

## ✧ Confidence ——Trust yourself!!!

I still remember last year when I first came here, I was just sitting there, listening to the experienced TAs telling me about their teaching experiences. At that time, I was quite nervous about this job. I don't know if I can make it.

I am a Chinese girl and sometimes I am a little shy. And I really admired those experienced TA. How they could talk so fluently and naturally in front of so many people? I did some TA work in China before, but it was mainly about reviewing the homework or helping with the instructor. I had never taken care of a whole class by my own in China. I was worried that I would screw up all the class.

However, an American TA friend encouraged me at that time: "Don't be nervous. You are excellent! And you can do it! You just don't know this, but I know! Be confident!"

Yes, and that's true! I did a very good job in my first class, and now I am doing better and better. That's what I want to tell you today—you are all excellent. You are all competent for being a good TA. Trust me, maybe you haven't yet realized that, but that is true! We just need a little bit more confidence in ourselves.

## ✧ Smile ——Your students will miss you for this!

I like Dr. Jaromczyk and his class, because he is always smiling at us and his class always has so much fun. And I believe all the students think the same.

So, for us, being a TA and facing your students, remember to keep your smile! Your students could love you to death, even if this was the only thing you can do in class. (Just kidding) But you do find them smiling back to you. They like you as an open person, and absolutely, this will help your communication with them become much easier and happier.

## ✧ English Skills ——

Sure, another important thing here is our English skill.

As an international TA, we need to explain everything to our students in English, instead of our own languages. It would be a little hard at the first beginning. Of course, we can do a very good job dealing with different kinds of students using our first language. We can even talk instinctively without any thinking. But when comes to the second language, we need to prepare and sometimes we still make mistakes. Well, that's OK! Don't feel bad for yourself!

I remember the first time we had an anonymous survey in class, and one of my students wrote on his card "I can't understand her at all." Oh, that's really frustrating. While, another student wrote "I can understand her sometimes." So I was thinking, OK, my English may not be that bad, at least some of them can still understand me sometimes. Then I tried to talk to them more loudly, more slowly and clearly the next time. I tried to communicate with them more, and I want them to get familiar with my pronunciation, my way of thinking and talking. And it works! At the end of the semester, my students wrote on the evaluation form "We love you, Beibei. We enjoy your class."

See, you don't have to be a perfect English speaker. You just need to be active in your communicating. But amazingly, you will find your English skills also improved a lot at the same time.

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