

INTRODUCTION

- At the University of Alberta, all undergraduate pre-service teachers take a required classroom assessment course (EDPY 303) during their “Introductory Professional Term” (IPT). The IPT is a condensed semester in which students take a full credit course in 9 weeks before their first practicum placement.
- In Fall 2020, the course was taught online as required by the public health restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The course was so well received by students, that in Fall 2021, the instructor elected to offer the course in the same delivery format.
- Learning objectives included the following:
 - understand the role of assessment in teaching and learning
 - relate assessment to learner outcomes in the program of studies

METHOD

Participants

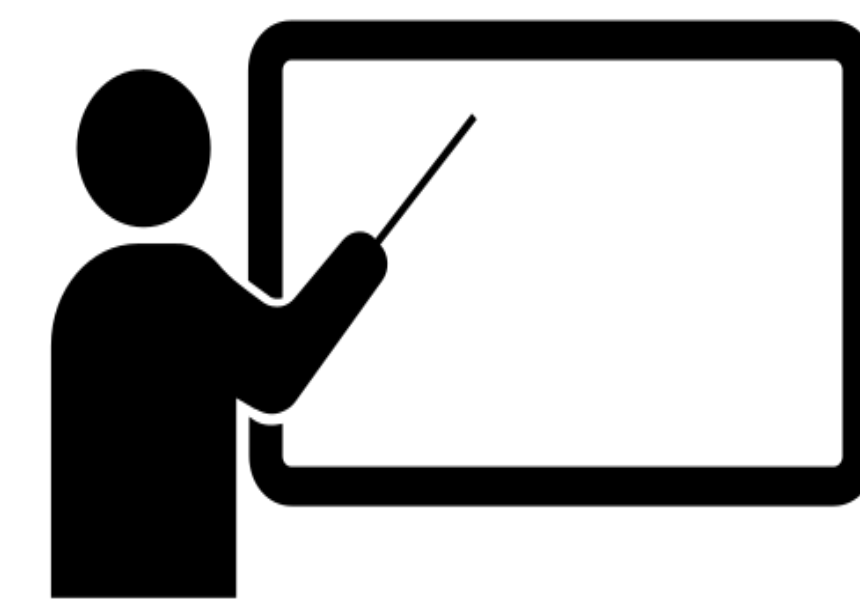
- Four Teaching Assistants (TAs) used a reflective case study approach (Becker & Renger, 2016) to explore the unique experience of TAing EDPY 303 during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

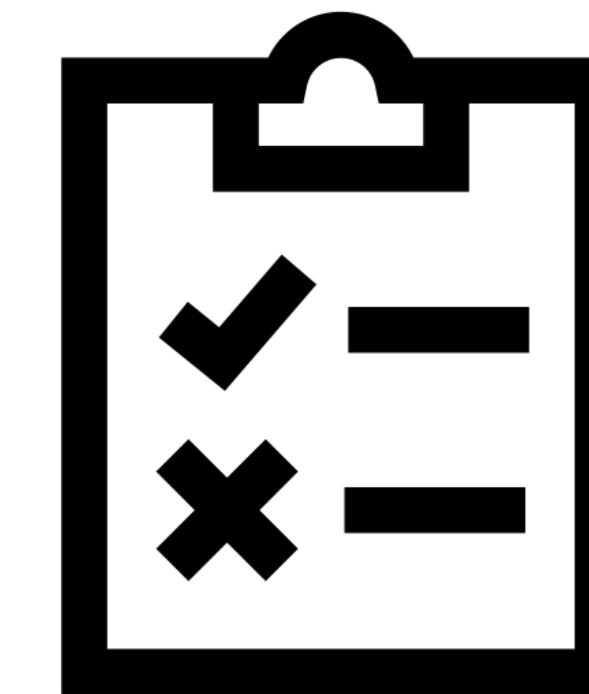
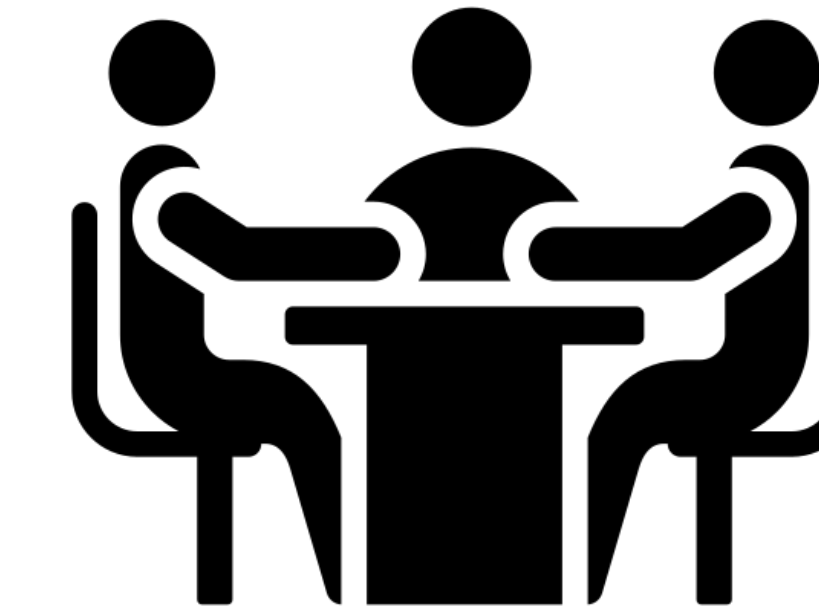
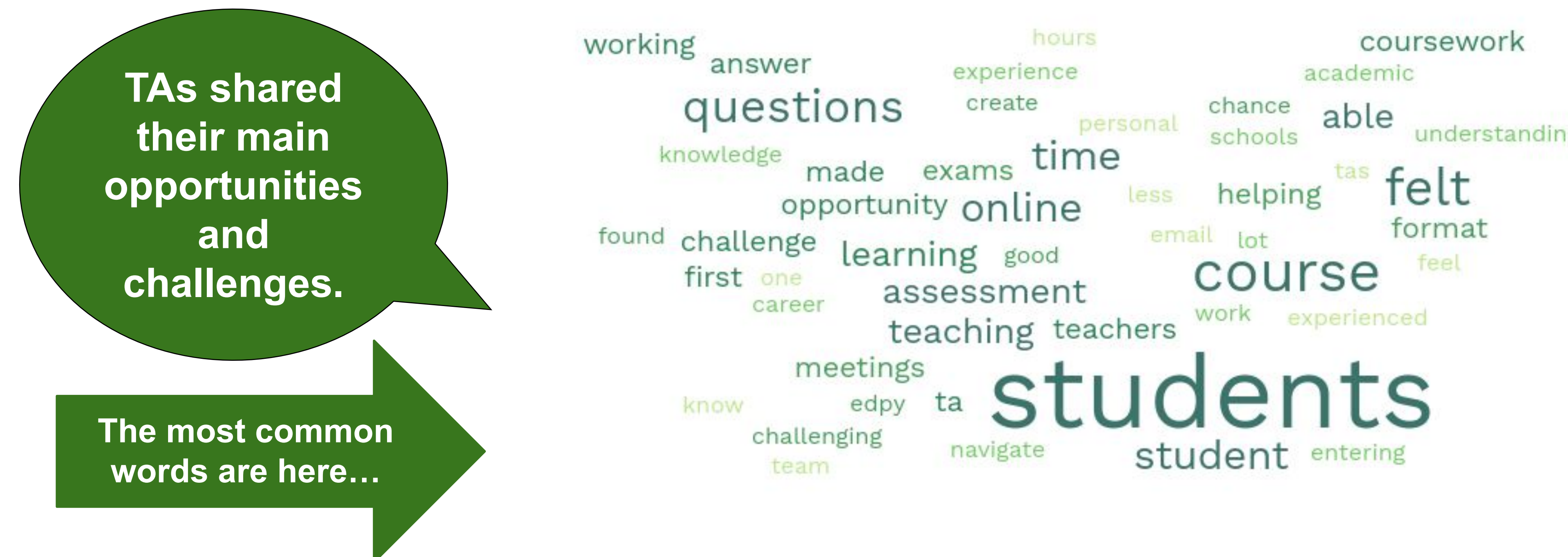
Procedure

- TAs identified the main opportunities and challenges associated with assistant teaching EDPY 303. Responses were then discussed as a team.

RESULTS

TA Roles and Responsibilities


Teacher Talks

Application Activities

Marking

Student Meetings


MAIN OPPORTUNITIES

Helping pre-service teachers navigate online instruction.

Enhancing teaching and communication skills when supporting students who required accommodations.

Helping to facilitate online learning through class break-out sessions.

Interviewing teachers to create Teacher Talks.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Connecting with students online given limited opportunities to connect in-person.

Effectively managing TA hours to accommodate meetings requested by students.

Managing an online course with students who wanted the class to be in-person.

The sheer volume of student questions and concerns, especially in the first couple weeks of the course.

DISCUSSION

- In Alberta, an entire Teaching Quality Standard (TQS 3C; 2020) is dedicated to application of assessment and evaluation practices that support student learning, equity, and fairness.
- Students had many questions about assessment as it pertains to not only their coursework, but also their future as teachers. This made our roles at TAs particularly challenging during this uncertain time.

IMPLICATIONS

- We TAs played an important role in facilitating EDPY 303 as students required considerable support even when provided with ample support and structure from the course and principal instructor. Moving forward, it may prove useful to consider the roles of TAs in other assessment courses as well as reconsider the ratio of students to TAs in remote student learning courses.

REFERENCES

- Becker, K. L., & Renger, R. (2016). Suggested guidelines for writing reflective case narratives. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *38*(1), 138–150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214016664025>
- Teaching quality standard [2020]. Teaching quality standard [2020] - Open Government. (n.d.). Retrieved January 24, 2022, from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/teaching-quality-standard-2020/resource/afc2aa25-ea83-4d23-a105-d1d45af9ffad>
- Pictures from the Noun Project.
- Special thanks to the EDPY 303 TAs for taking the time to reflect on their experiences.