with the discussion all I'm thinking about is what smart arse comment I can make within the next quarter hour that will get me a tick. And then I can relax until next week.
Post-Seminar

1. Admin follow-up. Confirm attendance. Record participation marks.

2. Fix up tute lesson plan. A well-oiled machine after 5 tutes in a row.
   * Fix tute plan that day, not next year! Labour saving.

3. If student raises tough question. Make a note of it, deal with it, discuss it next week. Gives a prompt to review next week.