

TA/LA checklist for first recitation:

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Checklist for the 1st Recitation:

- Take attendance:**
 - **Rationale:** This (along with an ice breaker) gives the TA and LA an opportunity to get to know students early on in the semester. This is important because it shows students that the TA and LA are aware of their presence and that the TA and LA want to get to know them (NOTE: this is done more by the ice breaker than merely taking attendance, but taking attendance certainly helps especially if it's made to be a little more interactive as described under ice breakers).

- Ice breaker:**
 - Go around the room and ask students to share their name and one interesting fact about themselves, their major, something cool they did during the summer, or something else.
 - Another possibility is combining an ice breaker activity with attendance. Before taking attendance, the TA and/or LA should ask that students brainstorm something interesting about themselves they want to share with the class, or their favorite television show, favorite food, etc. As students' names are called, instead of replying "here" students should respond with their answer to the question posed by the TA/LA.
 - **Rationale:** An ice breaker on the first day of recitation (or any class for that matter) helps students and instructors to feel welcomed and more at ease with not only one another but with one self as well. An ice breaker activity helps encourage students as well as the LA and TA to get to know one another. By having such an activity on the first day, the LA and TA themselves begin to build relationships with their students and it also encourages students to build relationships among themselves.

- TA AND LA should introduce themselves to the class:**
 - **Rationale:** This is essential to establishing a good working relationship with students. By introducing themselves to students, TAs and LAs break down the wall of "intimidation" and become personal with students early on. Overall, the small act of introductions does a lot to help create the foundation to a comfortable and safe learning environment.

- Go over what recitation is (layout your expectations for the students in regards to recitation)**
 - Define recitation for students
 - TAs and LAs should take this time to describe their own roles to students

- Another possible approach to this is to start off by asking students what they expect from the TA and LA.
- Explain to students how recitation will be structured (group work)
- Give students an idea of what they can expect
- **Rationale:** Throughout our lives, most of us have experienced the importance of structure and expectations, not only in school but in every aspect of our lives. Expectations have been laid out to us since the day we were born. Without expectations we go about defining and discovering what it is we should and/or want to be doing. This is why TAs and LAs should lay out their expectations for students during the first recitation. It will provide students with a clear understanding of what the purpose of recitation is going into the semester. This helps TAs and LAs establish a well-structured recitation in terms of the overall purpose and goal. In terms of helping the students, laying out the expectations for them allows them to focus on learning and understanding the material rather than on the idea of recitation.

Facilitate recitation

- **Rationale:** Recitation is a period in which students will have the opportunity to explore their understanding of chemistry. Being taught so much information during three 50 minute class periods a week, it is difficult for students to really process it all into understanding. Recitation material helps students bridge the gap between *being taught* and *learning*, and allows students to work with their TA, LA and fellow students to seek for better understanding. In addition to developing a better understanding of chemistry, recitation also promotes group work, critical thinking and application of content. Recitation can be facilitated in a number of different ways.

Students (and TAs) complete the concept survey at the end of recitation

- **Rationale:** In addition to having students complete this for the purpose of improving the course, it is a great opportunity for students to realize how much they're going to learning this semester. Although intimidating, the concept survey is helpful in that it gives students a brief preview of what's in store for them. Furthermore, the concept surveys show students that the content and concepts of the class is challenging and that it won't necessarily come easily, this is not so students will be discouraged but rather to show them that they themselves take responsibility for their own learning and put effort into the class in order to succeed. This is also our opportunity to collect data so we can evaluate the effectiveness of the class.



Go over syllabus for lab (at the end of recitation)

- **Rationale:** The purpose of having a syllabus and actually going over it with students is identical to that of laying out expectations. Going over a syllabus with students on the first day of classes help students realize all that the class entails and also gives them the opportunity to ask questions they have regarding the class before it's too late. In addition to this, TAs are showing students that they have thought about the course and have put some thought into organizing and structuring lab as best as they can within the limitations of the professors. In simple terms, it shows students that the TA cares about how well they do and that the TAs are willing to provide students with the appropriate resources if not assistance to be successful in the course.

