



Sarah Robinson, Ph.D.

I am excited to talk to you about:

PLAs! I have been using PLAs since Fall 2016 and love working with them. I am also a big supporter of active learning and completed the Active Learning Summer Institute (ALSI).

MOST USED PLA MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

- Providing PLAs with a OneDrive folder that includes course materials to help them prep for class
- Having one in-person prep session with all PLAs
- Having a GroupMe with the PLAs to make it easier for us to communicate
- Sending PLAs a weekly email that includes the plan for the next week, key points from the last prep session & other important info

BIGGEST SURPRISE IN YOUR PLA MANAGEMENT AND MENTORSHIP:

How much PLAs care about the success of their students. PLAs give valuable insight into how students are doing with the course material and give great suggestions for course changes. The PLAs and I are an instructional team, and I have become more open about sharing the reasons for my instructional choices with them.

MOST MEANINGFUL PLA MEMORY:

- Several PLAs have come up with helpful analogies and mnemonics that I tell students every semester.
- One of my PLAs from several years ago started a club on campus and asked me to be the faculty sponsor. He's now in medical school at Chapel Hill and recently I asked him to speak to the club and give advice about medical school. He said being a PLA was one of the most meaningful and important things he did in undergrad. During his med school interview, he discussed his experience as a PLA and the interviewer told him I wrote the letter I wrote had a big impact.

GREATEST TRIUMPH IN YOUR PLA MANAGEMENT:

After exam 1, I ask students to give me feedback on the PLAs. I love reading their glowing reviews! I have had several students tell me that in their opinion, my class has the best use of PLAs they have experienced at UGA and a lot of students commenting their PLA is the best PLA they've had.

ADVICE FOR OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS:

Communicate with your PLAs and with your students and request their feedback (can be anonymous). Don't be afraid to bring up your issue during our monthly PLA faculty meeting! Then we can put our heads together and brainstorm solutions. 😊

WORDS OF WISDOM:

PLAs really add to students' sense of community in the classroom help students feel more supported in their learning. If I'm not having a great teaching day or not feeling well or feeling like I'm not doing a good job of explaining something, I know that my PLAs can help fill in those gaps. And vice versa---I don't really worry about PLAs saying wrong things because I know that my course resources and lectures will fill in those gaps too.