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Training graduate teaching assistants on active learning

One important and, at times, overlooked component of instructor training is the training of our graduate students in their roles as graduate teaching assistants. Although decades of research into evidence-based active learning activities are regularly shared between and practiced by instructors, this is not always introduced to our graduate students. Since some graduate students will be instructors someday, it is crucial that they are aware of and learn effective pedagogical practices like active learning early in their careers; these early teaching experiences tend to establish enduring teaching skills and approaches.

A workshop on active learning techniques in the mathematical and statistical sciences was developed for graduate teaching assistants from those fields at the University of Western Ontario. A survey study of graduate teaching assistant perceptions about active learning before and after participating in the workshop was performed in September 2021 and September 2022. Learnings from this study are discussed.