STUDY QUESTIONS

This section is designed to be read after or in conjunction with the previous section that explains the various issues found in the Issues Matrix. Each topic in the Issues Matrix is listed along with some questions to help you get started thinking about your own teaching. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The answers depend on what you think and how you are comfortable teaching. You might want to seek the advice of your professor or an experienced TA on some topics.

GENERAL ADVICE

Preparing for class: What materials will you need for your first teaching session? What will the agenda be for your first session? Will you assign homework or have a quiz?

Understanding course goals: Which topics in your course are most important for students to understand? How can you help students make sure they understand the most important parts?

International TAs: If you are an international TA, what special issues might you want to consider before beginning your teaching?

Choosing sample problems: Which problems will you work through with students during the first class sessions? Why did you choose those particular problems?

Communicating with professor: How does your professor want you to communicate with him or her? For example, will you attend lecture class sessions periodically or meet with the professor to find out what is happening in the lecture?

Setting clear expectations: What do you need to tell students about how you plan to run your class?

MANAGING & TEACHING

Physical place in classroom: Looking at the arrangement of your classroom, how can you make sure you interact with your students and don't remain behind a desk the entire class period?

Handling late students: Look at the video clips in this issue. How does the TA handle late-arriving students? How can you communicate to your students the importance of being timely?

Beginning an activity: How will you start a new activity? What will you do to help students understand how this activity connects to past activities?

Transitions: What different activities will you plan for your first class? How will you transition smoothly between activities? Will you want to have certain pages marked in your textbook so you can move between problems easily?

Student questions: How can you encourage students to ask questions? After watching the video clips, what kinds of questions do you think students will ask? You might find it helpful to think about the kinds of questions students are likely to ask about different problems because this will help you think through how to guide them to the answers.

TA mistakes: How will you handle it if you realize you have made a mistake? What will you tell your students so they understand why you were confused?

Working practice questions: When doing practice questions, will you ask different students to do different steps in a problem? Will you want students to discuss possible approaches with each other before tackling the problem?

Multiple teaching strategies: What can you do in your class to vary your instructional methods? Can you include students working in groups and talking with each other to solve problems?

Keeping students involved: What will you do to keep your students involved in the class? How will you help them stay focused and engaged during the entire class session?

Going over past work: What past work will you want to go over in the first class sessions? Will there be quiz or test questions in addition to homework problems that students might need help solving?

Unexpected student solutions: When you encounter students who have solved a problem differently than you expected, how will you guide them? You will probably want to work through it and see if they did it correctly. Then you might want to think about whether it is okay to do the problem in that way. This means that you need to know the course goals and you'll want to make sure that if students do a problem in a different way it will not hinder them on a test or quiz that requires them to solve the problem in a particular way.

Using technology: What technology is being used in your course? Can you use it effectively yourself? Do you need to practice solving problems of the types that students will be asked to solve?

Student errors: How will you react when you discover a student has made an error? What can you do to make sure students understand that it's okay to make mistakes? How will you help a student to find his or her mistake in a problem?

Trouble-shooting student work: When a student presents a problem with an incorrect solution, and you cannot figure out what he or she did wrong, what can you do?

Interacting with students: What do you notice about the TA-student interactions? How do TAs treat their students? How do students treat the TA?

Encouraging multiple solutions: For different problems that you plan to work through with your students, what are some different ways to solve each problem? Is there any special reason to do a given problem in a particular way only?

Students working together: How can you facilitate students working together? What is your role going to be when you ask students to work together?

Eliciting student responses: What are some thought-provoking questions you could ask about the problems you intend to cover during your first class sessions? How can you practice waiting for a few seconds before asking someone to answer?

Getting students attention: What can you do to practice waiting before beginning the new activity? How can you get your students' attention?