

Advice for working with LAs: Starting the semester

General

- Go observe how other people are doing it before you go jump in yourself.
- Be prepared when working with LAs, and be prepared to scrap your plan. Try things out with the LAs and be willing to change.
- Have a very organized Brightspace site; structure online environment so it's easy for students and LAs to find stuff.
 - Make sure students know how to use it, either by doing a tour with them the first day of class or creating a video tour that is posted in the announcements and highlighted in class.
- Consider introducing more formal feedback into your classroom, asking the students what is working and what isn't working in a confidential setting on a regular basis.
- Consider using Zoom Fridays to give LAs greater opportunity to shape lessons and promote discussion.
- Think about how you are going to talk to students and LAs about boundary setting (specifically about disgruntled students). Consider interactions in and out of class (e.g., in the dorms).

Things to tell/do with students in the class

- Explain why you're doing what you're doing (e.g., you may be wondering why I'm having you talk to your colleagues). If you're using a flipped classroom approach, consider having an introductory "how to approach the flipped classroom" session; even more advanced students need reminders and advice.
- Pep talk: we have high standards, but you belong here.
- Convey to the students that you care about their success, and make sure to explain structures they may not fully understand (e.g., office hours).
- Tell students that you, the instructor, are responsible for instructional choices in the class—if they have concerns about how the course is set up, they should talk to you.

Things to tell/do with your LAs

- Set up a space (e.g., Box folder) to share course materials with your LAs; encourage them to share with each other.
- Establish a way to communicate with your LAs early (e.g., GroupMe, Slack, regular text thread, etc.).
- Set clear expectations for what LAs should have done before coming to the prep meeting (e.g., reviewing materials).
- Structure the relationship with the LAs so they understand that this is a job, and that they have committed to it. Comparison to a VUceptor position may be useful.

- Remind LAs how different all the students are from them and from each other. We have so many students who have approaches for solving problems that are different from the ways LAs may expect. It's important for the LAs to learn to think about where students are coming from and why they're saying what they say.
- Talk to the LAs about setting boundaries, what's okay for them to be doing and what they shouldn't be doing. This will both help protect their time and will help ensure a more equitable experience for different LA groups.
 - One option: LAs may want to be a peer-notetaker during lecture portions of class, sending a short summary to their group.
- Help LAs understand that they're not supposed to know everything. Give them phrases to practice using or tools to say "I don't know, and it's okay that I don't know."
- Talk to your LAs! Ask them how they solved problems and what helped them learn. Troubleshoot with them.
- In prep meetings, don't hesitate to probe knowledge and understanding of the LAs. From one instructor: "Do it early, to normalize getting deep into the material. As material got harder, the LAs were not comfortable saying they didn't understand something; need to normalize that probing and the expectation for high understanding."