Teaching with Writing (TWW) Tip

Planning for a multi-section course with multiple teaching assistants

**Rationale:** Advance planning can minimize misunderstandings and headaches after the semester begins.

**The process:**

**Determine what’s vital for new TAs to know about their new role**
- Ask your new TAs to complete the Experiences and Needs background survey from the Center for Teaching and Learning
- Schedule an all-TA, pre-semester meeting to make your expectations clear relative to:
  - Initial tasks (prior to first class meeting)
  - Class meetings
  - Office hours
- Establish TA meeting times/dates

**Determine TA responsibilities and make your expectations explicit**
- Take advantage of the Center for Teaching and Learning’s “TA Responsibility Checklist,” which can facilitate discussion of:
  - Primary responsibilities
  - Assignments and examinations
  - Commenting on and grading student writing
  - Photocopying, audio-visual materials, Moodle

**Facilitate a grade norming session for major assignments**
- Review assignment instructions and grading criteria/rubric
- Ask TAs to test out the criteria on samples of de-identified student writing
- Chat with a Teaching Consultant in the Center for Writing about setting up and running a grade norming session

**Encourage Teaching Assistants to pursue professional development opportunities**
- Ask your TAs to participate in the annual half-day “Commenting on and Grading Student Writing: A Workshop for Teaching Assistants, which is held during the last week of August.
- Encourage your TAs to take advantage of the Center for Teaching and Learning’s TA Resources.

**Questions?** Visit us online at [http://writing.umn.edu/tww/index.html](http://writing.umn.edu/tww/index.html)

**Further support:** Contact a member of the WAC (Writing Across the
Curriculum) team for a phone, email, or face-to-face teaching consultation: [http://z.umn.edu/twwconsultation](http://z.umn.edu/twwconsultation)

Our purpose is to provide practical strategies for teaching with writing. Our goal: to offer timely and pragmatic support to faculty members and instructors who teach with writing in undergraduate and graduate courses in all disciplinary areas.