

Teaching Workshops for Graduate Students: Professional Skill Development for Future Career in Academia

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Purpose

The Teaching Workshop and Certificate program, through Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Student Association, provides Drexel graduate students with opportunities to:

- Hone their teaching skills and reflect upon their teaching
- Become self-reflective teachers
- Be aware of different pedagogical practices.

In its second year, we have conducted extensive surveys to evaluate issues Teaching Assistants (TA) might face, created a multi-day interactive teaching workshop series, and are accessing graduate student teaching philosophy through pre- and post surveys.

Goal

- 1) To help graduate students teach their own courses either currently or in future faculty positions.
- 2) To increase teaching competency among graduate students

Measures

- 1) Survey responses from 110 TA's across departments about their teaching experience
- 2) Roundtable discussion with TA's across disciplines
- 3) Pre and post-workshop evaluation of graduate teaching philosophies (n=52)
- 4) Post-workshop evaluation of multi-day teaching workshop (n=59)

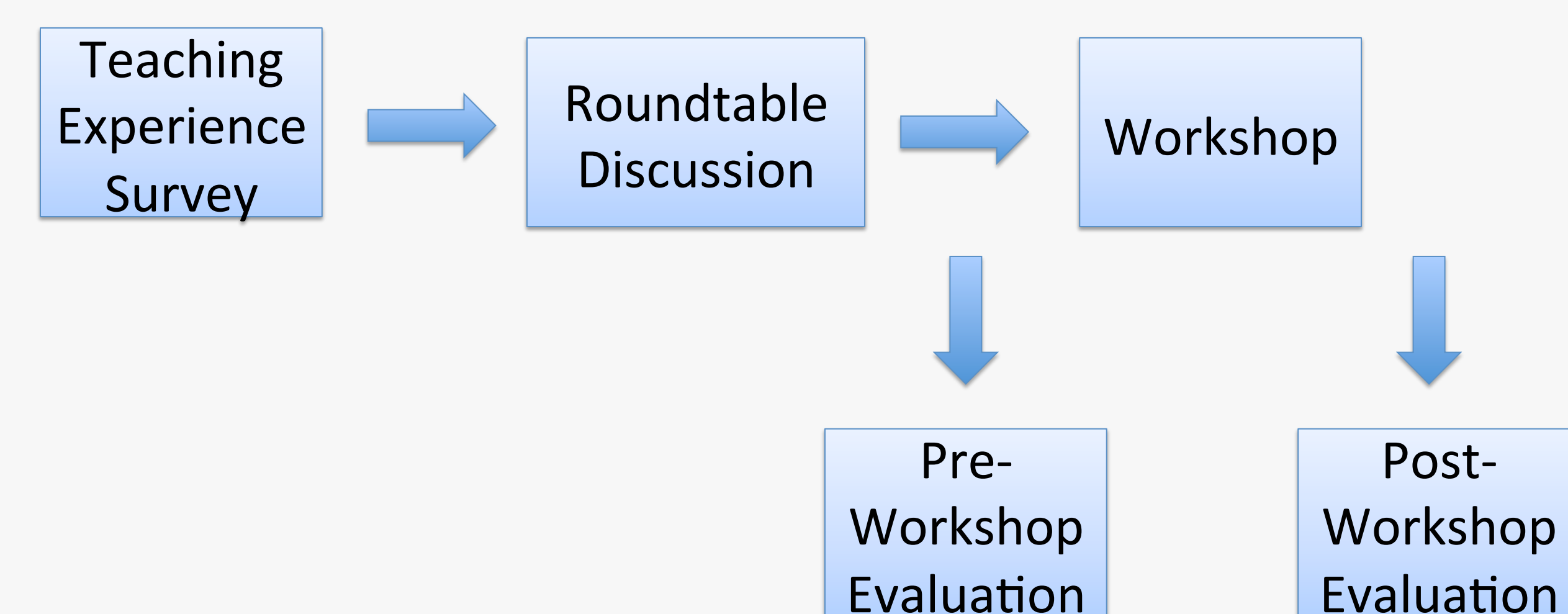


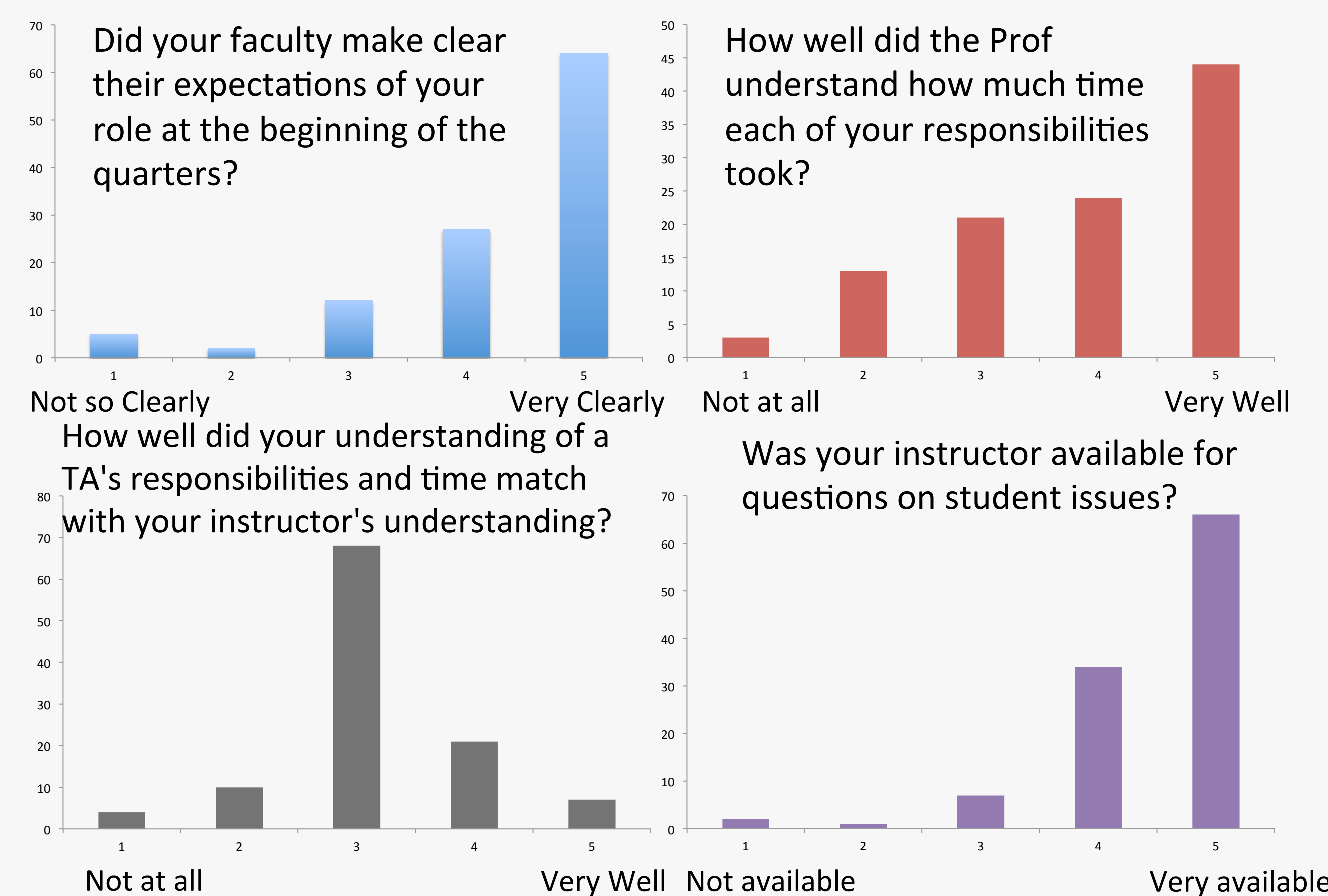
Figure 1: Flowchart of surveys, roundtables and workshop series. Responses from 110 graduate students were collected and a roundtable discussion was held with 45 of the respondents to go over issues they face. Based on those issues a 5-part workshop series was held. Before the workshop series, attendees were asked to fill out a pre-workshop evaluation. After each workshop, a post-event survey was distributed.

Results

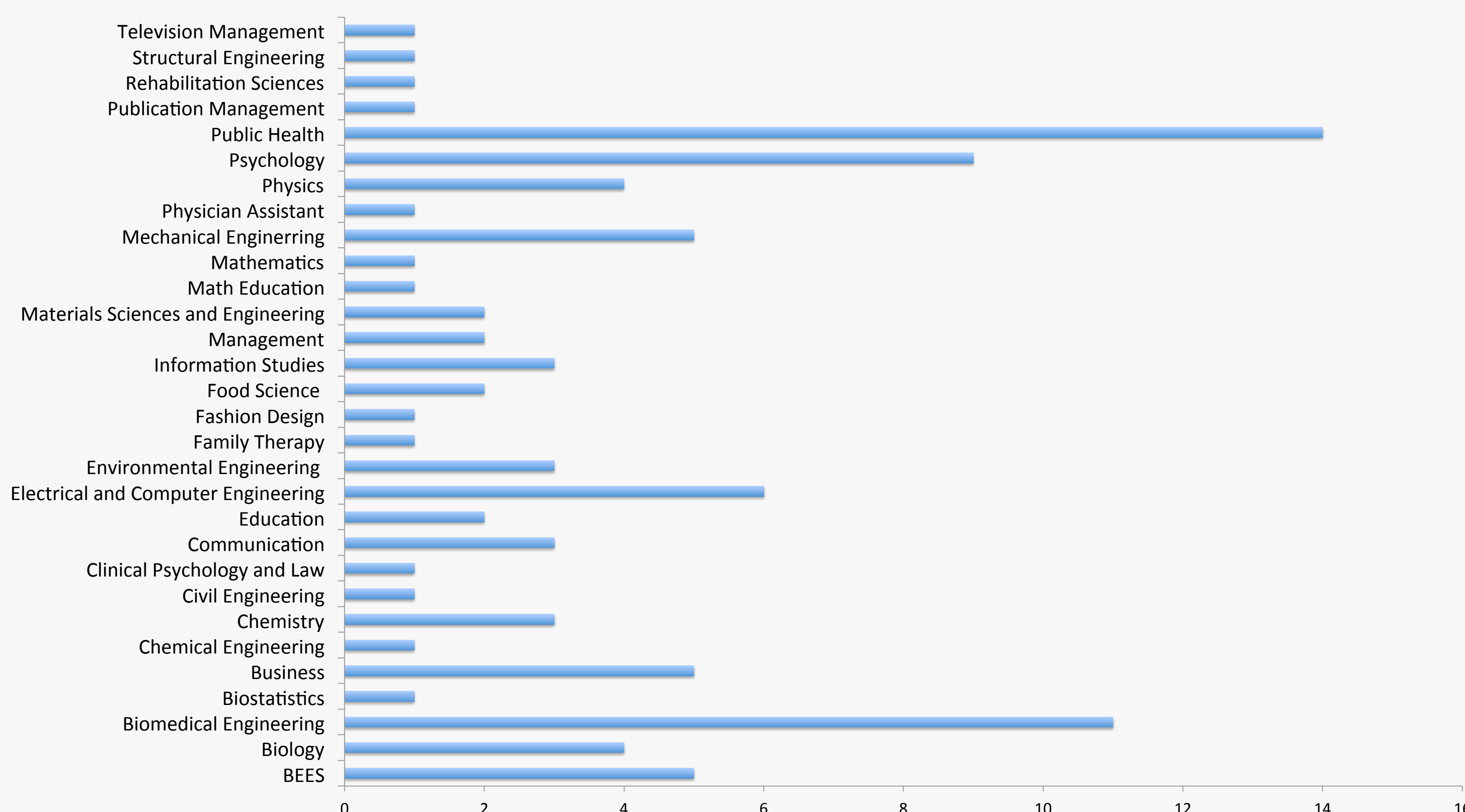
Teaching Issues Raised by Graduate Students

- 1) Teaching to different learning styles
- 2) More interactive teaching methods and creating an engaging classroom.
- 3) How to develop unique lesson plans; how to teach a course outside of your expertise.
- 4) Ways to get feedback from your students.
- 5) Dealing effectively with problematic students; Classroom Management
- 6) Teaching specific topics such as Math or Science.

TA's have a good rapport with Teaching Faculty (n=110)

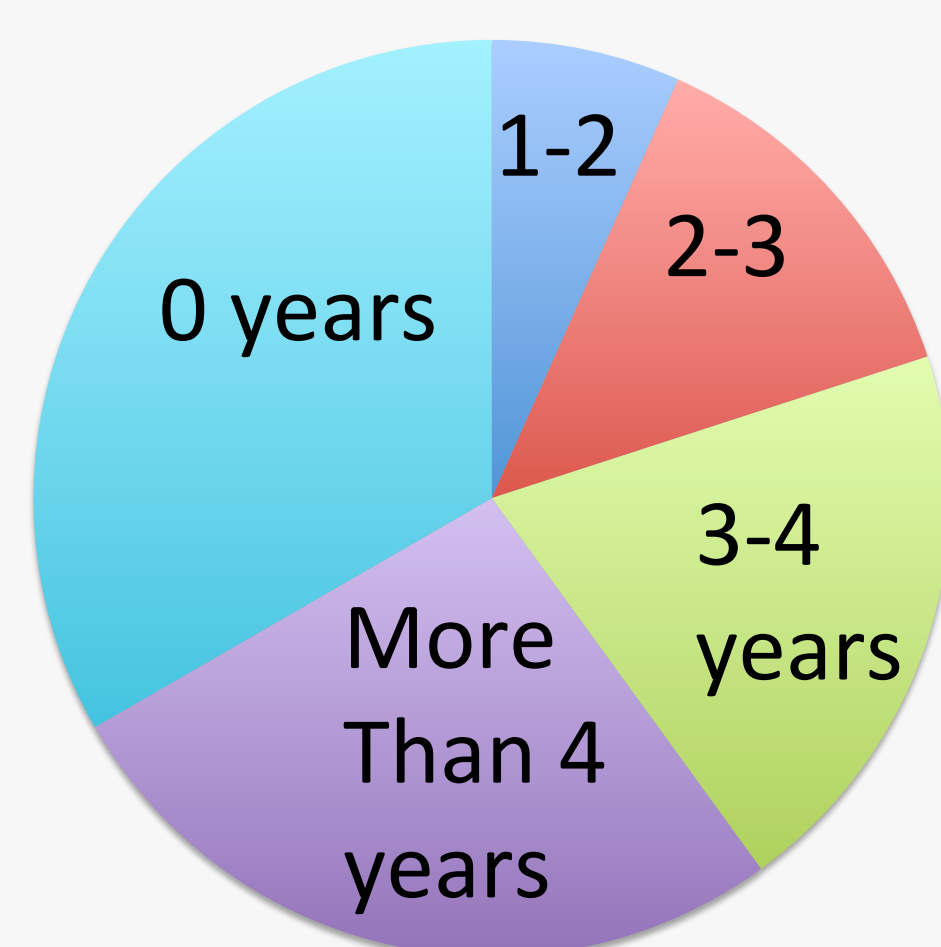


Data from Workshop Evaluation: Number of RSVPs for Workshop Series per Department (n=102)

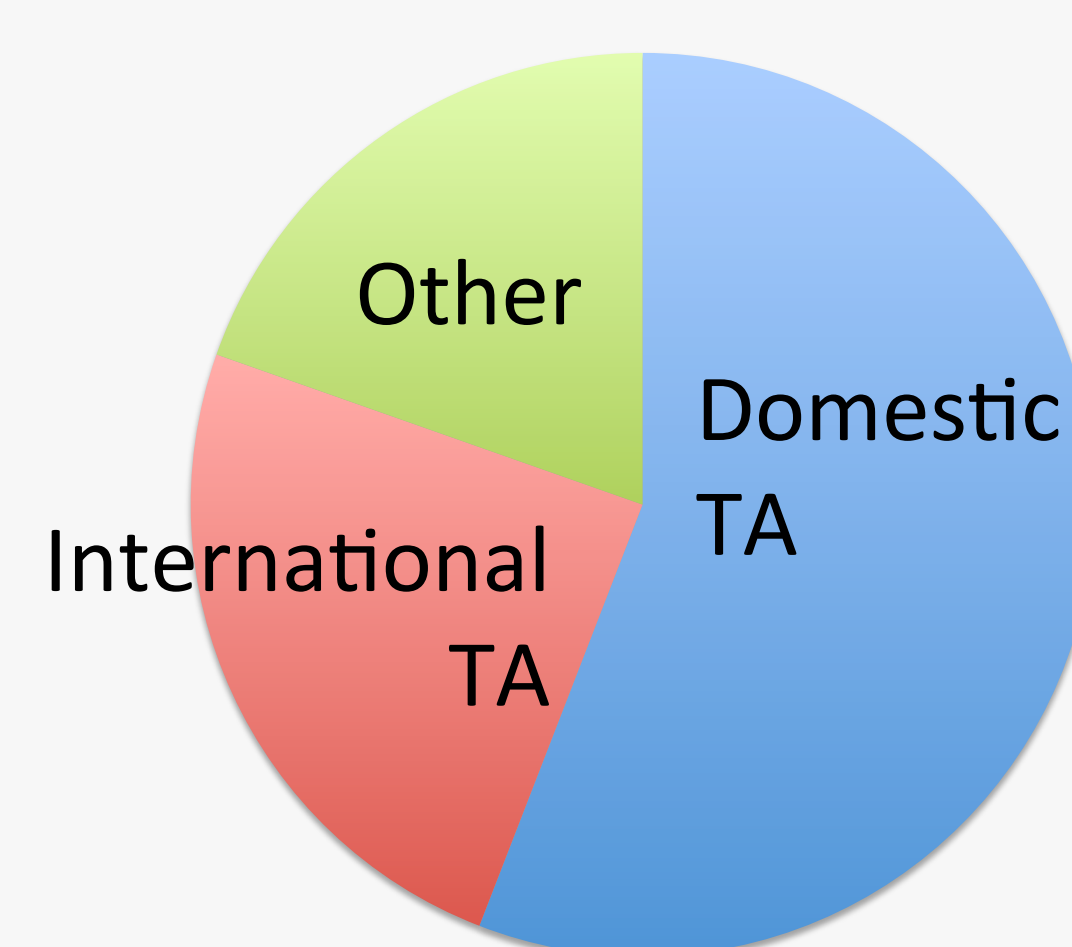


Diverse teaching experiences among RSVP (n=102)

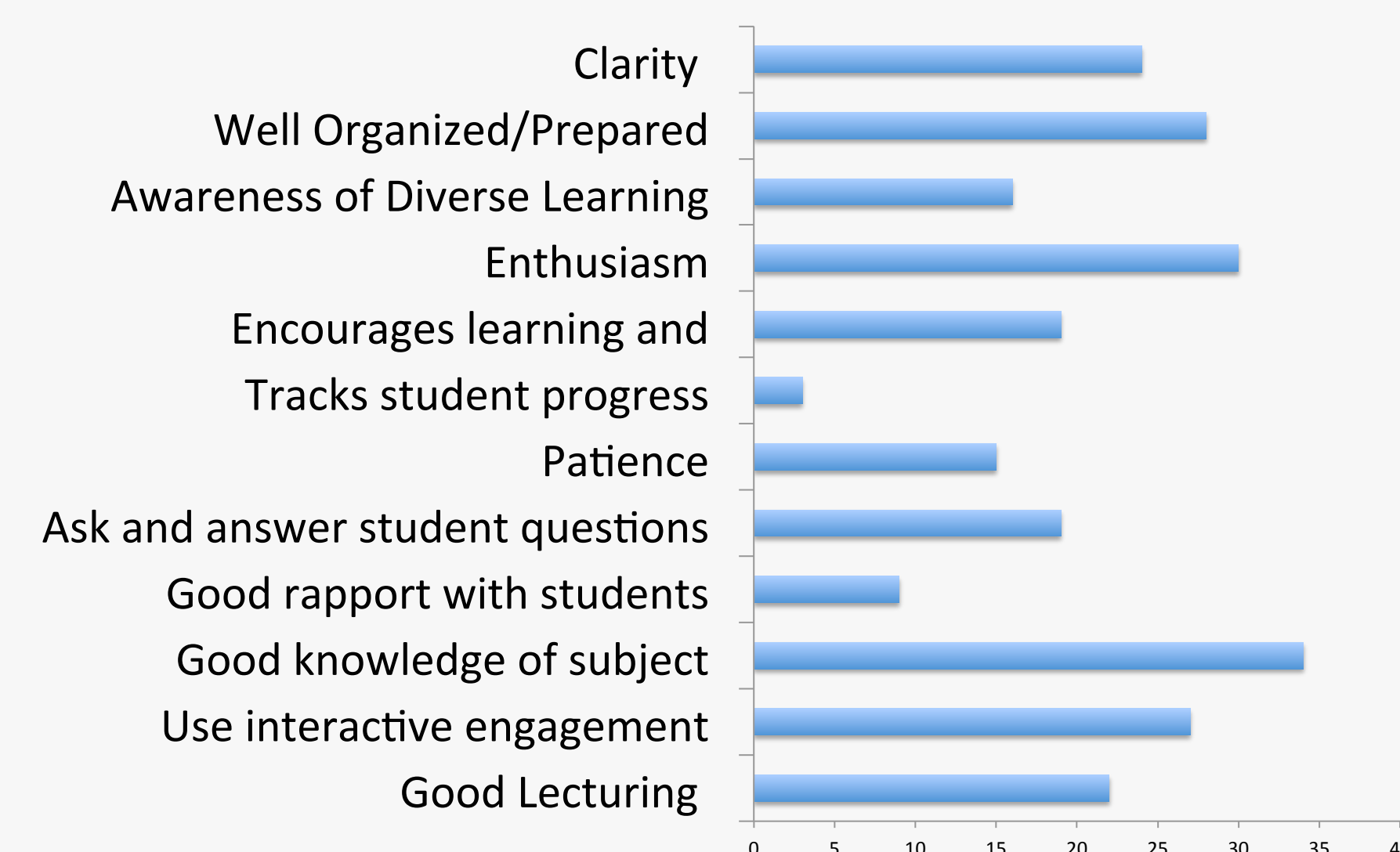
How long have you been Teaching?



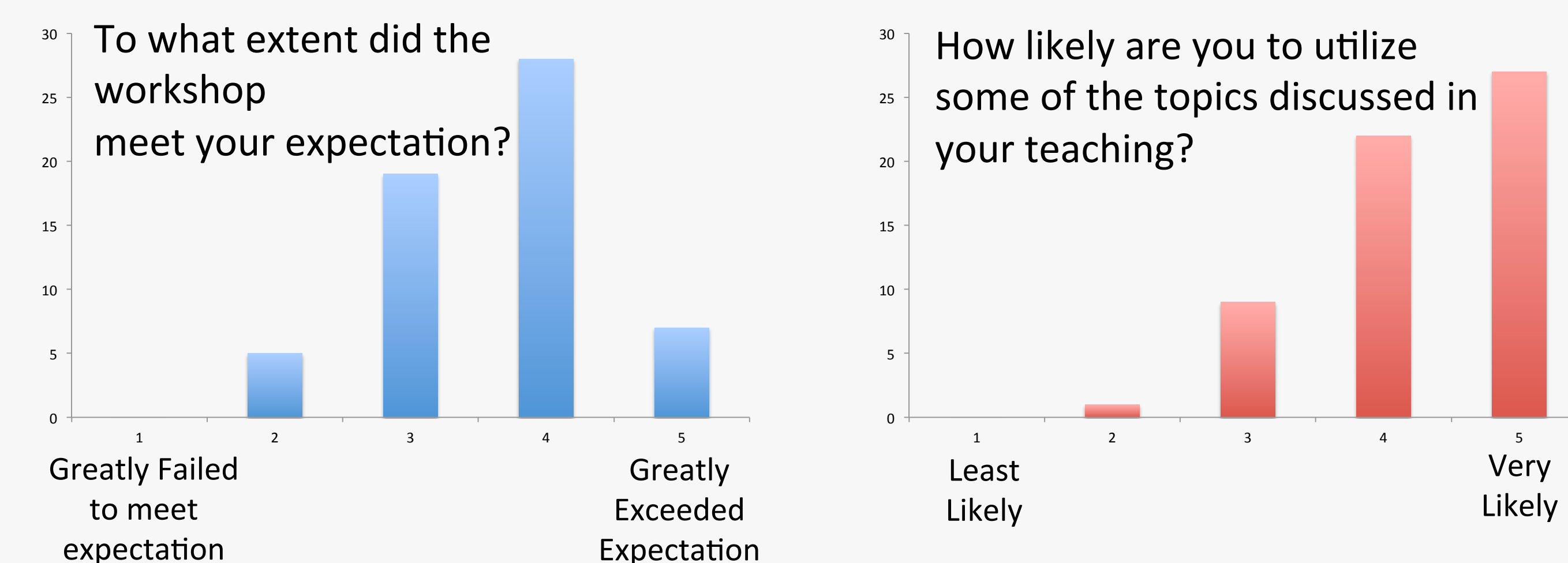
What would describe you best?



Data from Pre-Workshop Evaluation: Primary Responsibilities Of a Course Instructor as Listed by Survey Respondents (n=52)



Data from Post-Workshop Evaluation: TA's found the workshops useful (n=59)



Discussion

- The different groups of graduate students surveyed had **similar difficulties or issues across departments**, while some had specific issues pertaining to their discipline.
- Survey results show a **generally good relationship between TA's and their teaching faculty**, however, there is a lack of agreement between TA's and their instructor's on TA responsibilities.
- There was a **general disagreement that memorization is a sufficient learning technique** however, 60% of international TA's agreed or were neutral towards memorization.
- **Graduate students value organization, engagement, and knowledge as good teaching values.** Future work will include if these values change after workshop series.
- TA **needs may vary from across departments** and courses taught.
- A **long-term, systematic and broad focus** needs to be taken to train graduate students to reflect on their teaching and become effective future professors.

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