Vol. 10

EDLSC Associate Professor
Peter ROUX

· **Research Field:**
  Educational Technology

· **Subjects:**
  Study Skills and Academic Writing
  Introduction to Peer Leader Taining
  Peer Leader Taining Ⅰ

Interview date: May, 2021

Tips

1. **Stay informed and updated when preparing course content and material.**
2. **Use a variety of learning activities and online applications to create a stimulating and engaging environment.**
3. **Keep a dialogue with learners before, during and after classes to ensure that the course contents are understood.**

Q: In your classes, which subject do you plan for the most?

A: I try to spend an equal amount of time preparing for SSAW and Introduction to Peer Leadership courses. For Peer Leadership Training, which focuses on teamwork, I think a lot about the development and growth of the students. Therefore, the focus of setting up this course lies in **getting students involved, engaged, and communicating through preparing to facilitate the process of teamwork**. In SSAW, which focuses on the development of academic writing skills, I also try to facilitate teamwork, but for the specific purpose of developing those skills. Therefore, in this course I have to prepare for **learning goals with specific outcomes.** For example, what skills do I want students to learn and how do I get them to improve their writing and

student development through teamwork, each class results in its own character and learning journey. I'm always excited when I start to see this unique learning journey develop because the needs for each class will be slightly different and therefore the purpose of the class itself also develops over time.

Furthermore, there are two sides to the class relationship, the teacher and the student. As a teacher, I always demand of myself that I stay updated on new knowledge and the state of the educational world and its developments. Therefore, when I prepare to create classes, **I always try to update the classes and improve the quality. I confirm what students would like to hear, what they are discussing, and what they are interested in so that I can connect those interests and themes to the class content.** Therefore, I

problem-solving skills, while imparting knowledge which will also help them to improve their current skills?

Q: In your classes, what do you do to increase the quality of student learning?

A: A great place to start is by **thinking about why students join the course**, as the reason they enroll in the first place means that they have some kind of motivation to join. I'm always happy to see many eager and curious students in my courses because it means that they started from a place inside their hearts and minds regarding what skills and knowledge they want to develop in themselves. Therefore, to ensure this development and the quality of student education, considering student motivation for the respective course is a good place to start. Furthermore, as my courses focus on

think preparation is a mindset for improvement. During the class, I ask students to reflect on each lesson, its learning contents, and what contents they would like to study further. If I follow that path each week, I get a very good sense of student needs and development.

Q: In your classes, what do you do to increase student motivation for learning?

A: As a former student, I have been in the position of having signed up for a class which begins to wear me down. In this situation, I suggest that students ask themselves why they originally enrolled, and what their original feelings and goals were. They can also question how they will face potential disappointment or continue to strive for those goals: perhaps the disappointment itself will

reveal a life lesson. The wise words of the Persian writer Rumi describe the human soul like a house, and every emotion, every experience that comes in to it, should be treated like a guest in your house, while remembering that it's a guest and it will leave soon. I've always come back to this concept with any difficult experience in my life, and I advise my students to treat each of their experiences as guests in this way to maintain motivation during their ups and downs.

I also try to design activities in which the students have the opportunity to think about their everyday experiences and integrate these experiences into the course material. Then, each week in my Peer Leadership class, we will have a different topic and class activities conducted during breakout sessions based on that topic. These activities are usually based on different types of personal competencies.

For instance, if the theme of the week is time management, students in the breakout rooms are expected to make a schedule for the week and then analyze how they manage their time together with their peers.

Q: Classes were moved online in the Spring Semester of 2020. What sorts of changes have you made for your online classes?

A: It is a real challenge to have online classes as we are used to in-person style teaching which gives us the opportunity to communicate easily. In the classroom setting, students are accessible and it is easier to converse with them and exchange information. The challenge for online learning has been the correct setup. Technical support systems such as Zoom, WebEx, and online learning

What is a Mentor?
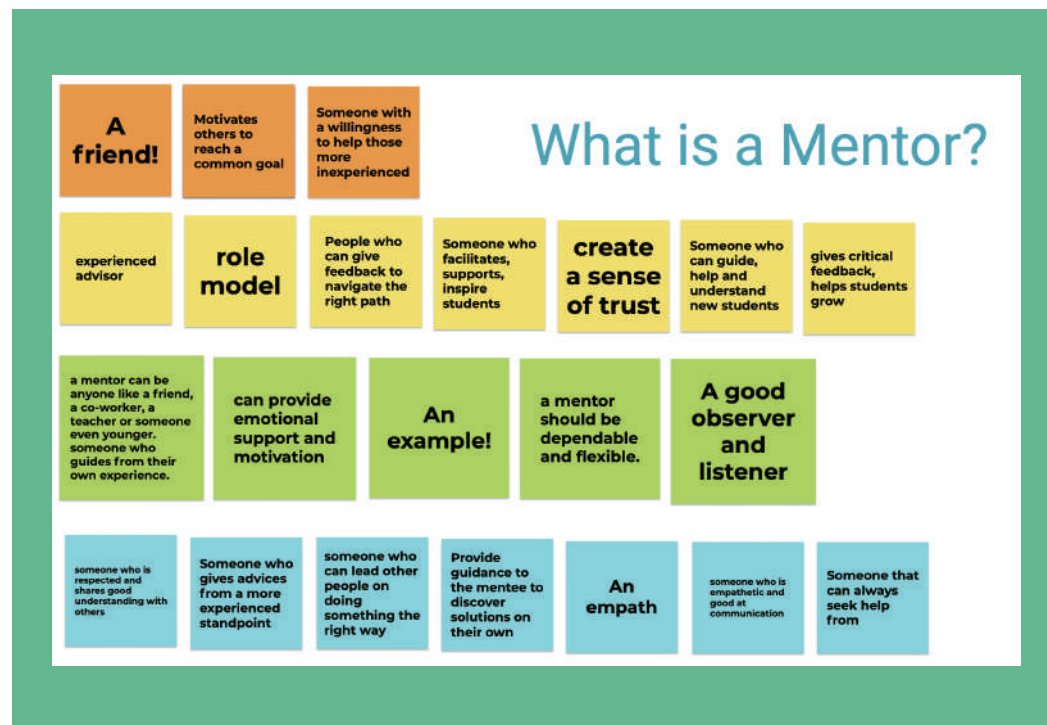
Learning Path Check 3 - SSAW SP21

management systems such as manaba have become the new bridges for communication. However, these bridges take time and effort to build and maintain to prevent communication from breaking down with unstable internet connection or the different time zones students are in. It is also crucial to adapt the class content to this online format For example, I believe in learning through classroom games, and in my classes I do an activity in which students as a group choose an aspect of leadership such as responsibility or inclusivity, and design a mini-lecture to teach their classmates about their chosen subject. I then encourage the presenting group to use game formats such as Kahoot, Zoom Poll, or PowerPoint to test and challenge their classmates' and their own understanding of the topic. I believe this presentation activity involving games will enable students to recall what they have learned and what the purpose of the presentation

was without the review being monotonous, improving their motivation to pay attention in online classes. I always try to end these activities with a 10-15 minute reflection on what was learned during that class to further confirm student understanding.

Q: When improving the contents of your classes, what steps do you take towards improvement?

A: In the SSAW course, we have created a repository of model essays for students to access and see examples of writing expectations in essays. I also try to motivate students to write essays through a specific set of topics rooted in real-world problems. For example, the faculty in charge of SSAW have chosen to use the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs,

which cover a broad range of topics on current global issues, and this method of choosing broad and relevant topics has been successful so far. We are also developing a system in which students choose their own topics of interest. Through this method, everybody who participates can find their passion somewhere within these topics.

As for classes such as Peer Leadership Training, I try to come up with activities in which students can learn through doing. For example, in one of the classes we explored power relations in leadership through a movie analysis, in which groups of students chose a movie to watch from a list and, based on a comprehensive leadership worksheet provided in class, analyzed the movie in terms of the power relationships depicted in the storyline and through the characters. After this analysis, students designed an information graph and summarized their analysis which could be later referenced in the course.

Q: What do you think is important in the process of education?

A: Speaking from my experiences as a learner, one of the most important aspects during the process of education is attitude. Attitude in any aspect of life will shape the experience and what is learned from it. If the mind is open to that concept, there is a very good chance to achieve positive results. However, if the experience is approached with a mindset such as: "I feel tired and I'm not sure I can do this" or "I feel a little bit low," then this mindset will create a stumbling block for learning. Education is not only about learning from classes, but learning from experiences in life.

Professor Peter ROUX with his Peer Leader Training Students

Q: What do you expect from the students who take your classes?

will make all the difference.

A: I think having that good attitude is a good place to start. My other hope is for students to stay curious. If students feel that they doubt themselves or are losing interest, this response is an acceptable part of the ups and downs we go through in our education. I suggest talking with peers, professors, friends, and family, and to keep communicating. Staying engaged is very important, and for shy students who don't open up easily, writing down thoughts and emotions may be one strategy for this kind of communication. I do not expect my students to be perfect or great achievers, but I think that achievement will reach each person in their own way at a point in their lives. However, having an open mind and staying engaged through facing both ups and downs during the learning experience

LEADER CHARACTERISTICS

Interviewer Impressions

Having taken Peer Leadership Training 2 last semester, it was interesting to know the behind-the-scenes preparation that takes place for classes like Peer Leadership Training, where the outcome depends on the students taking initiative to get the most out of the course. Interviewing Professor Roux made me realize how in-depth preparation is needed for these classes, and the mere preparation of materials is not enough. Rather, there is a need to create an active learning environment in which students can challenge themselves and create connections with people as well as gain the required skills promised through that course.

Interviewer

Name: BANERJEE Sulagna
College: APS (CSM)
Country: India
Message: Hello! I am Sulagna, class of FA 2022, majoring in Culture, Media and Society. My hobbies are watching anime and reading manga. I have been part of ALRCS and Project Q since Fall 2019 and working for Project Q has given me a better understanding and newfound appreciation towards our teaching faculty in APU. Our professors put a lot of effort into creating the course material for their students. Therefore, I hope that our articles help out our students and APU teaching faculty to improve the overall quality of learning in APU.

What is [Q]?

At APU there are many professors who put together wonderful classes, and if we could get to know how these classes are planned, it would contribute to the improvement of other professors' classes. For that purpose, we have begun doing interviews in order to learn about class planning. These articles have been entitled [Q], comprising a variety of meanings such as: increasing the [Q]uality of classes, answering [Q]uestions to increase quality, and forming a [Q]ueue, or line, of class improvements. We would be very happy if these articles could contribute to the [Q]uest of APU professors' class quality improvement.

QUALITY
QUESTION
QUEUE