How to Hold an Office Hour

Prepare a skit that demonstrates proper (or improper) approaches to holding an office hour.

Details for Mentoring in your office hour:
As well as Lab or Discussion section, we focus the office hours toward Problem Solving. Many of the strategies of tutoring are similar with those you use in those sections.

i. **Make sure that students know where they are having difficulties**
The first thing you have to do is to determine the source of a student’s difficulty. Often the student cannot tell you this directly. Remember some students come to the office hour to just get the correct answers without really doing problems. You need make sure that they have made an honest attempt to do the problem before you give them any help. Always ask to see their work.

Students might ask you about problems for other classes. Because you might be not familiar with the other classes, you will have to read their Lab manual or textbook. Make sure that the student shows you what they have done. If you have only one student in your office hour, you have time to do that. However, if you have several students in your office hour, you might not be able to spend much time with one student. If this happens, explain to the student that you must help the others and that they might get more effective help from a TA who is more familiar with their class. Do not turn a student away just because you are not teaching their class. This is demoralizing to student who interpret this action as rejection of them as a person.

ii. **Give some hints to their questions**
After determining the student’s difficulty, give the student some hints instead of just telling them how you would proceed toward the correct answer. If you determine that the student has a misconception, you could ask her/him some questions to try to get them to see a contradiction with something else they believe (like the 'skeptic' in the group solving). Again, do not just give the correct answer. Give the students the chance to go through their own thought processes. One suggestion is that you do not write anything down. Let the student do all of the writing. This help make the student a more active participant. If the TA does all the writing, the student tends to be just an observer.

iii. **Do not show the entire procedure to the final answer**
After giving some hints and/or questions and finding the student is on 'the right track', you can leave him/her and tutor the next student who is waiting for you. Our duty is not to give the correct final answers but to help each students learn problem-solving that fits their own thinking. Your procedure to the final answer is not likely to be the exact one that the student would use. You will not be there when the student takes a test.