



PIE Newsletter

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the Program for Instructional Excellence
at Florida State University

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

With midterms firmly in the rearview mirror and Thanksgiving already on the horizon, the pace and tumult of the semester can make it easy to feel overwhelmed as you balance teaching with everything else on your plate. Fortunately, our PIE team continues to offer workshops and other resources to help you be at the top of your game. In addition to the highlights you will find in this issue of the newsletter, we encourage you to explore new ways of centering yourself at such a crucial point in the semester. This may include going for a walk somewhere you haven't before, catching up with a friend you haven't in a while, listening to a new podcast, or anything else that suits you, and finding ways to decompress alongside established routines. As always, please feel free to contact us at PIE-info@fsu.edu with your questions or comments about what we at PIE can do for you.

TA SPOTLIGHT



SIMON PRADO

Simon Prado is an M.A. student from Panama City, FL, studying Slavic Languages & Literatures in the Department of Modern Languages & Linguistics

"Simon is one of the hardest-working graduate students and instructors I have worked with. He is incredibly knowledgeable, yet he is receptive to criticism, and he is always looking for ways to improve. He cares about his students a lot and he is always there to help them."

FRANCIS BAFFOUR- AWUAH JR.



Francis Baffour-Awuah Junior is a third-year PhD student in the Biomathematics program of the Department of Mathematics. He holds a B.S in Actuarial Science, and an M.A degree in Mathematics.

"Francis has always gone above and beyond to help his students and his fellow TAs. He is a great teacher who spends extra time preparing for his classes to make sure the students understand the topic well. I'm very grateful that I get to work with and learn from him."

Coping With Covid



In consultation with colleagues across campus who continue to settle into navigating health and safety in their classrooms, we offer the following tips:

- If you find yourself needing additional Zoom capabilities for teaching purposes beyond what your FSU account offers by default, ITS (850-644-4357) can loan you extended capacity and webinar licenses on a temporary basis. These can be useful for very large lecture sections, as well as panel and/or moderated discussions or presentations in classes of any size.

- If you upload lectures or other class videos to Canvas via Kaltura, subtitles are automatically generated that you can edit directly in Kaltura. Ensuring subtitles are ready to go increases accessibility and also makes it possible for students to get additional visual reinforcement through the subtitle text.
- We are now well into flu season. Health experts recommend the flu shot as the best protection against the flu, and its complications. It also helps prevent spreading flu from person to person on campus to help minimize non-Covid disruptions to in-person learning. If you wish to combine trips, UHS (850-644-4567) offers convenient on-campus appointments!



Slice of Advice

Submit your questions for future editions here!



Q: “I feel like I have forgotten a lot from undergrad, and I don’t feel ready or qualified to teach. I am reviewing and studying things, but I still freeze up and feel like a fraud in front of my students. What is your advice on this?”

A: First let me start by saying you are not alone. The “Imposter Syndrome” feeling is a very common feeling among new and sometimes even experienced TAs. Becoming a TA for the first-time can be very intimidating, especially if you haven’t had any teaching experience. However, you must remind yourself that you were given this TA position for a reason. The faculty of your department gave you this position because they believe you are a capable teaching assistant. Something you may want to try before teaching lessons is to practice the lesson the day before, and make sure you have all the materials needed. Maybe even practice with a peer to see if there’s anywhere you need to improve. Peer feedback is always a great way to practice, because they may have advice to offer, especially if they are an experienced TA.

It’s important to remember, you don’t have to know everything. We are all human and sometimes we forget even the littlest of things. Your students will appreciate you that much more by you showing them that it’s okay to not know everything. Encourage their curiosity and students will even teach you something. For those moments when you doubt yourself, or receive a question from a student that you’re not quite sure of the answer, try one of these responses:

- I’m not sure right off the top of my head but let me look into it and I’ll get back to you.
- That’s a great question that I haven’t really thought about. Let me investigate it and we can learn it together.

Remember, you’re doing great, and we are all here to learn, whether that’s from our instructors or from our students. Hang in there, you got this!

Upcoming PIE Events:

Fun Fact:

The origins of Halloween date back 2,000 years, to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, which was celebrated on October 31 on the eve of their new year. The Celts believed that the dead returned to earth that night, so during Samhain, people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off evil spirits.

In the eighth century, in an effort to spread Christianity, Pope Gregory III decreed November 1st as All Saints' Day and incorporated some of the rituals of Samhain. All Saints' Day was also called All Hallows and the night before, when the traditional Samhain festival used to take place in Celtic regions, was called All Hallows' Eve.



TEACHING AS A NON- INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD: YOUR IMPACT ON THE CLASSROOM

Date & Time: Thursday, 12/02 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM (will be held virtually via Zoom)

Presenters: 2021-2022 PIE Associates

Description: If you are serving as a TA who is not the instructor of record, you may feel that your position is "less important" compared to an instructor of record. This is simply untrue! Join us as our PIE Associate share tips and techniques for non-instructor of record TA tasks and discuss the crucial need you fulfill in the classroom.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

LET'S EXPLORE OER!

Date & Time: Wednesday, 11/10 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (will be held virtually via Zoom)

Presenters: Lindsey Wharton & Camille Thomas, FSU Libraries

Description: What are open educational resources? How can they help to facilitate an inclusive classroom that makes learning accessible to a variety of diverse learners? Join us in our exploration of OER!

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