Being a 6.042 Team Coach
Team Learning

The objective is to teach students to learn from each other.

These are the best students in the world.
Team Learning

They are highly motivated, proven high achievers.
They are a great resource for each other.
Team Problem Solving

The team focuses on writing problem solutions on their white board. Every team member should endorse and be ready to explain.
Group Dynamics

Focus on fostering teamwork.

Observe who is

• not participating
• dominating the board
• being unpleasant
Group Dynamics

Focus on fostering teamwork. Observe who is
• unhappy
• bored
• already knows the material
Group Dynamics

Focus on fostering teamwork. Observe who is

- doing so well they could be an LA
Group Dynamics

Report your observations in staff meeting and get advice on managing.

Notify instructors if urgent.
Team Solutions

A good answer is one that a student from another team who wanted the solution could look at the board and say “of course.”
Confirming a Team Solution

When the team is satisfied with their soln (usually not before then), tell them if something is unclear or wrong.

Don’t fix it yourself; let the team do it.
Confirming a Team Solution

If the solution seems OK, then ask if everyone is ready to be called upon to explain every part.

(Warn them you plan to call on the most worried looking 😊)
Confirming a Team Solution

If the solution seems OK, then ask if everyone is ready to be called upon to explain every part. If not ready, get them to explain to each other.
Confirming a Team Solution

If the solution seems OK, then ask if everyone is ready to be called upon to explain every part. If you believe they all understand, then you can move on.
Confirming a Team Solution

If the solution seems OK, then ask if everyone is ready to be called upon to explain every part. Or pick a tricky part for someone to explain—not a volunteer.
Coaching not Tutoring

• Answer a question with a question: “Did you ask your teammates?”

Watch out: students say “yes” when they mean they asked someone, not everyone.

You can help by calling the team’s attention to the student and have him ask his question.
Coaching not Tutoring

• A little floundering is educational.

Give students time to struggle. When they are stuck and struggle is no longer fruitful, provide just enough guidance to get them going--no more.
Warning signs during problem-solving

1. Tutoring instead of coaching.

During problem-solving, when you find yourself talking to your whole team a mental alarm should go off: “Why can’t I get a student to say what I’m saying?”
Warning signs during problem-solving

2. Talking to one student

The student should be getting answers from his teammates.* Did he try? You should check and verify that no one could answer.

In which case, you should answer the whole team, not the one student.

* ... unless it's personal
Warning signs during problem-solving

3. Showing tricks & mental teasers

Usually a bad idea. Your students are already struggling with a lot of new material. We’re trying to teach them concepts not quick facility.
Warning signs during problem-solving

3. Showing tricks & mental teasers

Their plate is full—you don’t need to add to it.

Stick to the class problems and info in the staff solutions.
Review at Start of Class

Start team session with list of the main topics of the day's class—2 to 3 short titles.

Ask students if they have any questions about the day's material. If so, see if a team member can answer before you do.
Review at Start of Class

Then ask students if they have questions about recent past material. If so, again see if a team member can answer.

Before answering yourself, check that the overall team is interested in hearing the answer; if not postpone answer till after class.
Review at Start of Class

Review session should rarely be more than 10 minutes.
Discussion Questions

Some class problems are meant for discussion.
Discussion may be more important than problem solving; don’t let students blow it off.
Discussion Questions

Try to get your team engaged with each other. Suggestions to help you stimulate discussion are given in staff solutions.
Participation Grades

Take attendance.

0 for absence.

1 for unprepared, read email, fell asleep, ...

2 satisfactory (90% of grades)
Participation Grades

3 extraordinary contribution—better than staff solution.

Once or twice for a team during the term.
Participation Grades

Email students for unexplained absence:

“I noticed you were absent today. Hope you are OK. Look forward to seeing at next class.” cc instructors.
Participation Grades

Tell students who get a 1:

“Given your team activity today, I’m not comfortable giving you full credit for participation.”
Participation Grades

Tell students who get a 1:
Follow up by email &
cc the instructors.
Preparing yourself

We assume you’ll be prepared yourself: you’ve looked at all the student material and staff solutions and have asked in advance about anything you’re not sure of.
Coaching is a pleasure

Most students appreciate the guidance of their coaches. Many are former students who want to return the favor.

It’s a satisfying role and a way to gain valuable leadership and communication skills.
And it should go w/o saying

You are in a supervisory position, perhaps for the first time. Do not abuse it. For example,

• no personal relationships with team members
• no bribes
• no undeserved “hardship” grading