

Running Effective Office Hours

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Objectives for This Session

- To identify purposes for holding office hours
- To develop strategies to encourage students to use office hours
- To describe ways that online interactions differ from face-to-face interactions and when to take advantage of these differences
- To create potential responses to challenging situations that may happen during office hours

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Background

- Office hours are a common aspect of TA work
- Expectations and needs vary, so ask your supervising professor:
 - How many office hours should be held?
 - When and where should they be held?
 - How should they be communicated?

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Purposes

What are some common purposes of office hours?

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Purposes

Why do students go to TA office hours?

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Purposes

Why do students not go to TA office hours?

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Strategies

What might TAs do to encourage students to go to TA office hours?

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Online Interactions

- May take different forms: e-mail, discussion board, IM
- Differ from face-to-face meetings
- Potential problems exist with online interactions
- Circumstances dictate whether it is better to interact on-line or meet face-to-face

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Online Interactions

How are online interactions different from face-to-face meetings?

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Online Interactions

What are some problems that could arise through online interactions?

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Online Interactions

When might it be better to meet with a student face-to-face?

When might it be better to interact online with a student?

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Challenges

There is no single "correct" way to respond to student challenges.

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Challenges

#1: *The (Almost) Overwhelmed TA*

What, if anything, could Sergei be handling better?

What are some strategies that Sergei might consider to help him manage his TA responsibilities?

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Challenges

#2: *The Needy Student*

If you were Kathleen, what would you say to Thomas?

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Challenges

#3: *The At-risk Student*

If you were TA Andrew, what would you say to John?

What other actions might Andrew take?

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Some Take-away Messages

- Communicate frequently regarding your availability and expectations
- Be proactive about encouraging one-on-one meetings during office hours
- Make office hours student-focused: Have them do most of the talking
- Use online interactions to the advantage of you and your students
- Call upon experts on campus if you need help supporting a troubled student

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