Department of Biostatistics
Teaching Assistant Training Day
Assumptions about Teaching and Learning Exercises

The Videotape Exercise: Learning Experiences
(5 minutes individually, 10 minutes discussing with partner, 20 minutes generating list as a whole group.)

Liberally adapted from: Values Clarification Exercise found on Middle Tennessee State University’s website:  www.mtsu.edu/~u101irm/valuesex.html

Imagine that your mind is a videotape recorder that has recorded all the messages that you received during your formal education up until now, as you are sitting in (yet another) classroom. Rewind this tape and review the images of classrooms, teachers, professors, teaching assistants, and anyone else who influenced your learning experiences. What kind of things did they tell you about how you should think and act? What kinds of unspoken messages did you receive that influenced your classroom behavior and learning style? Put these expectations into your own words. Which of these attitudes, beliefs, or values do you agree with now? (Which of these have you decided to throw out?) How will these ideas affect your teaching? Be prepared to share your ideas with the larger class.

Your Best/Worst List of Teaching Practices
(20 minutes discussing/generating group list)

Spend a few minutes thinking about the best and the worst class or TA section you were ever in. Then, as a group, try to generate a list of specific reasons why these experiences were so good/bad. (Example: Rather than “The professor/teacher knew who I was” “The teacher knew my name and remembered things that I had written about in his class.”) Your group should generate a list of “good characteristics” “bad characteristics” and, if necessary, “ambiguous characteristics” of teaching. Be prepared to share your list with the larger class.