

# Instruction at DAIMI

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# Purpose of using TAs

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- Relieve work load of professors
- Improve the study environment
- Maximize “STÅ” earnings

# Purpose of using TAs

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- Relieve work load of professors
  - correcting and grading of assignments
  - supervision
  - administration
  - substitute as lecturer
  - grading of exam assignments
- Improve the study environment
- Maximize “STÅ” earnings

# Purpose of using TAs

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- Relieve work load of professors
- Improve the study environment
  - contact among older and younger students
  - contact among students and professors
  - relevant work
- Maximize “STÅ” earnings

# Purpose of using TAs

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- Relieve work load of professors
- Improve the study environment
- Maximize “STÅ” earnings
  - decrease drop-out
  - increase pass rates

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# Distribution of TAs

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- Standard rule for d-courses
  - one TA per 20 students,  $\lfloor n/20 \rfloor$
- Informal rule for graduate courses
  - $\lfloor (n-20)/20 \rfloor$
- The purpose is to decrease drop-out and increase pass rates
  - this problem is by far most dominant in the first year
  - why use an even distribution for all years?

# Traditional use of TAs

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- 3 hours a week
  - exercise 1-17, part a)-f)
  - the students have **solved the exercises in advance**
  - solutions are presented on the whiteboard
- Correcting weekly (mandatory) assignments
- Question time
  - if they bother and can find the TA



# Traditional use of TAs

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- 3 hours a week
  - exercise 1-17, part a)-f)
  - the students have **looked at the exercises in advance**
  - solutions are presented on the whiteboard
- Correcting weekly (mandatory) assignments
- Question time
  - if they bother and can find the TA

# Traditional use of TAs

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- 3 hours a week
  - exercise 1-17, part a)-f)
  - the students have **brought the exercises**
  - solutions are presented on the whiteboard
- Correcting weekly (mandatory) assignments
- Question time
  - if they bother and can find the TA

# Traditional use of TAs

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- 3 hours a week
  - exercise 1-17, part a)-f)
  - the students have brought their laptop
  - solutions are presented on the whiteboard
- Correcting weekly (mandatory) assignments
- Question time
  - if they bother and can find the TA

# Alternative use of TAs

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- Study café
  - solving exercises while TAs circulate
- Lab sessions
  - programming while TAs circulate
- Group consulting
  - 30 minutes per group per week for help with projects
- Manned web board
  - 24/7, guaranteed response time

# Potential use of TAs?

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- Auditorium exercises
  - repetition of syllabus
  - going over solutions to assignments
- Individual study support
  - assigned by study managers
- Practice exams
  - written/oral/practical/multiple choice
- Hotline
  - e-mail/web board/sms/phone/msn

# Instruction versus alignment

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- Alignment
  - the exam is organised such that the lazy but sly student can't avoid to achieve the desired competences by passing the course
- Old-fashioned view
  - everyone are focused on learning what is expected
  - the exam is a formality between gentlemen

# Instruction versus alignment

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- Alignment
  - the exam is organised such that the lazy but sly student can't avoid to achieve the desired competences by passing the course
- Old-fashioned view
  - everyone are focused on learning the syllabus
  - the exam is a formality between gentlemen
  - ↓
  - Robert fails (Susan passes)

# Instruction versus alignment

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- Alignment
  - the exam is organised such that the lazy but sly student can't avoid to achieve the desired competences by passing the course
- Instruction with perfect alignment
  - spent all time preparing for the exam
- Old-fashioned view
  - instruction is just help to learn the syllabus
  - swotting for the exam is cheating



# Instruction versus alignment

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- Alignment
  - the exam is organised such that the lazy but sly student can't avoid to achieve the desired competences by passing the course
- Instruction with perfect alignment
  - spent all time preparing for the exam
- dBerLog as example
  - oral exam with free choice of topic
  - instruction is used for preparations of presentations

# Instruction versus alignment

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- Alignment
  - the exam is organised such that the lazy but sly student can't avoid to achieve the desired competences by passing the course
- Instruction with perfect alignment
  - spent all time preparing for the exam
- dOvs as example
  - greedy collection of points during the project
  - TAs are consultants for the groups

# Survey questions and topics for discussion

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- Which considerations did you have the first time you were a TA?
- What are the primary challenges of being a TA?
- What characterises the good/bad TA?
- Which tips and techniques do you think is important to pass on to new TAs?
- Are there weekly meetings between TAs and the lecturer? If so, do you discuss teaching techniques or only content topics?
- Do TAs exchange experience about instruction?
- Would it be relevant to offer regular seminars for TAs about instruction?
- The Faculty of Science is preparing a 2,5 ECTS PhD course about teaching. What do you suggest to include in such a course?
- What is your opinion about arrangement of future instruction?
  - organisation: traditional, alternative, alignment?
  - distribution of TA resources among courses: uniform, graduate, purposive?
  - education of TAs?

# Feedback

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Please provide your  
**feedback in writing**  
as  
**minutes of your discussion**  
including  
**answers and comments**  
to the questions on the previous slide

# Group Work on Talks

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- Find your name on list. Everyone with an “a” presents in first half of poster session, “b”’s present in last half.
- After poster session, meet with your group at 11:15.
- Select one of the posters from your group and prepare a presentation on the subject of the selected poster.
- Elect someone from your group to present
- After lunch, at 13:30, meet with your “super-group” to do the presentation and hear the others.
- A: here, B: room 4, C: room 5, D: room 6 (4,5,6 are downstairs)

# Rules and Regulations

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Some “nice to know” facts

# Teaching portfolio for PhD students

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- Offered to PhD students upon graduation
- A folder with information about teaching activities
- A sheet for each teaching activity containing
  - the PhD's name
  - the name and time of the teaching activity
  - short description of the activity and the PhD's role
  - # of students
  - an evaluation of the PhD (from the faculty and the teacher)
- A gift from AU to the PhD for his/her CV
- Signal: teaching is important

# A new Course in TA'ing for PhD students

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- Runs first time this fall.
- 2.5 ECTS
- For more info: Contact Michael Caspersen



# New rules for TA vs. Stay abroad

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- Now you no longer need to do TA'ing equivalent to your time abroad.

# New system for PhD plans etc.

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- Your PhD plan and the regular evaluation of your study will be done electronically
- You revise your plan on-line, and your supervisor and PhD committee approve, also on-line.
- It all takes place at [mit.au.dk](http://mit.au.dk)

# Coordinating TA and other work

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- You get salaried work offered - you can say no
- If you don't say no, default work is TA'ing - but lots of other things occur.
- Up to now, no effort to distribute work in a coordinated way.
- From this fall: Ivan and Michael Schwartzbach will do the distribution.
- You get a mail, should answer and say what you do now, and what you would like to do in coming semester. Perhaps discuss with your supervisor first.
- We will assign work, of course taking continuity etc. into account.