

## Description and Training of “TA-to-be”

- The duties of a TA-to-be represent 10 hours of work per week, and the following is a description of those assignments and responsibilities.
- The TAs-to-be are assigned to a full-time faculty mentor, and they meet with this mentor once a week.
- A detailed time schedule is established between the mentor and the TA-to-be, taking into account the wide variety of activities described in this document and the time commitment that each one requires.
- The TAs-to-be attend the weekly meetings of one of the basic level Spanish courses, typically SPAN 110.
- TAs-to-be will pursue completion of the Certificate in University Teaching Skills offered by the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence (<http://cte.slu.edu/>). If for scheduling reasons the TA-to-be is unable to attend the activities required in this program, the TA-to-be will work with his or her mentor to find equivalent activities to participate in around the university (such as technology workshops and other seminars).
- Readings in the area of pedagogy and teaching practices are assigned by the mentor to TAs-to-be. These will be discussed with the mentor.
- Practice exercises in grading and evaluation are incorporated into the TA-to-be’s activities, but they will not involve assisting in grading homework, exams or assignments from current classes. Instead, these activities will tend to use examples from past courses.
- At the beginning of the semester TAs-to-be observe classes (including labs and grammar workshops) taught by most or all of the level instructors at the assigned level. They take notes, which they then type up and submit to the mentor. These early observation notes are to include as much detail about what happens in class as possible (for example, specific quotations from the participants, a description of participants’ on-task and off-task behaviors, and even details of the environment, such as the lighting of the room,) and as little judgment (such as “good explanation”) or assumption (“the students learned,” instead of “the students were able to produce XYZ”) as possible.
- When the TA-to-be shows that he or she has developed a keen ability to notice details of what happens in a class, and after discussing these observations with the mentor, the TA-to-be then moves towards class write-ups that include questions, reflections, and critiques. These are also discussed with the mentor, and some additional reading may be assigned.
- Out of these observations, the TA-to-be is to choose one to three particularly interesting issues and develop some questions, which he or she will then use to

interview one of the level instructors (face-to-face or via email). The interview and the TA-to-be's reflections on it are written up and submitted to and discussed with the mentor.

- Some of the level instructors (or perhaps only the mentor) later on (starting roughly near the middle of the semester) will include the TA-to-be in some lessons and/or have the TA-to-be teach part of a class. These experiences will be discussed with the mentor.
- Later, the TA-to-be may be invited to teach one or two classes, labs, or workshops, depending on the TA-to-be's demonstrated ability. The TA-to-be would be asked to write a reflection about such experiences.
- Likewise, the TA-to-be will be asked to begin work, with more experienced instructors, on some of the course materials, such as quizzes or grammar workshop materials.
- Near the end of the semester, the TA-to-be should write up a critique of a lesson plan or evaluation (quiz or test), backing up his or her claims with strong pedagogical reasoning.
- Finally, the TA-to-be writes a reflective paper at the end of the semester on what he or she has learned, his/her strengths and weaknesses as a Spanish instructor, what he or she plans to do to continue to improve his or her teaching.
- TAs-to-be are provided an evaluation of their experience and mentors at the end of their formation process.