

TA workshop: Facilitating successful discussions

Congratulations! You've recently been hired at a medium-sized comprehensive public research university as an educational developer. Your role within Teaching Support Services (TSS) is to support graduate student teaching development. This is your first position as an educational developer.

During your first week, you were told that TSS offers a series of workshops on topics related to teaching and learning for graduate students and that these will be part of your responsibilities. This series is meant to offer an introduction to topics and is open to students from across the institution. This 1.5 hour session, focused on the topic of facilitating successful discussions, would be part of that workshop series. You've been told that you are solely responsible for organizing these workshops. In past offerings, your predecessor has often facilitated the sessions themselves, with the expected attendance between 15 and 20 participants for each, but the assistant director believes that these numbers should be higher (perhaps double?). TSS lacks space to accommodate a workshop larger than 15 in its centre. Classroom space can be booked with the assistance of TSS' administrative assistant.

- As the Educational Developer tasked with the responsibility of organizing the workshop, what are your goals and concerns?
- What routine and additional considerations will factor into your work?
- With whom will you consult and collaborate?
- What will be your approach to designing, developing, delivering and evaluating the workshop?

New faculty orientation on e-Learning

You are an Educational Developer working in the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) at a large, public research university. You have been approached by your Director and given the task of developing some kind of session for new faculty, orienting them to the e-Learning tools and services available to them as instructors. It is stated strategic priority on-campus to use e-Learning tools to improve the quality of student learning. Your Director has suggested that you work with a colleague to plan, organize and facilitate.

While responsibilities for supporting teaching and learning fall to the CAE, support for e-Learning falls to multiple departments across the institution: classroom technology is managed by the Classroom Support Group and your institution's learning management system is managed by the IT department. Staff from these groups have collaborated in the past on other e-Learning related initiatives.

The CAE currently organizes a one-day new faculty orientation in conjunction with Faculty Relations in mid-August each year. "New" faculty members are those who have joined the institution within the past 12 months and most are preparing to teach their first course in the Fall Semester. Approximately 50 new faculty participate in this orientation session, with participants coming from across the 10 faculties on-campus.

- As the Educational Developer tasked with the responsibility of organizing the orientation, what are your goals and concerns?
- What routine and additional considerations will factor into your work?
- With whom will you consult and collaborate?
- What will be your approach to designing, developing, delivering and evaluating the orientation?

Department meeting: working with student course evaluations

You work in the Centre for Faculty Development (CFD) at a small, primarily undergraduate university. Last year, the institution undertook a review and subsequently changed the student assessment of teaching (SET) collected at the end of courses. During the re-development process, the CFD offered consultative input to the committee in charge of making the changes to the tool (but you had little to do with these consultations). This tool has an emphasized focus on providing feedback on the instructor's approach to student-centred learning.

After the results of the first semester's evaluations are made available to faculty, the chair of the Physics Department has approached the CFD, bringing with her concerns from departmental faculty members about changes to their scores (these scores are taken into consideration for the promotion and tenure process). The CFD's Assistant Director has come to you with the request from the Department: can someone in the CFD come and talk to the six other faculty members about the new tool and how to interpret the results? The Chair (considered a "friend" of the CFD) understands that her colleagues might also need to know more about student-centred approaches, but their primary concern (appears to be) about the lower scores.

- As the Educational Developer tasked with the responsibility of organizing the faculty meeting, what are your goals and concerns?
- What routine and additional considerations will factor into your work?
- With whom will you consult and collaborate?
- What will be your approach to designing, developing, delivering and evaluating the departmental meeting?

Workshop on Effective Classroom Management

You are an Educational Developer in a large, comprehensive, research-intensive university. You have been assigned responsibility for organizing a program of workshops on effective classroom management strategies for a general audience of sessional instructors. The request for this workshop was made by the Associate Vice-President, Academic to the Director of the Teaching Centre, following an incident in a first-year, large lecture classroom taught by a sessional instructor the previous semester.

The events that occurred in this specific course last semester have had significant consequences for some of the students involved and for the sessional instructor, causing ripple effects across campus and in the campus and local media, and raising concern for the ability of sessional instructors to ensure the safety and security of a classroom, as well as to create and sustain positive classroom environments conducive to teaching and learning. Over the course of the previous semester, early emergence of mildly disruptive classroom behaviours among a small group of students enrolled in a large lecture first year course grew and evolved into bullying and threatening behaviours in class that made attending classes an unpleasant experience for many. Inevitably, the trouble that had been brewing over the semester, escalated to include racial intolerance and culminated in an in-class physical altercation between students that required that campus police and first-responders be called. Once the dust settled, two students were expelled and one is facing charges. Several other students were traumatized by the events that occurred over the semester and the toxic classroom environment that spilled over into residence life. The sessional instructor has chosen to take a semester off and is seeking professional assistance with stress management. In addition to the AVPA's request for a workshop series from the Teaching Centre, the university has struck a representative task force with far-reaching authority to examine the issues and factors that contributed to the incident and make recommendations for changes.

As the Educational Developer tasked with the responsibility of organizing the workshop series under these conditions:

- What are your goals and concerns?
- What routine and additional considerations will factor into your work?
- With whom will you consult and collaborate?
- What will be your approach to designing, developing, delivering and evaluating the workshop series?

Workshop on Developing Course-level Learning Outcomes

You are an Educational Developer at a small post-secondary institution. It's the end of March, the snow is still flying, and given the general mood on campus, the winter doldrums seem to have a firm grip on your campus. Matters are not being helped by the recent release of budget information which announces that every organizational unit will be required to find 3% cuts to base budgets in the coming fiscal year. At the same time, there is a growing chorus of concern bubbling just under the surface about the recently released three year Academic Plan which many faculty members feel was created by the senior administration without adequate consultation with faculty members.

Among other ambitious goals for program growth and greater diversification of modes of delivery outlined in the recently released Academic Plan, your school has set an institutional goal of ensuring that every course outline contains detailed learning outcomes by the end of the 3 year plan that starts the following September. The VPA is looking to your teaching centre to support these efforts across campus and you have been given a month to get ready to deliver a workshop on developing course-level learning outcomes. The workshop will be open to any interested members of your campus community. Your VPA has indicated that she will try to be present and will encourage the Deans to participate as well to show support for the initiative. The workshop will be live-streamed and recorded and will be made available on your Centre's website following the workshop. Your workshop is only an hour long.

As the Educational Developer tasked with the responsibility of organizing the workshop series under these conditions:

- What are your goals and concerns?
- What routine and additional considerations will factor into your work?
- With whom will you consult and collaborate?
- What will be your approach to designing, developing, delivering and evaluating the workshop?