

# Students Teaching Students

Jinger Zhao  
Harvard University

May 1, 2004

## Summary

The goal of “Students Teaching Students” is to bring together undergraduate and graduate students who have been or will soon be teaching assistants to discuss their concerns, ask questions, and share lessons, experiences, and advice about simultaneously being a student and a teacher in a university.

## Audience

This “Birds of a Feather” is directed at **undergraduate and graduate students** who

- are about to experience their first semesters of being a teaching assistant
- have been teaching assistants and want to share experiences and wisdom
- have been teaching assistants and want to ask questions to more experienced teachers or get new ideas for how to be more successful in teaching other students
- want to discuss concerns about being a teaching assistant for other university students in general

## Topics Covered

- \*Finding a Class to TA  
How, when, and why to look for a class to TA.
- \*Getting Started as a TA  
Calming anxieties, finding training, establishing yourself as section leader.
- \*Enlivening Section/Recitation  
Boardwork, fun examples, how to bring your own personality into section and make your class your own.

- \*Relating to Your Students  
Your special relationship to your (no-longer) peers.
- \*Balancing Teaching, Research, Coursework, and Life  
Teaching takes time—how to take care of yourself.
- \*Being a Female TA in Computing  
Special challenges for women and how to confront them.

## About the Session Leader

Jinger Zhao has been a teaching fellow for the introductory computer science course at Harvard, CS50, for the past two years. She was the head teaching fellow in her second year and was deeply involved in both course administration and teaching. Her responsibilities included hiring and training other teaching fellows, helping plan the course syllabus and choose course material, writing and updating assignments, running review sessions, administering course policy, holding office hours, teaching section, and teaching “Topic Sessions” (weekly two-hour mini-lectures).