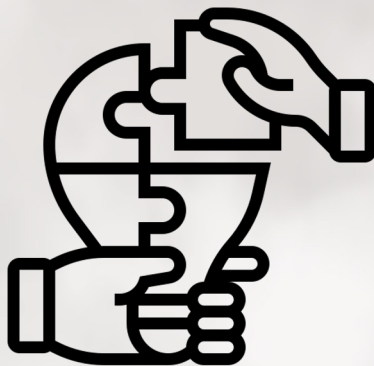


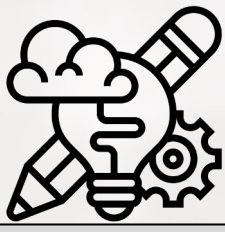
Establishing a positive TA Experience working with faculty

TA Institute



Resources developed by the participants

Jan 2023



Positive/Effective Strategies in TA/Faculty Relationship

Concrete approaches and actions that contributed to a positive Faculty-TA relationship
Encouraged TAs to adopt email strategies (no answering emails after 5pm, M-F etc), and supported TAs marks (allowed TAs to stand by the marks they gave)
Discuss our roles in a pre-meeting (set clear boundaries)
The faculty member allowed me to have a say in how the lab can be improved and took my ideas seriously and worked with me to implement even small changes
Weekly check ins/meetings to discuss expectations and maintain communication
Open and regular communication between faculty and TA. Working together to address issues in class/ with students.
Clearly outlined what TA responsibilities were, and when the instructor should intervene.
TA tracking hours worked so it was clear when they were being asked to do too much
The individual set clear boundaries which helped me to understand what was expected of me. This allowed for a great collaboration between us
Clear weekly milestones (e.g., lectures posted on Tuesdays, grading turnaround time was 1 week, response time was 1 business day, etc.)
Weekly meetings with clear communication, and treat TA as an equal. Always open to doing things differently and taking into account TA suggestions.
Allowed the TA team to take on as much activity leading/teaching responsibilities as we wanted and felt right for our development! It was an awesome opportunity to teach.
Didn't send slides or marking until Monday morning so we wouldn't have to worry about it over the weekend!
Faculty member checked in to answer questions and address challenges
Both faculty member and other TAs communicating quickly and effectively
Faculty member checked in regularly to see how I was doing and gave positive feedback
Help faculty to mark assignment correctly and contact faculty when TAs have questions. Be proactive when faculty give you some tasks and be able to finish it on time.
Communicated early in the term their expectations for what my role was, and how I should do it.
Review session before test
Well, we have weekly check-ins to prepare for the next week's sessions, which is really helpful
Collaborating with the TAs on course content and how assignments were being marked rather than just giving out instructions helped foster independence as a TA, and helped TA feel respected and challenged
Assisted students and graded assignments in time as a TA Create a positive communication between students and TA
TA has a significant role in my education life as she motivated me to do my best during my program. Some useful tips and sharing their experiences are so practical for me.
Held review session before tests or exams
Create a grade calibration



Addressing Challenges

Instructions

Round 1: Read the challenge(s) described in column 1. Post a strategy to address the challenge (after it has happened).

Note: Don't write anything in the third column

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

Round 2: Rotate to the next **slide (#5)**. Write down strategies to prevent this challenge.

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

ROOM 1

Challenge	Round 1: Strategies to address (after they happened)	Round 2: Strategies to prevent
<p>I was TAing a course last term and one of the students handed in her assignment a week past the deadline. I told the student that I was unable to accept their assignment. Later I found out that the student had approached the instructor and that the instructor had accepted their assignment. That really put me in a very uncomfortable place in relation to the students for the rest of the term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to the instructor about how the TA might feel in front of other students • Miscommunication between TA and instructor • Communicate with the student to let them know that the mistake was not their fault • Communicate and listen to student • Set clear boundaries with the course instructor on when the late deadline is. • Ask instructor to be CC'd on future emails to be kept in the loop on similar situations. 	<p>Possible Solutions: discuss the following with faculty member</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Separate Work Habits Grade 2. Homework Passes 3. Extension Requests 4. Floating Deadlines. 5. Let Students Submit Work in Progress. 6. Give Late Work Full Credit. 7. Other Preventative Measures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially loop in Arts Advising • Student-specific discussion board where simple requests (like who to ask for extensions) can be posed • Add teaching team workflow to syllabus (who to contact for extensions, questions, grading, etc.)



Addressing Challenges

Instructions

Round 1: Read the challenge(s) described in column 1. Post a strategy to address the challenge (after it has happened).

Note: Don't write anything in the third column

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

Round 2: Rotate to the next **slide (#6)**. Write down strategies to prevent this challenge.

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

ROOM 2

Challenge	Round 1: Strategies to address (after they happened)	Round 2: Strategies to prevent
<p>There is no preparation for my role as a TA. I was just told I had to teach students. No one told me <i>how</i> to teach!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk to instructor about worries ● Talk to TAs with previous experience on what to expect and advice ● Look up resources online to help support yourself (i.e. UBC CTLT) ● Contact TA union to ask for help ● Talk to other support staff relevant to the course that could be of help (i.e. lab techs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact the TA representative to see what are their duties ● Arrange to meet with the course leader to understand what they expect of you ● Ask instructor before course starts if you can get access to materials that might help you better understand and teach course content ● See if the TA representative can offer some introductory courses for their role ● Attend TA training program through CTLT



Addressing Your Challenges

Instructions

Round 1: Read the challenge(s) described in column 1. Post a strategy to address the challenge (after it has happened).

Note: Don't write anything in the third column

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

Round 2: Rotate to the next **slide (#7)**. Write down strategies to prevent this challenge.

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

ROOM 3

Challenge	Round 1: Strategies to address (after they happened)	Round 2: Strategies to prevent
Instructor overworks TAs and verbally abuses them when they are not able to finish everything.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with union representatives • Reiterate union policies and working hours • Contact UBC department that handles improper workplace communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can prevent for future TAs by talking to TA union • Set and discuss clear boundaries and expectations with instructor at the start of the term • Keep instructor updated with your tasks and hours at hand so they are not surprised • Keep good track of your hours • Be your own advocate throughout keeping instructor informed on other happenings in your life (i.e. PhD or Masters work) • If you have any idea this might happen, suggest hiring a second TA or revise contract to include more hours to get paid for all your work.



Addressing Your Challenges

Instructions

Round 1: Read the challenge(s) described in column 1. Post a strategy to address the challenge (after it has happened).

Note: Don't write anything in the third column

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

Round 2: Rotate to the **slide #4**. Write down strategies to prevent this challenge.

Keep in mind the model that we showed you earlier

ROOM 4

Challenge	Round 1: Strategies to address (after they happened)	Round 2: Strategies to prevent
Instructor didn't answer class related questions over the weekend. TA would receive email complaints that Canvas didn't work. Instructor was the only one with access to fix the issue, and the students were frustrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify expectations for response time from teaching team. • (clarifying to both students, and to members of the teaching team, making this a teachable moment for workflow - don't leave requests to the last second) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize communication periods, especially when anticipating assignment deadlines • Do so early on in the course



Developing a Communication Agreement

ROOM 1: In your breakout rooms, please brainstorm (bullet points are fine) *concrete* items you can add to these themes. You will have about **7 minutes.**

Note: There is also an “other” category you are welcome to add to.

1. Logistics and resources

What does your TA need to get set up?

- Give access to canvas site, Fasmail, syllabus, etc.
- Group work is great
- Prepare more material than you think you need
- Discuss a way of communication with the instructor
- When establishing the hours allocation form, the TA could ask the instructor to clearly state what is expected of them. This could look like a written communication agreement.
- Have regular meetings with the instructor
- Establish duties for the term (e.g. marking, leading tutorials, guest lecture, etc.)
- Course materials and content so the TA can get familiar with what the students are expected to learn
- Programs/software that would facilitate teaching (video calling/tutorial platforms, Canva for creating lecture activities)

Other things you should discuss/agree on:

- Establish what would be the way to communicate with students
- Schedule duties of TA (office hours, tutorials, etc.)
- list your key responsibilities**
- provides support and assistance to individual students or small groups to help them better understand the content and help them to complete assignments.**
-



Developing a Communication Agreement

Room 2: In your breakout rooms, please brainstorm (bullet points are fine) *concrete* items you can add to these themes. You will have about **7 minutes.**

Note: There is also an “other” category you are welcome to add to.

2. Prevent & address issues related **roles & responsibilities, defining success and getting the support you need** (beginning and during term)

What will your TA be doing and how?

- Example: Co-develop hours allocated to each task**
- Set working hours (i.e. weekends, evenings), total number of hours and how they're distributed over semester
- Set a weekly or bi-weekly time to meet with instructor/teaching team
- Establish communication channels/methods for different situations/contexts
- Discuss expectations of grading and deadlines
- Asking examples of previous work so we know what is expected
- An idea: have a shared document for tracking hours or some form of submitting them at a regular time interval

Other things you should discuss/agree on:

- Discuss how you will communicate through students (i.e. canvas, email)
- Discuss how office hours will work



Developing a **Communication Agreement**

ROOM 3: In your breakout rooms, please brainstorm (bullet points are fine) *concrete* items you can add to these themes. You will have about **7 minutes.**

Note: There is also an “other” category you are welcome to add to.

3. Clarification of **needs, expectations & boundaries between Faculty/TA** (i.e.: around communication and support) (beginning and during term)

How much does your TA need, and how much do you need from your TA (how specific, extensive, etc.)?

- Set-up bi-weekly Check-in meeting
- Establish working hours, availability, personal responsibilities across different platforms
- Clarify which emails TAs have autonomy to directly address
- Coordinate responsibilities with other TAs
- Communicate how workload is distributed across the term

Other things you should discuss/agree on:

- [Insert your ideas here]

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Developing a Communication Agreement

ROOM 4: In your breakout rooms, please brainstorm (bullet points are fine) *concrete* items you can add to these themes. You will have about **7 minutes.**

Note: There is also an “other” category you are welcome to add to.

4. Clarification of **needs, expectations & boundaries between TA/Student**

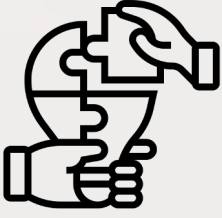
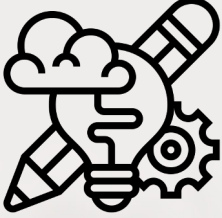



When and in what manner/context will the TA interact with the students?

- Example: Who is first/only respondent to student complaints/requests**
- Only utilizing staff email for communicating students
- Announce when grades are posted.
- Establish clear turnaround time for both receiving marks and grading appeals.
- Students should communicate in a professional, clear way to TAs when submitting requests and asking questions.

Other things you should discuss/agree on:

- Would Friendship with students influence their grade?
- What is the process and timeline to appeal a grade?
- Provide supports for email writing (so that the tone is appropriate for academic contexts)
- Which complain of marks could be acceptable?

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