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Reflection Paper

I did not have much of a clue what to expect when I applied to the UTA program. Frankly, I was unsure if I was going to get in. I had a low GPA and failed vector on my first attempt and barely passed the second. Luckily, I took analysis with Dr. Mrad the previous semester and she believed in me and gave me a chance. I didn't exactly realize what I had gotten myself into until they told me that I'd be working in a tutoring room with vector students. I felt like I was going to be exposed for "lying" as soon as a student asked me a question I didn't know. Thankfully it couldn't have been more the opposite. Dr. Jaramillo and Mrad both gave me the resources I needed to succeed and improve in all aspects of being a TA. I learned that even though I wasn't completely helpful just pointing a student in the right direction was more than enough. I didn't need to be Isaac Newton who knew calculus inside out forward and backward which was something that I had never even considered.

Even though I probably won't ever use a partial derivative again I still learned a valuable lesson in the way I express my ideas. I learned that being vocab heavy isn't always helpful and can sometimes be detrimental to students. I myself am going into the world of finance and in the world of investments many people who just want to put away a nest egg for their children go pale in the face when they hear about options, forwards, deferrals, amortization and the like. In order to best understand what they want out of their future I need to be able to explain all of these in layman's terms.

I had always just expected that the TAs were wunderkinds who would have their PhD in no time. In reality, we were a pretty diverse group. About half of the TAs in my semester had no intention of going to grad school. Some of us were computer scientists, some pre-med. Anyone and everyone in the school who has a desire to teach can be a TA.