

Weekly Pedagogy Meetings

Weekly pedagogy discussions are essential for an LA's pedagogical growth and a positive experience. LAs are better prepared to facilitate Active Learning, and professors/TAs can expect a better learning environment. The number one complaint, from LAs having a bad experience, is the feeling of not being prepared for instruction days. Most of the time, meetings are infrequent or non-existent. Depending on weekly emails or virtual communication (messaging apps) for pedagogy and planning will result in very frustrated and unprepared LAs. The following best Practices will help you set up and run successful and meaningful Pedagogy Discussions and increase the likelihood of a strong, confident, and effective instructional team.

Best Practices

1. Weekly Pedagogy Discussions are Mandatory

- a. Instructors must meet with their LAs for meaningful pedagogy discussions. This is a mandatory requirement for LA and must be designed to enhance the educational value of being an LA
- b. All LAs and instructors must participate. Ideally, the whole instructional team attends (Professors, TAs, LAs)
- c. Meet in-person or virtually (Zoom, teams, etc.) or a hybrid of both
- d. Have someone take thorough notes
 - i. Life happens. LAs unable to attend a meeting should be able to review the Pedagogy Discussions and plans for upcoming instruction.
- e. Consider recording the meetings, especially if people have schedule conflicts
 - i. Recordings provide the additional context that even excellent meeting notes cannot provide

2. Carefully consider when you're scheduling meetings

- a. Hosting Pedagogy Discussions at the same day/time, each week, is usually best
- b. For very large teams or teams with unusual availability, consider hosting more than one meeting or hosting alternating meeting times. Either way, record the meetings for those unable to attend.
- c. Another option for large teams is determining the day/time of your weekly meeting before starting the recruiting process. Include this in your recruiting letter and application, then only select applicants that are available to attend.

3. All participants have a voice and a platform

- a. Always provide time for participants to raise questions, concerns, or suggestions

4. Reflect on previous instruction and pedagogy training (weekly LA pedagogy training program)

- a. Take some time to consider how the previous week went
- b. Often, the results of previous instruction will determine future instruction
- c. Everyone should share their thoughts
 - i. Find out what's going well and what has been difficult
- d. This may be difficult with large LA teams.

- i. You may want to departmentalize reflections- Have one representative from each role share (professors, TAs, and LAs) but allow space for others to comment
- 5. Ask about what they've learned or are learning in LA pedagogy training program)
 - i. LAs are eager to apply what they've learned in LAs pedagogy training program. The LAs are introduced to new strategies each week. Can you adjust activities to complement their pedagogy skills?
- 6. Plan, discuss, and prep for upcoming instruction/learning outcomes**
 - a. Be well-prepared in advance
 - i. You'll likely be discussing upcoming instruction for multiple sessions, especially if you have multiple lectures in a week. Make sure you have clear instructions for all activities, including downtime.
 - b. Share your learning outcomes!
 - i. Everyone should know exactly what you hope your students will get from instruction. Without understanding what you hope to achieve, LAs will be less effective. Student/LA interactions can be very inconsistent without clear goals or academic checkpoints
 - ii. "By the end of this activity, the students should be able to do ____."
 - iii. "Based on last week's material, the students should already understand____, so they should be able to apply it to the activity to produce ____."
 - c. Elicit feedback after sharing the lesson plans
 - i. As former students, LAs have probably participated in many of your lessons/activities.
 - ii. LAs also have a vast history of diverse learning experiences with other professors.
 - iii. LAs are great for helping instructors fine-tune lessons and activities for a better student experience.
 - d. Have a back-up plan
 - i. Teaching doesn't often go as planned
 - ii. Discuss which lesson/activities are most essential to your learning outcomes
 - iii. Discuss what might be omitted if an activity runs longer than expected
 - iv. Have ideas if there's extra time
- 7. Introduce and discuss course-specific pedagogy**
 - a. This is your opportunity to share course-specific pedagogy
 - i. Weekly pedagogy training program is taught to a very diverse group of LAs
 - ii. All supporting different disciplines, course structures, and teaching styles
 - iii. LA Pedagogy must take a very broad approach to benefit the many different types of LA support
 - b. It's the professor's responsibility to teach their LAs the course-specific pedagogy skills required
 - c. Brainstorm common/potential student challenges or questions

- i. Get the team to discuss potential responses in case they are approached by a student with one of these issues
- ii. LAs will be more confident and effective if they are aware of and prepared for common difficulties
- iii. It is likely that the LAs will have considerable insight here

8. Identify and discuss student needs/concerns

- a. Listen to your LAs!
 - i. LAs have good insight into the minds of your students. They are your cultural guides and often identify student challenges that professors don't see or consider.

9. Set everyone up for success

- a. Consistent, weekly Pedagogy Meetings will not only set up your instructional team for success, but they will also benefit your students!
- b. Provide easily accessible lines of communication outside of the meetings.
 - i. Questions and comments can occur anytime
 - ii. Email is fine, but messaging apps tend to be quicker
 - iii. Electronic communications are supplemental; they cannot substitute actual pedagogy Discussions.