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Dear Science of Learning Team Leader,

This guide is designed to support your efforts in organizing a team during the edX course EDSCI1x: The Science of Learning -- What Every Teacher Should Know, which will bring together thousands of participants from around the world. The Science of Learning course is designed to take participants through an exploration of the practical implications of cognitive science for classroom teaching. As a team leader, you will play a key role in helping other students connect, learn, and apply the science of learning to their own teaching contexts; you'll also enrich your own learning experience by serving the leadership role for your team. This guide explains the basics of organizing a EDSCI1x study team.

Thank you for your participation,
--EDSCI1x Course Staff

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What is a Science of Learning Team?

Science of Learning Teams are groups of up to 20 students who meet regularly, either in-person or virtually, to review and discuss the course, and explore the concepts of the course together. Although students are encouraged to participate in discussions within the edX forums, joining a team allows for deeper and more personal engagement with the course and with other students.

What happens in team meetings is totally up to the team leader, but we suggest you use the section topics in the course content to inspire your activities and discussions. Perhaps you might co-plan lessons that use certain techniques and reflect in the next meeting about how teaching those lessons was successful and what could be improved. If you are geographically near your team, you could even arrange to observe each other's teaching and provide feedback to each other. You could also form a reading group around some of the readings and resources listed in the course together.

Why lead a Science of Learning Team?

By leading a team, you are committing more deeply to exploring the concepts in the course and offering others social support, accountability, and a positive environment in which to explore these ideas.

Examples of Team Organization

Teams can be organized around a location, an interest, or an organization. It's up to the team leader to decide on the team focus. Here are some examples of teams you might form:

Place-based Teams

Organize a team in your neighborhood, your city, or your state.

Subject-based Teams

Organize a team of people who teach in the same subject area or at the same grade level.

Interest-based Teams

Organize a team of students interested in a more in-depth exploration of one of the key ideas within the course, such as exploring mindsets, memory, study strategies and teaching strategies. These teams could spend some meeting time discussing how the course material applies to their interest of choice.

Organization-based Teams

Organize a team at your school, district, office, or community center.

Leading a Team

Team Leaders should be comfortable in front of a group, either in-person or virtually, friendly, and committed to completing the course material. Anyone can be a team leader, as long as you are willing to put a little extra heart into managing your team.

Key roles of a Team leader include:

1. Finding a space for your group to meet, such as a library, cafe, or community center. If you're setting up an online team, see Resources for Online Meetings below.
2. Managing logistics by scheduling the meetings and ensuring you have wifi, name tags, snacks, or whatever else the group might need.
3. Leading discussions and deciding how to structure each meeting. Taking notes so you can share your team's experiences with other students in the edX discussion forums.

Tips for leaders

- Find co-leaders. You might decide to share your leadership responsibilities with one or two other people.
- Send invitations that explain what people can expect in the meeting and how many members are coming. Include links to the content you will be discussing.
- Pick a venue that's large enough to fit your group and quiet enough for conversation.

- Welcome people so they feel comfortable arriving. You might print out a sign so newcomers recognize you.
- Have people introduce themselves and break the ice by telling a joke, or sharing one thing that makes them happy, for example.
- Be respectful and curious. Treat each person's experiences and thoughts as valid.
- Moderate the conversation to make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance.
- Establish how often the team will meet. At your first meeting (or beforehand), consider asking students how often they prefer to meet and what times work best for them.
- It's common for teams to meet every week or every two weeks.
- Consider the self-paced nature of the course. Establish at the meeting how quickly the group intends to complete each section. This ensures that all members can engage in meaningful conversation on each topic.

Sample Meeting Schedule

- 5 minutes: Welcome and introduction
- 30 minutes: Review course material
  You might rewatch key course videos, ask people to share the material they found most interesting or challenging, or have them present summaries of the material (assigned beforehand). Each meeting could be associated with a specific section from the course, so that students know which material to complete before attending the meeting.
- 30 minutes: Discussion questions
  Talk about some of the discussion questions with the group. The Teaching Journal prompts provide a number of topics for discussion. Later, you might share some of the group's insights on the edX forums.
- 30 minutes: If applicable, discuss your classroom practice as it relates to the Science of Learning content. Share ideas, successes and challenges.

Resources for online meetings and collaboration

- Google Hangouts (free): Up to 15 people can join an audio or video call on Google Hangouts.
- Skype (free): Up to 25 people can join an audio or video call on Skype.
- FreeConferenceCall.com (free): Up to 1,000 callers can join your conference call, and you can generate local phone numbers for international callers.

- Zoom (free): You can give a presentation or share your screen in a Zoom video conference.
- Padlet -- Share video, images, text, etc.

Activities

Below are some suggested study activities for your team. We look forward to seeing how these work for you and what new activities you come up with!

Teaching Journal Prompts

Each section has a series of teaching journal prompts. Decide as a group which prompts you will discuss at your next meeting. You may print your edX notes by going to the notes section of the course and clicking on “File” in your browser menu and select.

Discussion Prompts

Each section has discussion prompts that you may choose to discuss among your team. You may also find it useful to have each team member highlight and extend interesting discussions taking place in the course discussion area.

Peer Assessment Essay

Have each team member write an answer to the prompt below. Then discuss each answer and give feedback. Feel free to use this rubric to provide feedback.

Prompt: Please think about and review the principles of learning discussed in Section 3 of our course. Which ones do you think would be particularly applicable to the students you are or will teach? Now think about ways you can use these principles to help them become more effective and successful learners.

What sorts of lesson plans might you design or classroom learning activities would you have them experience that incorporates one of those learning principles? Describe what this lesson plan and/or learning activity would look like.

Your essay should include:

1. A brief and accurate description of your chosen learning principle and why you chose it.
2. The characteristics of the students and school the lesson plan/learning activity will take place—age, type of school, class size, important background and demographics characteristics of the students.
3. A description of the lesson plan/learning activity (remember your 500-word limit).
4. In what ways your lesson plan/learning activity makes use of the learning principle you chose. In other words, please link explicitly what the students will be doing that exemplifies the learning

principle you are focused on.
5. What challenges or problems do you foresee in the application of this learning principle to your classroom situation?

Team FAQs

- What kind of time commitment should I prepare for if I lead a Science of Learning team?
  It's up to you--you need to factor in preparation time (before the meetings), the amount of time you spend together as a team, and any follow-up and documentation you intend to do. All in all, it should take no longer than two hours per week (plus the meeting itself).
- How long are meetings?
  Our suggested schedule is a two-hour meeting, but you can choose to have a shorter or longer meeting depending on how often you meet and what you plan to do during the meetings. For example, a Science of Learning Team within your school might choose to meet during a prep period or after school.
- Can I charge money for these meetings?
  The Science of Learning is a free online course, so we encourage you to offer the meetings for free if at all possible. If you need to charge a nominal amount to cover the cost of meeting space, just make sure to explain to members exactly what the money is going toward. Members may be able to help keep team meeting free by offering space for the meeting or taking turns bringing refreshments or supplies.
- What is the maximum number of people I can have on my team?
  We've set a maximum of 20 members for each team. Remember, people may be busy or may drop out of the course, so it would be rare for every person to turn up for every meeting.
- How do I get technical support for my team?
  Please ask technical support questions in the discussion forum. If you know an answer to a technical support question, please share your knowledge.

Information about the Science of Learning

As a team leader, you may receive questions about the course from students. Below are answers to some of the most common queries:

- The Science of Learning is a self-paced course, beginning March 7th, 2018. Material may be accessed on the main course site on edX.

- To earn a verified certificate, students have to pay extra ($49). Verified certificates require students to confirm their identity via photos and ID. They can be useful if students want to put the course on their job or school applications. The deadline to register for verified certificates will be announced later in the course. To earn a certificate, students must receive a grade of 70% or higher by 11:59 AM EST on March 5th, 2019. Only quizzes, self-reflections and the final exam count toward student grades. (Students can view their grades in the Progress tab of the course. Some sections show 0 points because they are ungraded.)
- The course syllabus provides more details on the course outline and assessment.