

Welcome!

Please take an index card.

On your index card, please
brainstorm:

***What is the pedagogical goal of
a TA-led discussion section?***

Teaching Together

Supporting Faculty & TA Collaboration in Large Classes

Angela Jenks & Katie Cox

Department of Anthropology
University of California, Irvine

Today's Agenda

Welcome &
Introduction

15 min

About the
Teaching
Together
Learning
Community

10 min

Building a Toolkit for Teaching Together

25 min

Q&A and
Evaluations

10 min

Introduction

*What is the pedagogical goal of
a TA-led discussion section?*



Discussion sections are apparently a **most difficult problem** in many of the large audience courses, as indicated by the fact that a majority of instructors in such courses **regard the discussion sections as unsuccessful.**

...[M]any question the value of **free-ranging discussion** between **inexperienced teaching assistants** and sophomores who know no anthropology.

If discussion sections are not highly regarded in some institutions, **why then is the system maintained?"**

Edward M. Bruner and George D. Spindler, 1963

*About the Teaching Together
Learning Community*

Our Approach

Improving Role Clarity and
Communication among
Faculty and TAs

Designing Discussion Sections to
Support Undergraduate Learning

Navigating Teaching Challenges as
a Teaching Team

Supporting Graduate Students'
Professional and Pedagogical
Development

Timeline of the Learning Community

WINTER 2019

Workshops

Active Lectures &
Discussion Sections

Inclusive Teaching &
Course Policies

Assessment & Grading

SPRING 2019

Workshops

TAs, Faculty, &
Integrated Course
Design (Parts I & II)

Preparation for
Course
Implementation

SUMMER 2019 - WINTER 2020

Implementation

- Implementation of tools from workshops in four undergrad Anthropology courses
- Teaching teams made up of learning community participants
- Regular meetings & consultations with teaching teams

WINTER 2020 - SPRING 2020

Data Collection, Analysis & Dissemination

- Individual exit interviews with instructors and TAs
- Surveys of undergraduate students in pilot courses
- Drafting a *Teaching Together Handbook* for UCI Social Sciences

*Building a Toolkit for
Teaching Together*

Scenarios

1. Count off by four and find your group.
2. Read the assigned scenario.
3. With your group, take **five minutes** to discuss how you would handle this situation.
4. Plan to briefly report back to the large group.

Scenario 1

Improving Role Clarity and Communication among Faculty & TAs

- Clarify course policies and expectations
- Anticipate common challenges
- Make plans for regular communication with your team

Handout: Faculty/TA Communication Checklist

Designing Discussion Sections to Support Undergraduate Learning

Navigating Teaching Challenges as a Teaching Team

Supporting Graduate Students' Professional and Pedagogical Development

Scenario 2

Improving Role Clarity and
Communication among
Faculty and TAs

Navigating Teaching Challenges as
a Teaching Team

Designing Discussion Sections to Support Undergraduate Learning

- Integrate discussion sections into course design, making learning goals clear
- Distribute learning activities across lecture, discussion, and homework

*Handout: Integrated Backward Course Design
Template*

Supporting Graduate Students'
Professional and Pedagogical
Development

Improving Role Clarity and
Communication among
Faculty and TAs

Designing Discussion Sections to
Support Undergraduate Learning

Navigating Teaching Challenges as a Teaching Team

- Use regular meetings to address emergent problems, leveraging TAs' perspectives
- Facilitate regular feedback in both directions
- Conduct grade norming sessions in advance of major assignments

Handout: Getting Started with Grade Norming

Supporting Graduate Students'
Professional and Pedagogical
Development

Scenario 3

Improving Role Clarity and
Communication among
Faculty and TAs

Designing Discussion Sections to
Support Undergraduate Learning

Navigating Teaching Challenges as
a Teaching Team

Supporting Graduate Students' Pedagogical and Professional Development

- Communicate and model professional norms and teaching strategies
- Foreground TAs' roles as educators at your institution
- Invite and provide feedback on teaching
- Help TAs build teaching skills throughout grad school and prepare for teaching careers

*Handout: Seven Ways to Support Grad Students'
Pedagogical and Professional Development*

Scenario 4

Questions? Thoughts?

Thank you!

Please complete the
evaluation form.

We welcome questions,
feedback, and future
conversations!

Angela Jenks: ajenks@uci.edu

Katie Cox: kecox@uci.edu