



# TA Training CoP: Programming for Diverse TA Populations



Session Workbook Slides

October 2024



## Your Questions:

What questions do you have about:

- Programming for diverse groups of TAs
- Balancing faculty and TA expectations about what the training should be

How to get and organize <b>knowledge about the diversity and style of courses to anticipate TA needs</b> (followed-up with needs assessments)?
How to support undergraduate TAs with <b>conflicts of interests</b> in their courses
Creating <b>discipline specific EDI material</b> on top of general EDI material to ensure students are equipped for the context they teach in
Establishing " <b>follow-through</b> " aside from feedback collection / designing activities that ask participants to reflect on their individual needs and application of workshop content
Creating more in <b>depth materials for diverse TA roles</b> that can be <b>dispersed outside of TA training</b>
Distinguishing <b>what is shared between TAs with diverse roles</b> (universal relevance) from highly specific duties/roles/challenges/etc. 🤔
Building <b>more learner choice into TA training</b> , or flexibility for varying participant group makeup



# Identifying needs and expectations of TAs

What strategies have you tried to identify needs and expectations of your TAs?
Feedback Survey with TA
Qualtrics survey - Pre Anticipate needs -
Ask for their workload and roles and responsibilities
Check in with faculty (formally or informally)
We have a Head TA program, and we get them to discuss the needs of their TAs as well as them as Head TAs with our TAPD (TA professional development) team

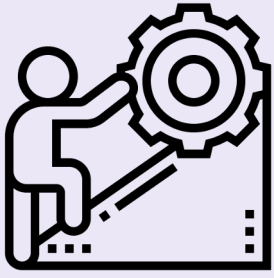
What questions can you ask to identify needs and expectations of TAs?		
	Room 1: Questions to ask TAs	Room 2: Questions to ask Faculty/Other teaching team members (i.e: head TAs)
Questions to identify TA roles and responsibilities	What <b>percentage of your hours is approximately spent on 'x' task</b> : (x= running labs/tutorials, grading, designing course materials, etc.)	What are your priorities for TAs' role in the course? What resources are available to support those priorities?
		What are some of the roles and responsibilities of your TA?
		Have you worked with a TA before? Are you connected with faculty who have worked TAs as part of the teaching team?
Questions to identify what new TA <b>need to feel prepared</b> for TAship	1st question: new or returning TA; 2nd Question:	What concerns (fears, anxieties, etc.) do you have when it comes to working with new TAs? What concerns (fears, anxieties, etc.) do you think your TAs have?
	Pre-training: " <b>what do you want to know more about?</b> " Post-training: "what do you think we missed?"	How <b>do you support a new TA in getting "up to speed" with the course and student needs?</b>
	Asking Senior TA's if there is information they "wish they knew" when they started?	What are some <b>challenges you have faced</b> (overcome?) with new TAs?
Questions to identify TAship <b>challenges</b>	What did you struggle with during your TAship (or what are you concerned may be a challenge)?	What are some challenges you have faced (overcome?) with returning TAs?
	Do you feel communication with the instructor was adequate?	What have you felt TAs have needed from you in past iterations of this course (or on past teaching teams, etc.)
	Do you feel supported in marking? Were rubrics provided, clear and easy to follow, and consistent?	What student needs have emerged in this course that TAs might need support in addressing?
Questions to identify the changes TAs experienced as a <b>result of your past TA Training</b>	What are some of the tools from TA Training that you were able to use in your TAship?	Have your TAs attended a TA training program?
	In what areas did your TA Training help you feel more prepared?	What changes have you noticed in TAs and their work following participation in TA training workshops?
	Which of the strategies your learned in your TA training program did you use in your TAship?	



# Competing needs and expectations

## Examples of competing needs and expectations:

<b>Experience Level:</b> UTA	<b>Experience Level:</b> GTA
<b>Experience Level:</b> New TA	<b>Experience Level:</b> Returning TA
<b>TA role and responsibilities:</b> Marking	<b>TA role and responsibilities:</b> leading tutorials
<b>Difference in unit cultures:</b> faculty wide training	
Faculty members indicate TAs need X training	TAs indicate they need Y training
Role of the TA in relation to the students	

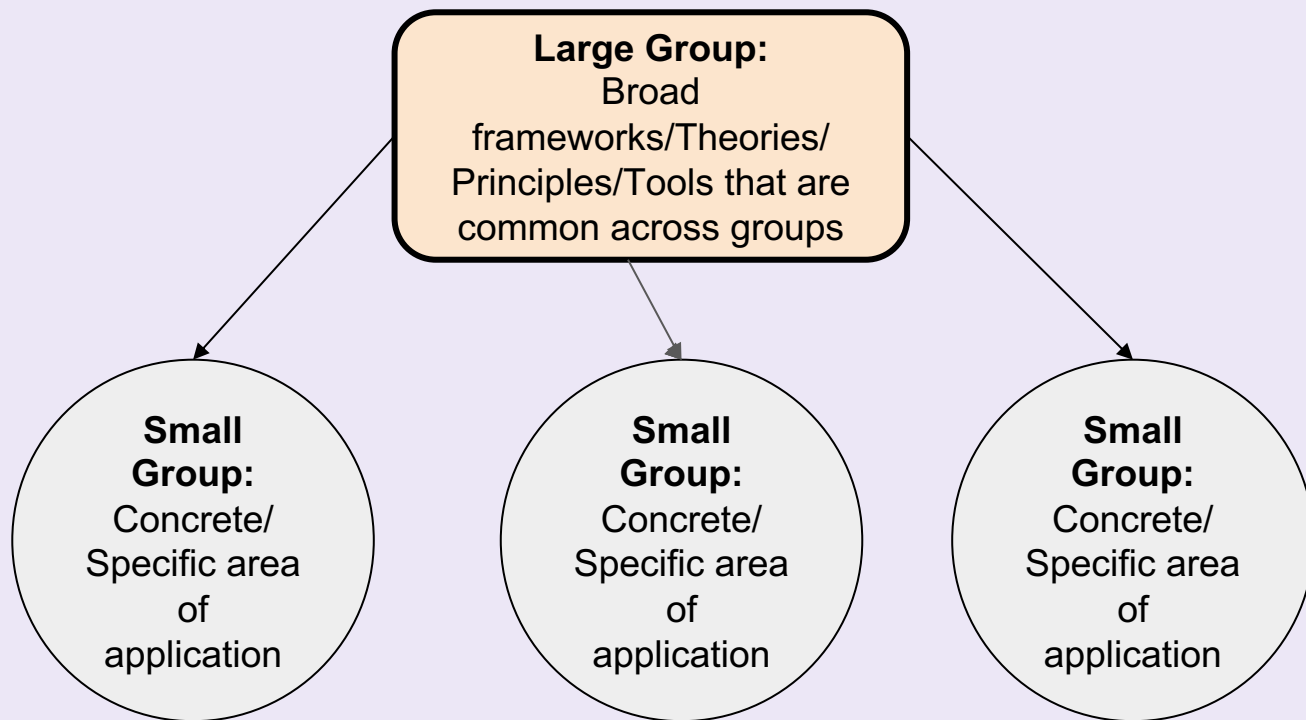


# Training Challenges

Group/ Room	Training Programming Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we address these challenges in our programming?</li> <li>• What have you done that has been successful in addressing these challenges?</li> </ul>
1	You only have a few (i.e 3-4) new TAs each year (plus many returning TAs)- their training needs are very different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Send a survey to TAs asking their training needs then grouping the needs into categories and designing trainings based on that</li> <li>- Break the group into smaller groups during the session and have each group work on the scenario related to their role and responsibilities</li> </ul>
1	Returning TAs don't attend training. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why do you think that is?</li> <li>2. How can we address this?</li> <li>3. What are some ways to engage returning TAs in the training?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of intrinsic motivation, feeling that stakes aren't high enough to merit attending again , feeling that energy is better spent elsewhere , apprehensive amount of work or time commitment</li> <li>2. Consolidating materials and highlighting key takeaways, modularity in activities ,</li> <li>3. Building activities that leverage returning TAs' experience and communicating this to returning TAs before the workshop</li> </ol>
1	Small group of TAs (UTA, GTA, new and returning) in your unit and you need to train them all in the same space (due to lack of resources; availability)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could move to having a session online depending on needs (do you need lab equipment?) (not favourable, but a solution)</li> <li>2. If the room is large enough and the groups are small enough, divy the room up and be mindful of sound</li> <li>3. In PHAS we have grad courses cancelled the days we run these sessions so that students can make their training, which provides extra room booking resources (context, all new TAs HAVE to attend our training).</li> <li>4. For next time, book rooms month's in advance :) (the new room booking system is also a challenge...)</li> <li>5. Break the group into smaller groups during the session and have each group work on the scenario related to their role and responsibilities</li> </ol>
1	Diversity in terms of how much TAs care about their role as a TA	Balance activities that address teaching/marking basics and "nitty gritty" working realities (logistics, time, working w/ faculty, etc.) and highlight the benefits of the "on the ground" components in concrete practical terms.
1	Faculty members/TA training committee wants sessions in TA Training that would fall under professional development (rather than training)	<p>Making time in training to point participants to other University resources ("If you would like to know more and go deeper, here is where you could go")</p> <p>Flag that training needs to be focused on tasks and roles of TAs. PD sessions can be offered outside of TA Training program. Resources can also be shared during TA Training</p>
2	TAs engage in the same task - Marking- but different kinds of marking (i.e essays, oral, short answer quiz)	<p>Themes that might be common across different marking formats (english as an additional language, how to give partial marks/credit) and cover strategies that might work in all different format.</p> <p>Strategies to make consistent marking (comparing your average and strategy with other TA's, mark a few and share with Prof. or have Prof. mark a few and share with TAs).</p>
2	TAs engage in very different tasks (i.e: Leading discussion, Marking, Lecturing, etc)	Modular activities with quick feedback (i.e. mock lab discussion, lecture, lesson) = participants can select what is most relevant to their anticipated duties and get personalized feedback.
2	Major disciplinary/department cultural differences between units supported by TA Training program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify how those differences in culture impact the role and responsibilities of the TAs then make sure your training offers support to TAs for all the units. You may need to do more breakout groups in the sessions and have TAs for each unit to work together.</li> </ul>
2	Communicating and supporting TAs that are hired <b>from other departments/units</b>	<p>Put in courses with head TAs where they can be supported by other TAs (especially head TAs).</p> <p>Have Instructors forward TA training resources and information to their own TAs.</p> <p>Something about adding to listservs, typically they say they aren't getting emails or aren't familiar with how the trainings are communicated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often late hires? Not added to list servs</li> </ul>
2	The expectation of faculty members of the TA Training program doesn't align with the training needs indicated by your TAs	<p>Explain the goals of the TA Training program.</p> <p>Encourage other priorities to be addressed in other ways (i.e. department wide symposiums , panels, PD etc)</p>

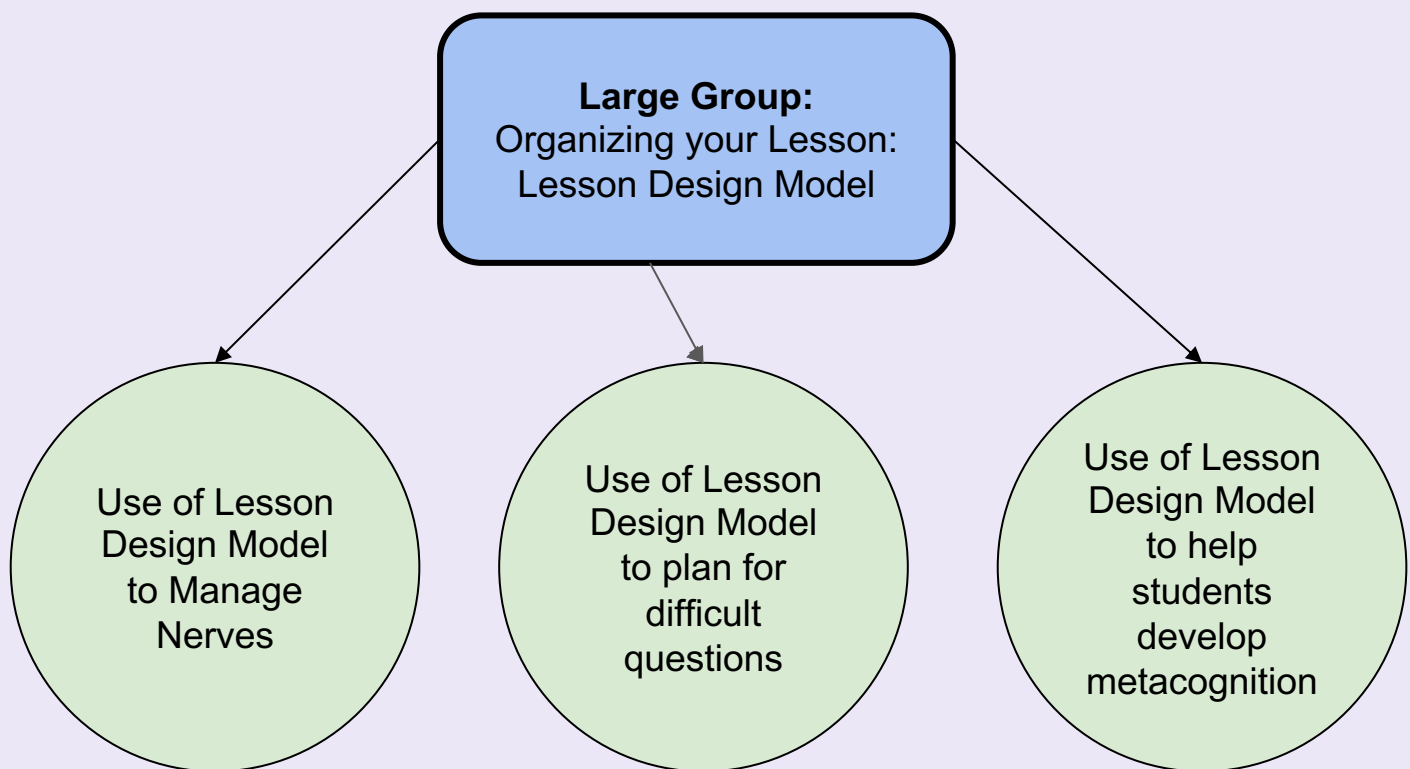


# Strategy: Break out Groups



## Example

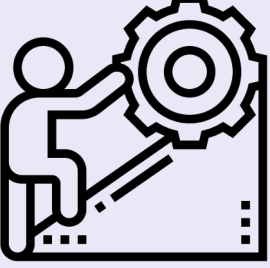



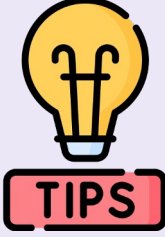
### Session Topic: Lecturing



New TAs

Returning TAs

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