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Graduate Student Teaching Development: Creating Opportunities for Learning

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Graduate Student Teaching Development: Creating Opportunities for Learning

University of Calgary, graduate student teaching assistants and presenters in the GRAD BADGE program



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Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning



THE GRAD BADGE PROGRAM

There are 12 courses in the GRAD BADGE program. Offered over an academic year, students are required to attend and participate in five workshops, plus submit a self-reflective statement. To provide formal recognition of completion, a micro-credential (BADGE) is offered.

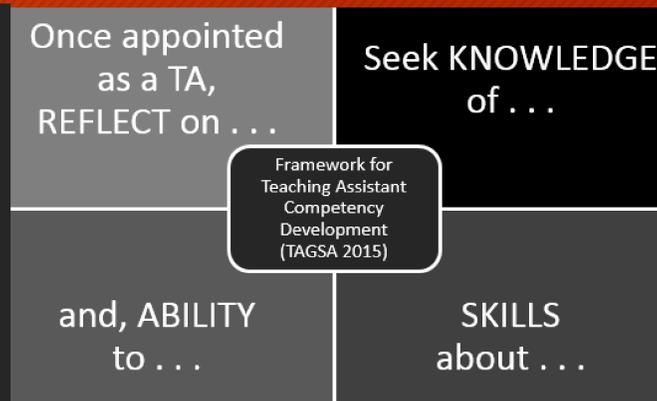
LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the GRAD BADGE program, students will be able to:

- Identify their existing teaching skills, philosophy, strengths, and individual development goals
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of a TA, and available resources
- Examine strategies for student engagement, presentations, writing learning outcomes, grading, technology, asking and answering questions, feedback, and effective communication
- Apply strategies to effectively fulfil the roles of a TA

FRAMEWORK

TAGSA (STLHE, 2015) Framework for Teaching Assistant Competency Development was selected to map the U of C GRAD BADGE learning outcomes to the competencies: Knowledge, Skills, Ability, and Reflection.



WHAT IS A BADGE?

Badges are digital icons with embedded information about when, where and how they were earned. This information, or metadata, includes the name of the issuer, the date issued, and the criteria for earning the badge. Badges provide a visual record of achievement, and can be combined with a portfolio to allow users to demonstrate their learning in ways other than traditional credit course work.



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

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Poster
Presentation

Graduate Student Teaching Development: Creating Opportunities for Learning

This poster focuses on a proposed study of a graduate student teaching program, created to provide opportunities for learning and teaching development. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) need skills for their current teaching responsibilities, and for their future role in the academy and beyond (Osborne & Korpan, 2014; Rose, 2012). There are many pressures and time constraints for TAs (Fairbrother, 2012), and universities do provide resources, support, and opportunities for training: but what are TAs specifically learning about teaching? Boman (2013) found in her study that a TA training program enhanced teaching skills, and at the same time she identified a need for more research on the learning outcomes of TA development programs.

The TA development program under investigation is offered at the University of Calgary, and consists of 12 workshops which are offered over an academic term. To engage TAs in the program, a micro-credential (Badge) is offered, and this creative element has attracted much interest with increased enrolment. The Framework for Teaching Assistant Competency Development (Korpan, Sheffield, & Verwood, 2015) was adopted to map the learning outcomes of the TA program to the identified competencies in the Framework. The research questions guiding this study are: 1) Did the micro-credential motivate TAs to participate? 2) What learning did the participants identify; and 2a) did they apply this learning in their teaching? and 3) What is the alignment of the Framework competencies to the learning outcomes of the TA program? The findings of this study will have specific implications for TA Development, and general implications for teaching and learning across disciplines.

How does your session relate to the conference theme?

This proposal addresses the issue of how a creative element (micro-credential) can be added to a program that creates interest and engagement. At the same time the TA teaching development program was being created and learning outcomes identified, the Framework for Teaching Assistant Competency Development was published. This is the perfect opportunity to conduct a research project on the program, map the learning outcomes to the competencies, and share our experience.

References

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