

Holding Effective Office Hours

Learning objective:

Purpose, strategies for effective office hours, Issues

Office hours are different from other TA responsibilities because:

- Not easy to completely prepare ahead of time
- Limited control over course of interaction - unpredictable

Outline

- Ice breaker
- Purpose
- Strategies / active learning
- Difficult Scenarios
- Conclusion

Discussion about the purpose of office hours.

Have students call out their answers. Make a list on the board of purposes / benefits for students/ benefits for you

- What do students get out of office hours? Why do they come?
- What do TAs get out of office hours?
- What do professors get out of office hours, and their TAs office hours

Some possible answers

- Students: An opportunity for students to interact with an instructor at a personal level.
- TA: Hears from students topics that are unclear
- Prof: lessens the burden. Helps student learn.

Tips for Effective Office Hours (to fulfill the above purpose)

Getting students to come

- posting office hours every class
- Requiring students to come at least once?
- choosing a good time for you and students

In office hours:

- have students take turns asking questions
- probe with questions
- experiment with not writing
- Active learning

Possible Answers

Desired characteristics (according to undergrads)

- Provide a comfortable learning environment
- Should be approachable and friendly
- Should be enthusiastic about material
- Expect them to be prepared and go beyond text
- Provide confidentiality

Repeat questions

- Shows you've been listening
- Paraphrasing helps the speaker consider their situation from a different perspective
- Checks accuracy of your understanding

Attentive behaviors

- Understanding
- Genuineness
- Respect
- Esteem
- Empathy
- Non-judgmentalness

Active Learning in Office Hours

How can you make office hours an **active** learning experience for a group of

- 15 students the day before an exam?
- 1 student who needs help with homework?
- 2 students with very different needs?

Case-Studies: Dealing with Challenging Situations

Cases?

Have students take 5 minutes to discuss their case.

Then take 2 minutes to choose a voice for their groups and summarize the discussion.

1. You are teaching a 400 level class, which requires some prerequisites and previous knowledge about the topic. A student comes to your office hours in Week 2 and it's clear that the student does not have the background knowledge to function in the class. What will you tell the student?

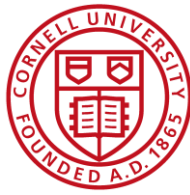
2. One of your students comes to all of your office hours and has a lot of questions. S/he tells you that s/he wants an A in the class. You are also getting emails from the student with questions about the material being presented. How would you talk to the student about setting boundaries? How do you respond to "is my answer what you are looking for"?

3. You are at Starbucks in Collegetown working on your assignment. One of your students stops by to tell you how much they appreciate your teaching and offers to buy you a drink. Would you accept? As you are chatting the student tells you about issues that s/he has been facing and that it has affected their ability to concentrate on their work. Later that day you see that the student has 'friended' you on Facebook. How do you balance personal and professional aspects of your TA position?

Holding Effective Office Hours

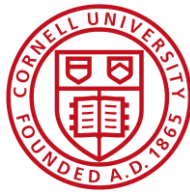


Kristen Pueschel
& Daniel Ludwinski

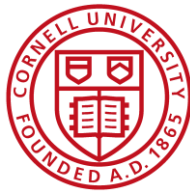


Outline

- Ice breaker
- Scenarios

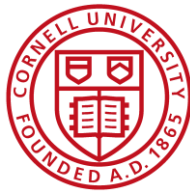


- What's the purpose of office hours?
 - What do students get out of office hours?
 - You?
-
- Take 3 minutes to consider the questions above and write out your answer.



Tips for Effective Office Hours

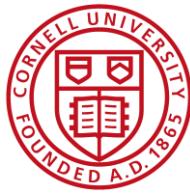
- Step 1: Getting students to come
 - posting office hours every class
 - requiring students to come at least once?
 - choosing a good time for you and students
- In office hours:
 - have students take turns asking questions
 - probe with questions
 - experiment with not writing



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Case-Studies

Dealing with Challenging Situations

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- Then take 2 minutes to choose a voice for your group and summarize your discussion.