Certified Learning Assistants Program
What Are CLAP Learning Assistants?

**LAs are...**
- Undergraduate Peer Educators/Mentors
  - Students that did well in the course
  - Recruited by professors
- Part of the instructional team
- Trained
  - Complete an LA Pedagogy Course
  - Concurrent to their 1st quarter working as an LA
- Work directly with students
  - Facilitate active learning activities
  - Monitor group work
  - Foster student discussion
  - Give feedback and encouragement
- Earn Course Credit
  - Earn course credit for further development in pedagogical practice in experiential classroom instruction
  - Graded Units (UNI STU 198)

**LAs are not...**
- TAs or TA Replacements
- Graders/Readers
- Instructors/Content Experts
The LA Model at UCI

**Pedagogy**
- New LAs:
  - Weekly Pedagogy Training
  - CLAP Mentors
- Certified LAs:
  - CLAP Mentors

**Practice**
- Facilitating Active Learning with students

**Planning**
- Participate with the instructional team in **weekly** planning meetings
LA Pedagogy Training
(Once a Week for 2 hours)

**Goal:** A Learning Assistant’s main focus is facilitating Active Learning, not teaching course material. We introduce practical pedagogy training that the LAs can start using immediately with students. LAs learn how to leverage their course knowledge to best support student learning outcomes. Pedagogy concepts are broad to support LAs across diverse subjects and course types.

- “Redirecting Questions” and “Asking the Right Questions”
- Bloom’s Taxonomy
- Check for Understanding
- Collaborative Learning (Group Activities; Group Roles; Maximum Participation)
- Metacognition
- Growth Mindset
- Weekly Reflections (Written & Shared in Small Groups)
- Work 1-1 with an LA Mentor (Peer Observations & Personal Consultations)
Weekly Planning Meetings
(Course Instructional Team)

Best Practices for productive planning meetings:

- Instructional meetings are mandatory
- All participants have a voice and a platform (Instructors, TAs, and LAs)
- Plan, discuss, and prep for upcoming instruction/learning objectives
- Introduce and discuss course-specific pedagogy
- Reflect on previous instruction and pedagogy training (UNI STU 176)
- Identify and discuss student needs/concerns
- Set everyone up for success
What Can Learning Assistants Do?

Per TA Union rules, LAs have limitations to their job duties.

Yes ...

- Attend and participate in weekly planning meetings with professors and TAs
  - LAs can contribute to curriculum development
  - Collaborate on activities, lessons, assignments, exams
- Work directly with students during instruction
- Grade, and analyze formative assessments (grades cannot go into the gradebook)
- Lead supplemental work groups or review sessions
  - 2 or more LAs per session
- Pass out/collection worksheets, homework, and exams
- Grade and analyze formative assessments (grades cannot go into the gradebook)
- Proctor exams and quizzes (instructors must be present)

No...

- Assigned to lead lecture, discussion, or lab sections
  - Professor or TA must be present
- Read, sort, or grade assignments or exams
  - General Rule: LAs should avoid anything students submit for their grade (formative assessment can be an exception, if students are graded on completion, regardless of score)
- Hold open “Office Hours”
  - LAs can, however, host LA Learning Sessions
  - Learning Sessions must focus on class material, and ideally have pre-planned activities or worksheets
- Confront students regarding behavior/cheating
  - LAs should inform professor or TAs to take action
How LAs Can Help...

SYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION

In Person

- Lecture Sections
  - LAs can circulate the lecture hall during Active Learning activities (Think/Pair/Share; small group discussion; clicker questions)
  - LAs monitor student discussions/active learning to “answer” questions and facilitate the activity

- Discussion Sections
  - Work with TA to facilitate activities and monitor student progress
  - Encourage ALL students to participate and contribute

- Lab Sections
  - Engage students to tie course concepts to lab activities, instead of focusing on just finishing it

Zoom Sessions (Lecture, Lab, Discussion)

- Monitor the chat while the instructor is lecturing
  - LAs respond to student questions or comments
  - If needed, LAs can alert the instructor to important questions or confusion in the chat
  - LAs can add supplemental information or advice without interrupting the instructor

- Monitor and facilitate breakout rooms (Co-Hosts)
  - LAs “circulate” the breakout rooms and provide assistance when needed
  - Encourage ALL group members to participate and collaborate for the task at hand
  - Proper coordination guarantees all groups get equal attention
How LAs Can Help...

**ASYNCHRONOUS INSTRUCTION (Remote & In-Person Instruction) - Build and Maintain a Course Community**

- Monitor and Facilitate Discussion Boards
  - Encourage students to participate and respond to each other’s questions and comments first
  - Respond to student questions or comments
  - Just as they are trained for in-person discussions, LAs will only give answers or explanations as a last resort

- Monitor progress on long-term assignments & projects (individually or in groups)
  - LAs monitor participation and collaboration within groups
  - Provide feedback and advice
  - Google Docs
  - Social Messaging Apps
  - Zoom/Canvas Conferences
  - In-Person “office hours”

- LAs coordinate ongoing student check-ins
  - Repeating contact for LAs to discuss student wellness (academic and personal)

- (Virtual) Office Hours / Supplemental Practice / Review Sessions
  - Activity based sessions that focus on course material
  - Virtual sessions where LAs and students can interact with a specific purpose or task (e.g., exam reviews)
  - Led by 2 or more LAs, whenever possible
Things to consider...

● Do you have the time/energy to recruit your own Learning Assistants?
● What kind of Active Learning will be implemented and how do you envision the LA/student interaction
● Learning Assistants should be spending more time facilitating Active Learning than listening to you or the TA lecture to students.
● Can you commit to a weekly planning meeting?
● How many LAs will you need?
  ○ 1 LA per 20-25 students / 1 LA per 4-5 groups
● Who do you need to contact to schedule an LA Consultation meeting?
  ○ Contact your School or Department’s CLAP LA Faculty Advisor
  ○ https://dtei.uci.edu/opportunities/faculty/learning-assistants/learning-assistants-at-uci/
Q&A

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DTEI Website:
https://dtei.uci.edu/learning-assistants/