

Teaching Excellence Awards for Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Academic Year 2022/23

Semester I

Dorothy Ting Wan Shyuen (EC2101)

Ho Zi Ming (EC1101E)

Marcus Ng Yong Ming (EC1101E)

Naman Agrawal (EC2102)

Ong Hong Zheng Joshua (EC1101E)

Shawn Ho Cheng Ying (EC2101)

Wang Peiyu (EC1101E)

Dorothy Ting Wan Shyuen



Dorothy (left) working on a biodigester construction project in an Indonesian village as part of an NUS OSA Community Leadership Development Programme.

Were there any specific events that inspired you to become a TA? Why?

Quite the contrary actually, I was pretty adamant about not being a TA. I didn't picture myself as someone who would be effective at teaching, so best not encumber the bright eyes and bright minds with subpar teaching and instead leave it to those who are passionate and capable. As luck would have it, the department was short of TAs in one of the semesters and I got cold-called to be a TA. In retrospect, I'm really glad this opportunity came knocking because I've gained a great deal from the experience.

What do you find the most challenging about conducting tutorials and how do you overcome it?

Haha the silence is deafening in tutorials because students tend to be shy. It did feel a bit awkward in the first few tutorials because it felt like a monologue most of the time. But if you actually pay attention to the students, they are responding to the questions, just not verbally. There are perceptible nods, mouthing of the solutions etc. It's important to acknowledge/respond to these as well, it encourages students to speak up eventually.

What is your favourite part about working with students?

Seeing them break into a smile now and then, albeit very briefly :). Coursework can be rather stressful, especially at the stage where they're having their first encounter with the core modules and realising that Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grades are no longer an option, not forgetting other commitments like CCA's, applying for internships etc.

I think because of all these stressors, students are often visibly fatigued yet uptight in class. It's really valuable for me to see them loosen up a little, so I strive to have at least one or two cold jokes in the tutorials (some were really cold though, sorry guys).

What advice do you have for students who are interested in becoming a TA?

Go for it! In the meantime, (not to be a killjoy) do make sure that you build a solid foundation in Economics. Needless to say, you'll need it to convince the department that you tick the box of having a good grasp of economics, but more importantly, it will build up part of your TA-confidence reserves. The other parts come with time and practice.

Where is your favourite place to grab a bite in NUS?

I am pretty indifferent about food (some people find this appalling), so my favourite place to grab a bite isn't actually based on the food itself. It's more of what fits my schedule the best, so I'll have to give it to the noodle stall in Frontier! They have one of the earliest (if not the earliest) opening hours in NUS. You will probably bump into me at 6:45 a.m. on weekdays enjoying my bowl of dumpling soup with pickled green chilli.

If you could gain any one superpower, what would you choose?

This is probably a lame one but it'll be cool to be able to "mental-write". I tend to lose my train of thoughts or zone out in the middle of a conversation so it would be helpful to concurrently scribe what I am thinking.