

ATTACHMENT E

ELAC 5050 International Graduate Teaching Assistants Training

Course Description: To prepare international graduate assistants to assist or teach in U.S. university classes. The course focuses on enhancing teaching and communication skills, and cultural knowledge. Students are non-native speakers of English who currently have a teaching assistantship or plan to obtain one in the following semester. Not for degree credit.

Graduate level. Not for degree credit. Class meets 4 hours / week

Prerequisite: Language assessment required.

Specific Course Objectives:

1. Language Skills: Students improve their communicative competence through work on aspects of pronunciation and grammar as needed.

a. Pronunciation

Students will improve their pronunciation so that they are comprehensible at the word level; they will practice and develop accurate word stress, rhythm and intonation, and use thought groups effectively.

Students may need to take additional pronunciation course.

b. Grammatical accuracy

Students will identify and correct their own grammatical mistakes when speaking. Some areas of grammatical weakness for ITAs are: relative clauses in definitions, use of imperatives, negative questions, logical connectors, verb forms, verb tenses.

c. Compensation strategies

Students will learn and practice strategies for coping with their common grammatical errors.

d. Levels of directness

Students will learn and be able to appropriately use phrases to indicate politeness and/or direct commands.

2. Teaching Skills: Through a series of student led micro-teaching lessons, students enhance their presentation skills, learn how to lead class discussions, and develop classroom management skills.

a. Beginning a course

Students will practice:

- i. designing and introducing a syllabus: setting the tone, expectations, assumptions, requirements
- ii. introducing self to students

b. Giving Presentations

Students will:

- i. develop their introductions, openers, endings
- ii. improve their organizational strategies
- iii. present appropriate content: gauging level of difficulty / amount of material to be covered
- iii. learn about the importance and types of evidence / examples / steps and practice presenting these in their classes

- iv. improve their explanations of technical terms
- v. improve their use of visuals and the blackboard, by preparing, presenting, and explaining visuals and using the blackboard
- vi. incorporate organizational cues into their presentations, using signposts for cohesion / improved comprehensibility

b. Motivating Ss' Participation and Managing T-Ss Interaction:

Students will develop their ability to:

- i. check students' understanding,
- ii. elicit questions from audience,
- iii. restate questions, prepare & respond to questions,
- iv. interrupt the speaker to ask a question or ask for clarification

c. Leading Discussions

Students will:

- i. prepare questions for discussion
- ii. listen and respond to students to encourage them
- iii. develop skills in managing disagreements / errors / conflict
- iv. develop skills in promoting S-S interaction, managing small group work
- v. use techniques for coping with silence

d. Classroom Management

Students will discuss and practice strategies for:

- i. building rapport with students: creating a welcoming classroom environment
- ii. preventing and dealing with unacceptable behavior
- iii. managing large vs. small classes
- iv. teaching labs
- iv. accommodating students with special needs.

e. Teaching with Technology

Students will discuss the uses, benefits and challenges of teaching with the latest technology, and they will practice teaching with / balancing use of:

- i. email
- ii. Blackboard
- iii. Safe Assign (or similar tools designed to discourage plagiarism)
- iv. Blogs, Wikis, and other online tools
- v. blended learning

Students may discuss / practice teaching in computer labs (when applicable).

3. Cross-cultural Awareness

Students develop their cultural knowledge, with a focus on understanding U.S. university culture, the role of the teaching assistant, and the expectations of American students.

Students will read and discuss, attend a panel discussion, and conduct interviews on:

a. assumptions and expectations of the teaching-learning process in the U.S.

classroom of American colleagues and professors, ITAs, American students, the host institution, their departments., etc. (particularly college level)

- i. discuss what makes a "good" teacher
- ii. the role of the teacher, the role of the Graduate Teaching Assistant, the role of the student

- iii. active vs. passive learning (the U.S. philosophy of education – focused on problem solving and exploration through questions rather than extensive memorization)
- iv. characteristics of students in the U.S.
American individualism and competitiveness / aggressiveness, egalitarianism
- v. the relationship between faculty, TAs and students
- vi. office hours
- vii. grading

b. issues of diversity in the U.S. classroom

- i. stereotyping and prejudice

c. verbal and non-verbal communication in educational contexts

- i. body language
- ii. voice
- iii. eye contact

d. teaching to multiple learning styles

e. collaborative learning and group projects

Suggested Methods

To both whole class and small groups, in a micro-teaching format, students present (for 5-10 minute sessions) on various topics in their field. Students:

1. introduce self
2. create and present a syllabus (as on the first day of a course)
3. explain a visual (graph, chart, diagram, etc.)
4. present a concept (define a key term)
5. teach a process
6. present a topic
7. give a two-part presentation
8. lead a discussion

For pronunciation:

Students will audio- or video- record themselves in situations of real communication, for example, while micro-teaching. They will transcribe a sample of their language. The instructor / tutor can help with transcription the first time, but later it is the students' responsibility to transcribe for homework. The transcript is marked for word stress, phrase boundaries, important focus words and intonation. The student practices reading the transcript aloud, aiming for a more fluent, phrasal delivery. After working with the transcript, students can re-record the material in their own words without reading. This activity should be repeated, using different speech samples – as needed.

Evaluation Suggestions

Homework – 25%
Micro-teaching Lessons – 35%
Final Exam – 40%

1. Student teachers receive regular (written or oral) peer feedback as well as feedback from the instructor at the conclusion of each micro-teaching lesson. (See rubrics.) (The first micro-teaching lesson may not be graded.)
2. Each micro-teaching lesson is digitally recorded and later reviewed by the student.
3. Students shall transcribe a portion of their speech and mark it for word stress, phrasing, focus words and intonation.
3. At (1-3) times during the semester, the instructor conferences with individual students to review the micro-teaching lesson using the digital recordings. The lesson is critiqued from linguistic, cultural and pedagogical perspectives.
4. The final exam consists of a 15 – 20 minute practical teaching demonstration in which the student demonstrates mastery of the above competencies.

NOTE: If a student obtains a grade of B or higher in ELAC 5050, he / she will satisfy the Spoken Language Proficiency requirement for non-native speakers of English seeking to hold a graduate assistantship that requires direct contact with students in a teaching or tutorial role.

Commented [C1]: Seeking approval from the Graduate Council for this. (May 2014)

Suggested Materials

Course textbooks

1. *English Communication for International Teaching Assistants* (2010) by Gorsuch, Meyers, Pickering, Griffiee

or
2. *Communicate – Strategies for International Teaching Assistants* (2007) by Smith, Meyers, Burkhalter

Teacher Reference

1. <http://grad.uark.edu/dean/ta-support.php> (This is the UA site to support TAs)
2. *Cultures in Contrast, 2nd Edition: Student Life at U.S. Colleges and Universities* (2009) by Shulman
3. *Online Intercultural Activity Toolkit*
http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/intercultural_activity_5/
4. *Strategies for Teaching Assistant and International Teaching Assistant Development* (2007) Ross & Dunphy
5. *Teaching American Students* (2006) by Sarkisian

6. http://www.public.iastate.edu/~jlevis/SPRIS/ITAs_ans.html (ITA Pronunciation suggestions)
7. *First Day to Final Grade, Third Edition: A Graduate Student's Guide to Teaching* (Michigan Teacher Training) by Anne Curzan and Lisa Damour
8. *Teaching Tips for College and University Instructors* (2001) by David Royse
9. *Active Learning 101 Strategies to teach any subject* (1996) by Mel Silberman
10. *Techniques for Teachers: A Guide for Non-native Speakers of English* by Ann Wennerstrom (1991)