

PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING LEADER TRAINING

LEADER TRAINING MODULE: COMMUNICATION

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”
--Henry Ford



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Before attending the **Leader Training Module: *Communication***, please read the Introduction and How to Conduct a Leader Training Session.

Section A: Introduction

Questions as a test

These questions are typically direct and have only one answer. The purpose of these questions is to evaluate progress. Such direct questions can have a negative effect on the students' thought processes. Because there is only one right answer, these questions suggest to the students that finding the answers is paramount to learning.

Alternative: A more effective way of evaluating the students' progress is to ask the students how to approach the problem (D'Adamo, 2004).

Questions as motivation

Students often find themselves unable to understand the concepts being taught in lecture. During these times it can become difficult to motivate the students to be productive during workshop. It then becomes necessary to prompt students with questions that ask them to think about the concepts they already know and how they can be applied to the problem they are having trouble with. Creating a review sheet can be quite helpful in doubtful times. The review sheets help the students visualize what they already know and what they need to learn, helping them get back on task (D'Adamo, 2004).

Questions as exploration

One of the most effective ways to challenge a student's understanding of a certain concept is to ask that student a question in which there are many if not infinite ways of solving the problem. These questions encourage students to apply their knowledge of chemistry to solve challenging problems. Because these questions can be time-consuming it may sometimes be more appropriate to ask a student how solving a certain problem would change if only one or two variables were changed (D'Adamo, 2004).

Section B: How to Conduct a Leader Training Session

Goals of PLTL-LT Modules

Modules should generally be completed in 50-60 minutes. In order to meet this goal, everyone in the group will have to work together to stay on task. If the group has some extra time, a more relaxed pace can be accommodated.

Choosing the Leader

Each week your group will select a different person to be the leader. Choose the leader for the following week at the end of the current week's session. The leader will be responsible for keeping the group on target and within the time limits assigned to each activity. They will help guide the group when the group is having trouble moving forward.

The Assessor

Each week, aside from the leader, your group will choose one person to write a short assessment regarding the module. This person should write how the module went, any problems that occurred, any positive feedback, what they would like to see changed/stay etc. This should be posted in the PLTL on-line folder.

Section C: Leader Training Activities

15 mins

Sentence Game

How it's played:

1. In your group, everyone writes a short sentence on a small piece of paper and places it in a hat or a like object.
2. One person then draws a sentence out of the hat.
3. Everyone in the group takes a turn reading the sentence using a different tone of voice, using different body language, or doing anything that changes the sentence without changing the words.
4. Repeat this so that everyone in the group has read each person's sentence.
5. Discuss the following questions

1. How was the meaning of your sentence changed by the way others presented it?
2. Think of a statement that you might say to a student during workshop. Find as many different ways that you can use the same words but change the meaning/implication of the statement.
3. Which components of communication can affect how clearly a leader communicates?

Scenarios

Choose one Scenario to read aloud in your group and discuss how you would react. The assessor should write a summary of the discussion to present at the weekly meeting.

1. Emily, a student in your workshop, tells you that she doesn't understand net ionic equations. She says to you, "I just don't understand net ionic equations!" What questions could you ask her to get her on track to solving a net ionic equation? (Roth, Cracolice, Goldstein, Snyder, p.52)

2. Sam, a student in your workshop comes to the first workshop and says, as he looks around at his peers, "These problems are *so* easy." But while working on the problems he seems to be having trouble. When you ask him how he is doing, he tells you that he is doing fine. When you look back at him several minutes later his head is on his desk and he has not answered *any* of the problems.

- *What does his verbal communication tell you?*
- *What does his nonverbal communication tell you?*
- *How can you help Sam be more productive?*

3. One of your students, Aryn, has not come to the last 2 workshops. She was always very confident and helpful during workshops and did well on her first two tests, so you know she understands the material. What do you do?

Round Robin Communication Exercise

The following exercise will be done using the round robin method. Below is a list of hypothetical derogative statements that you as leaders may encounter in your workshops. Take a minute to read the statements to yourself. One member of the group will then choose a statement to read aloud. A second member will analyze the statement. (*To analyze each statement think about why the student has made his or her statement, what the underlying problem is, how you can solve it etc*). A third person in the group will respond to the statement. A fourth person will summarize the discussion regarding the statement, the analysis, and the response.

- a. “This stuff’s really boring. Besides I think we all get it. Can we just leave early?”
- b. One’s student’s response to another student who did not know how to solve a certain problem: “This stuff is so easy! If you don’t know how to answer problems like this you probably shouldn’t be in college.”
- c. “PLTL is a waste of my time. I just come ‘cause I get extra credit.”
- d. “Let’s just face it, I’m way too dumb to ever understand chemistry.”
- e. “If my professor didn’t suck so freakin’ much then maybe I would understand this stupid stuff!”
- f. “You know, I don’t need to be here. I did all of this stuff in high school.”
- g. “I don’t know the answer! I don’t know how to do this! Why can’t you just tell me how to do it!”
- h. “You’re the teacher, shouldn’t you know the answer to this?”
- i. After only a half-hour of workshop one student says, “I finished the work shop, Peace out,” And begins to leave.
- j. “This workshop is b---s---, I’m outta here.”

10 min

Discussion questions:

Using what you have learned today discuss these questions within your group.

1. How does communication play an integral part in the way we learn?
2. What can you do to better your communication skills?
3. Why is it effective to answer a student's question with another question?

Journal Response Questions

Make a list of the different communication techniques that you used today. Which techniques did work? Which communication techniques did not work? Why or why not? Please post your response to the PLTL on-line conference.

For more tips on communication visit the folder titled "Communication" under "Leader Training" on the PLTLIS website: <http://www.pltlis.org/>

References

D'Adamo, H. (2012). How Can the Peer Leader and the Student Use Questions as Action? Peer-Led Team Learning: Leader Training. Online at <http://www.pltlis.org>.

Roth, V., Cracolice, M. S., Goldstein, E., Snyder, V. (2001). Workshop Leader Training (Chapter Four). In Gosser, D.K., Cracolice, M.S., Kampmeier, J.A., Roth, V., Strozak, V., Varma-Nelson, P. *Peer Led Team Learning: A Guidebook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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