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ABSTRACT

This collection contains 16 papers that focus on various problems and challenges relating to the design and implementation of training programs for international or foreign teaching assistants (ITAs or FTAs). It includes: (1) "An Outline of Analysis for Program Design" (Larry L. Loeher); (2) "A Survey of ITA Orientation Programs: Type, Assessment Categories, and Exit Options" (Marion Couvillion); (3) "The Ideal FTA Environment: Notes Based on One Trainer's Experience" (Mike Lyons); (4) "Designing and Implementing an FTA Orientation" (Nancy Pfinstag); (5) "A Program to Improve Student Attitudes Toward Foreign Teaching Assistants" (Kim E. Gilmore); (6) "Assessment for International Teaching Assistant Institute" (Lavon Gappa); (7) "Short But Sweet: A One-Day ITA Orientation Workshop" (Janet M. Goodwin); (8) "Proposal for Vanderbilt University FTA Program" (Janette Lanier); (9) "Plea for an Integrated Approach to Language Testing and Training for Foreign Teaching Assistants: Potential for ESL Training" (Susan Taylor); (10) "Cross Cultural Communications: Understanding the Situation" (Lynne McNamara); (11) "Culture in FTA Training Programs: An Overview" (Rosslyn Smith); (12) "Nonverbal Communication for the FTA: An Annotated Bibliography" (Nancy Frampton); (13) "'Talking': The Basic Act of University Teaching" (Patricia Byrd); (14) "Improving the Intelligibility of FTAs: How ESL Teachers Might Be More Effective" (Linda Grant); (15) "The Assessment and Training of Teaching Assistants in Biology and Chemistry" (Linda Mantel); and (16) "Duties and Activities of Chemistry Teaching Assistants" (Kim E. Gilmore). (Some individual papers contain references.) (MDM)

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Working Papers

Volume III

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

III. The Language Connection

IV. The Science Connection

Introduction

Janet C. Constantinides, University of Wyoming

Training programs for foreign teaching assistants (FTAs) need to comprise areas of focus not usually found in ESL classes. This article delineates those areas and suggests a model for determining the content of an FTA-training program which can be adapted to the needs of specific programs and students.

There seems to be general acceptance that FTA-training programs have to be something more than just language courses. In the early days of such programs, the assumption was that the problem was mainly, if not entirely, one of comprehensibility. Thus early programs emphasized language skills, particularly pronunciation. But our experience during the past few years, coupled with the research, some of which is reported in this volume, have shown that language proficiency is not the simple answer to the complex problem of inadequate classroom communication skills.

A typology developed in a previous publication (Constantinides, 1987) outlined three areas of focus for the content of FTA-training programs. The following is a detailed exploration of those areas.

Cross-Cultural Communication

FTA-training programs should probably have cross-cultural communication at their center, with the other areas relating to and building on it. What should be included in this focus? Because of the purpose of FTA-training programs, there should be a clear emphasis on <u>classroom-related communication</u>. A course in general cross-cultural communication skills, though helpful in other ways, usually will not present the cross-cultural dimensions of the classroom setting. Consideration of general communication skills, such as greetings and conversation openers, should be tailored to the ways those skills are realized in classroom settings. This requires that the trainers be thoroughly familiar with the communication patterns of American post-secondary education and how they differ from the patterns of the education systems of the countries from which the FTAs come.

Related to this is the need for some emphasis on <u>public speaking skills</u>. The traditional lecture format is used in many, if not most, university-level classes. In fact, most teaching situations, except for office hours and one-on-one tutoring, require the teacher to present at least a short "lecture," for example, the opening explanation in a chemistry lab or the context-setting opening for a review or problem session. Public speaking in this culture calls for some variation on "normal" communication skills: longer turns, louder voice, more internal signals (transitions, summaries, repetitions), different ways of signalling turn-taking, and so on (see Byrd, 1988).

These public-speaking skills need to be supplemented with the skills needed for successful teacher-student interactions. One obvious example is the open acceptance in this culture of questions and interruptions by students, behavior unheard of in some other cultures. In office hours and tutoring situations, proxemics and body placement (open or closed positions, indicating the degree of acceptance of the teacher for the student's comment) are important. Appropriate ways of indicating approval and disapproval (both verbal and non-verbal) need to be included.

One communication skill which has been shown to be central to good teaching is the use of questions and questioning. Learning to recognize questions, many of which do not have the grammatical form of a question, is important.[1] This is an extension of the classroom-related communication focus which would present an awareness that questions are not only allowed but encouraged in American education. Additionally, the use of questions by teachers needs to be explored to indicate the various ways in which questions serve pedagogical functions.

Related to all of the verbal communication skills, there are the accompanying non-verbal communication skills that need to be attained, for example, appropriate eye contact, body movement and placement (avoiding too much pacing, standing by the side of the desk vs. behind it, sitting next to a student during office hours or with the desk between, the physical distance maintained between teacher and student, touching a student).

Pedagogy

The specific classroom-related skills which must be presented reflect the accepted modes of teaching in this culture. Although it is not generally fashionable to talk about pedagogical matters in post-secondary education, there are nonetheless pedagogical assumptions behind the behavior of every teacher in every post-secondary classroom. And though teachers in different disciplines and with different personalities teach in different ways, underlying most of that teaching are some common assumptions, based on cultural givens. If FTAs are to adopt appropriate pedagogical techniques, the FTA-training program should carefully consider four important categories of information:

General Information About U.S. Education. This topic includes the philosophy and purpose of education in this country. From these are derived the expected behaviors of teachers and students. One effective way of handling these topics is by using contrastive analysis: what is the philosophy and purpose of education in the countries from which the FTAs come and what teacher and student behaviors are dictated by them? How is the philosophy and purpose of education in this country different? What types of expected behavior are then different and why? Exploring these differences can help FTAs become aware of their own assumptions about teacher-student behavior and thus realize why some behaviors they encounter in U.S. classrooms trouble, even offend, them so much. Explaining behaviors in this culture as the result of an underlying philosophy of education is one way to make the presentation of new patterns of behavior less chauvinistic. The emphasis in this approach is that different cultures have different ways, not that the way things are done in this country is superior or necessarily more effective.

Specific Information About the Institution in Which the FTAs Will Teach. Each institution has its own "culture," and it is important for the FTAs to know the culture of the one in which they will teach. Types of information which need to be included in this part of the program are demographics of the student body (traditional or non-traditional students, percentage of minorities, previous education, etc.), admission policies (highly selective, moderately selective, special consideration given to certain populations, open-door), traditions (using "bluebooks" for all exams or giving no exams on the day before or after a vacation period), and the specific teacher/student expectations (calling instructors by their first name, acceptance of students' arriving late or leaving class before it is finished, calling students Mr. and Ms. or by their first names, for example).

Discipline-specific Information. This topic includes the preferred teaching/learning style for the discipline (for example, in many business courses, instructors are expected to come to class with a prepared set of overhead transparencies; in math, they are expected to use the board), the emphasis on teaching (generally speaking, the humanities put more emphasis on teaching than do the sciences and engineering, where the emphasis is on the content, not the delivery) and the openness of the discipline to innovation and change in classroom presentation (again, the humanities are usually more open than the sciences and engineering). Training FTAs to use methods of presentation and public speaking which are not appropriate to the discipline sets them up to fail; they are already the object of much attention and wariness from both their students and sometimes the faculty, and if they violate the accepted traditions of the institution or the discipline they are made to look not only different but incompetent. This means that FTA trainers need to know about the traditions of the institution and the disciplines before undertaking to train FTAs.

<u>Department-specific Information</u>. This topic includes such traditions as the way in which graduate students address faculty, the definition of the teaching task to which the FTA will be assigned (in one department at my institution a simple definition like "do a lab" turned out to have at least four very different meanings, each requiring different classroom communication skills on the part of the TA), and the emphasis given to teaching by the faculty in that department. Though there is great similarity among departments in the same discipline across institutions, there are occasional differences, and the FTA-training program must be aware of those differences if it is to appropriately train the FTAs.

Language

The part of the FTA-training program that focuses specifically on language is delineated by the content in the other two areas. Ideally, the language-related part of a particular course should be designed only <u>after</u> the other two parts have been determined. But some general comments can be made about what should be included.

First, there needs to be a careful <u>consideration of general proficiency in English</u>. Unless the students have a minimum level of general English proficiency, no FTA-training program can be successful. Those students who do not have that minimum level should be put into ESL classes, not into an FTA program.

Second, the <u>language skills needed for public speaking</u> should be incorporated. These include ability to speak without long unfilled pauses, ability to maintain appropriate volume and projection, skill at gauging and adjusting rate of speech. Most ESL classes do not teach such skills, but for the FTA program these are essential. If the FTAs don't have the required public speaking skills, even though their other language skills are adequate, they will not be judged as successful teachers by their students. For example the FTA (especially female) who speaks too softly and without projecting may be considered ineffective by students who misinterpret lack of volume for lack of authority. In this example, the language skills needed (projection and volume) would be included in the course because they are necessary to achieve the goals of the other content areas of the FTA course.

Third, and perhaps one of the most important language considerations, is the use and "correct" pronunciation of key vocabulary and routines commonly used in the discipline. ("Correct" in this context refers to what American undergraduates will recognize and is not intended to imply that American pronunciation is inherently superior to the pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns of other dialects of English, such as, for instance, Indian or Nigerian English.) Most TAs are assigned to teach introductory-level courses, often required courses for non-majors as well as majors in the discipline. The students do not already know the vocabulary of the discipline and thus have no context for listening to variant pronunciations of the key vocabulary which is often being defined in that introductory course.e Work done at the University of Wyoming has shown that slight changes in the FTAs' pronunciation of key vocabulary and the ability to use routines correctly (to say "A equals B" rather than "A is equal B") improved their comprehensibility as perceived by American students. No attempt was made at global pronunciation changes, but the response of the raters was that the FTAs had "greatly improved their pronunciation" (Constantinides, 1986).

The final part of the language section of the course should respond to the participant-specific language needs. This requires the ability to individualize some part of the FTA-training program so that each program participant has the opportunity to work on those language features which most interfere with comprehension. This may mean work on changing syntax, grammar, or pronunciation patterns; it may also mean changing non-verbal behavior.

Conclusion

Each FTA-training program must determine to what extent it will include each of the areas discussed above. For example, if a specific department is prepared to handle discussions of the discipline-specific teaching methods and the department-specific traditions, then the FTA-training program can shift its focus to other areas. However, if the departments in an institution do not provide such training, then it may be up to the FTA-training program to do so. Additionally, time and budget constraints will no doubt dictate to some extent the particular mix of the areas included in a given training program. And obviously the availability of appropriate expertise in each of the areas has to be considered.

In closing, a word of caution: FTA trainers need to be very certain that they are fully aware of the expectations of the undergraduate students in their institutions and of the departments in which the FTAs will teach before designing the content of a program. Sending an FTA into a classroom having learned inappropriate teaching behaviors is as bad as providing no training, perhaps worse. FTAs are already considered "different" or "strange." If they use inappropriate teaching methods, they may also look like fools. What has become increasingly obvious as FTA-training programs have become more than language skills classes is that we need more information about what is involved in "teaching" in this culture. Several important research projects are underway. Research into the language of the teaching of mathematics (Rounds, 1985; Constantinides and Byrd, 1988; Byrd and Constantinides, 1988b), for example, has shown how important the amount of language used, as well as the specific language, is to successful teaching. The results of such research should be incorporated into the content of FTA-training programs in order to enhance the possibilities for our FTAs to be successful in their teaching assignments.

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Chair.

Notes

[1]For examples of question types and uses, see The Foreign Teaching Assistant's Manual, by Patricia Byrd, Janet C. Constantinides, and Martha Pennington (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1989).

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I. Program Design

An Outline of Analysis for Program Design

Larry L. Loeher, UCLA

Many participants at the Wyoming/NAFSA Summer Institute have come on a problem-solving mission. They are hoping to create a new program, expand an existing one, re-direct a moribund or ineffective one, or simply seek improvement of an already competent program. These aspects of "problem"-solving are often difficult to define in terms that will actually effect change at the home campus. The difficulty comes, in part, from a lack of familiarity with administrative behavior within the larger system of the university or school.

The "problem" varies with the structure, values, and circumstances of each institution and each individual's position within the institution. For example, ESL instructors tend often to couch the "problem" in humanistic terms which reflect the perspective of the foreign TA. They have had little opportunity to observe or examine their school, and may have little notion of how to initiate change within the institution. Staff, on the other hand, are not often given the opportunity to evaluate problems and usually have limited data with which to work. They are therefore inclined to define the "problem" as it is given to them, and to have difficulty in interpreting information which is variant from the defined problem. They may have some insight into how to introduce change, but have little direct opportunity to do so. Administrators, as a third group, are most inclined to define the "problem" in institutional terms -- and frequently as a response to pressure from interest groups outside of their own office (legislatures, irate tax-payer letters [ITLs], students, etc.) They are willing to create change as a response to these pressures if they can obtain adequate information on what should be done.

These individuals can, in concert, provide tremendous impetus for change if they communicate well with each other. A major obstacle to success is that instructors, particularly ESL instructors -- who, for the sake of hyperbole, we could call "Bambi-lovers" -- have difficulty in interpreting how administrators -- who, likewise, we could call "Wildlife manipulators" -- operate. The following is offered as a suggestion for understanding WHAT ADMINISTRATORS WANT.

First, I should warn that administration is not a linear process -- there are no outlined steps which, if followed, will create the desired outcomes. Some administrative tasks, particularly those that are routine, are more linear than others. For the most part however, administration is an intuitive process and the outline presented here is merely an attempt to impose order on a disorderly process.

I. Elements

There are several elements of administration that must be recognized before we can proceed to the general principles and analytic outline we seek. The first of these elements is:

A. Culture

Much has been written about organizational culture, especially in the recent past, and it is well worth the scrutiny. Culture is a metaphor for the goals, values, mission and procedures of an institution. It encompasses shared assumptions, shared meanings, observed rituals, and symbolic acts and objects. Culture is a learned behavior which evolves from social interaction in all its forms. Continued observation of behavior will ultimately permit interpretation of the institution's culture.

Culture enables us to answer the questions:

What is this school all about ?
What is of value here ?
What do we believe in ?
How do we function ?
Who do we involve ?
In what order do we involve them ?
How do I fit in ?

For example, schools tend to define themselves as Research Universities, Community Colleges, Liberal Arts Schools, Comprehensive Colleges, etc. which enables us to take the usual purposes of higher education in the United States - research, graduate training, vocational training, community service, undergraduate instruction - and assign weightings to the relative importance each of these is likely to have for each school. We thereby begin to assume the type of cultural values each of these schools will uphold. University presidents, when pressed to discuss whether research or teaching is more important, usually use such phrases as, "I think good research and good teaching go hand in hand." Well, they might, but committees on tenure and promotion at research universities are spared the need to utter such pronouncements - they know the values they are meant to uphold and they act accordingly (Loeher 1987).

Another area where relative values can be interpreted is the manner in which teaching assistants are recruited and employed. If research is the dominant value, a teaching assistant position is often considered a consolation prize for those who failed to receive research assistantships. Furthermore, the TA-ship is defined as "graduate student support" and is considered as part of a battery of recruiting tools to draw superior candidates to the program. Where teaching is the dominant value, on the other hand, a TA position is more likely to be defined not as support, but as an apprenticeship - as collegial training. It is not a recruiting inducement, but a prize awarded to the most qualified graduate students, and in some cases is a requirement of the graduate program.

A recent article (and one of the best) on culture in education is William Tierney's (1988) wherein he provides a "framework of organizational culture" (p.8):

Environment:
- How does the organization define its environment?
- What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)

Mission:
- How is it defined?
- How is it articulated?
- Is it used as a basis for decisions?
- How much agreement is there?

Socialization:
- How do new members become socialized?
- How is socialization articulated?
- What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?

Information:
- What constitutes information?
- Who has it?
- How is it disseminated?

Strategy:
- How are decisions arrived at?
- Which strategy is used?
- Who makes decisions?
- What is the penalty for bad decisions?

Leadership:
- What does this organization expect from its leaders?

Who are the leaders?
Are there formal and informal leaders?

It is important to remember that no single act or symbol should be considered definitive in identifying cultural values. If the President should attend a given function, it may be because he (could be she, but usually he) supports it, because he owes a favor to the person organizing it, because there is an important donor present, or because there is political value elsewhere in his attendance. Do not be too quick to conclude it is the first reason.

Similarly, we must remember that the "megaculture" of the university is composed of many, often conflicting, subcultures. For example, at many schools, and particularly at research institutions, the faculty have a stronger allegiance to the discipline than they do to the school itself. What constitutes excellence in the discipline is defined on a national basis by the cohort of disciplinary peers, and the university may be viewed mostly as an address, and possibly a temporary one. Thus the differences between subcultures may be greater than the similarities among their shared values. For this reason, the interpretation of behavior should be cautious and supported by additional information.

Finally, no program or training activity which violates or conflicts with the cultural norms and values of the institution will last for very long nor have much impact while it endures. It is essential that you identify your programmatic goals in a manner which conforms, or at least appears to conform, with existing institutional values and which supports the interests of your constituents (Loeher 1987).

B. Dichotomy of Work and Theory

James March (1984) discusses the difference between the formal description of administrative positions and the actual detail of daily activity in those positions. His thesis is that organizations function on two levels: the action level, dominated by experience and problem-solving on a detailed, almost trivial level (what we <u>do</u>), and the level of interpretation, dominated by the intellectual process of applying theory to daily experience in an attempt to understand, or justify it (what we <u>believe</u> in).

This difference is perhaps best demonstrated by comparing the formal titles which we hold ("I am the Director of Instructional Development") along with our job descriptions (which run several pages and neatly outline responsibilities in curriculum design, media production, experiential education, etc.), with a "log" of the actual activity we perform on a day-to-day basis. (Met Professor Soandso in the parking lot, asked if he was close to submitting a proposal. Read the campus newspaper. Returned phone call re equipment lease. Settled argument between two clerks regarding who answers phones during lunch hour. Spent half hour trying to unjam copier. Read mail. Returned phone call to President's Office regarding proposed new title for teaching assistants. Tried to make the Laserjet print a new font. Returned phone call regarding why trash isn't emptied from our office. Phoned Contracts Office to ask for financial statement of media royalties from "Forearm and Hand Anatomy". And on and on...). Clearly, the job description was arrived at through an intellectual analysis of a particular role that needed filling. The log of activities is the means by which I fill that role, even though the link is not always very apparent.

The challenge to administrators is to successfully integrate these two aspects of life -- to drain the swamp while still taking care of the alligators! We cannot achieve our goals without solving the immediate problems of daily activity, yet we cannot resolve such issues unless we have an endpoint, a goal, in mind.

C. Formal Authority and Lines of Communication

A thorough understanding of the formal structure and hierarchy of the institutional environment is essential to administrators. We could describe this as part of March's level of interpretation - how the institution operates in theory. It is uncommon for violations of formal structure to be permitted - even if they are successful. A spectacular achievement may be tolerated, once, but the perpetrator is labeled a "troublemaker" and has a more difficult time afterwards (witness how faculty who sue after denial of tenure often become pariahs, even if they are successful in their suit.)

Fortunately, it is very easy to observe the formal structure. It is usually available in a documented form, either a printed organization chart or an outline in the campus directory. I am astonished nevertheless by how many individuals have never investigated their location within the structure. Attempting to trace the links between themselves and the president's office, or to chart the location and connective links of their program, frequently reveals gaps of understanding and hence an unawareness of who might have a legitimate interest in supporting (or defeating) their ideas.

Similarly, communication must follow the same path, and copies of memos must be sent to the appropriate offices and administrators.

D. Informal Authority and Lines of Communication

The informal structure of a school is much more difficult to identify. It comes from March's world of experience and answers the question of "how do things really work?" A functional understanding of an institution requires close observation and gentle questioning. It reveals whose opinions matter and where decisions are actually made. Such information is usually difficult to obtain and slow to accumulate. It is undocumented because it varies from official structures and it is sometimes denied (always denied under formal questioning). Nonetheless, such information and understanding is critical to effective administration.

Communication through the informal structure is likewise rarely documented. Often it must not be documented. Thus informal communication consists of a network of phone calls, discreet meetings, blind carbon copies, and official memos being delayed until unofficial drafts have been circulated and sanctioned.

II. Principles

If we recognize that all organizations constitute a bureaucracy, we can define the principles of administration as guidelines to making the bureaucracy work.

The primary need is to get things done; to become efficient and effective in transacting the daily and yearly functions of the bureaucracy. Administrators are rewarded for their ability to initiate and sustain what is essentially a routine maintenance activity (similar to many, if not most, jobs).

The secondary need is to make things happen; to create a means of adaptation to changing circumstances and new, often unique, demands on resources. Where this requires moderate changes, it is usually considered a normal part of the administrator's overall responsibility (although it may be subject to approval from higher levels of the organizational ladder.) Where this requires significant change, unlike industry which adopts a problem-solving approach, universities tend to assign the responsibility to an "executive committee" or a "task force" for a broad-based consensual approach. Very occasionally it may be assigned to a "planning" or "development" office (not to be confused with development as fund-raising.)

Thus, initiating change becomes significantly more difficult for an individual and may, at times, be regarded as inappropriate for an individual to attempt.

This should not discourage anyone from tackling the issues necessary to create change, but it should serve warning that there may be enormous institutional inertia to overcome before any evidence of interest or willingness to change is found. The following principles may be useful in the approach to creating change.

A. Goals

First and foremost, you must know what you want to do. The overall goal should be easy to describe and be readily restated to conform with whatever professional vocabulary is operating. For example, many schools are trying to revise their curricula to include research and literature from a broader world perspective than has traditionally been taught. This process has taken many names: "beyond the Great Books", "curriculum revision", "curriculum integration", "scholarly diversity", "Third-World perspectives", "the end of European White-Male dominance", etc. Some of these buzzword names are clearly intended to reduce anxiety, some are intended to imply this revision is merely the next logical step, and some are intended to act as a call for radical support and action. If you have a proposal for a new course which is connected to this issue, it would be to your benefit to echo whichever theme seems to be prevalent among the campus powers that approve new courses and state your argument accordingly, (e.g. This course will take newly available scholarship on African women and include it in the syllabus, not as an 'add-on' lecture, but as an integrated theme throughout all the lectures.)

As another example, we once proposed a series of new courses for freshmen which would focus on broad-scale issues within the professions (law, medicine, architecture, public health, etc.) and would be taught by professional school faculty. We shifted our arguments and vocabulary to correspond to the various subcultures we were addressing. To the students we said, "These are not pre-professional courses, but rather an opportunity to explore issues which might make you examine whether or not this profession is really of interest to you". To the faculty we said, "After teaching 'Torts' at the same time, on the same days, in the same way, for the last dozen years, wouldn't you enjoy a course with a bunch of eager fresh minds which want to know why law is worth teaching?" To the administration we said, "This is an opportunity for close interaction between faculty and students in a seminar format. Most freshman have classes ranging from 60 to 400 students and rarely see senior faculty, much less speak with them. Faculty-student interaction is a critical factor in the development of intellectual curiosity, and we shouldn't make students wait until their junior or senior year before they have the chance to take a course with significant faculty direction. Also, these courses will develop writing and speaking skills at the beginning of their college careers." These are, in most ways, the same argument, but we directed the thinking of the subcultures with the way we chose to describe the courses and what resultant benefits we thought they would derive.

Returning to our topic of goals, the emphasis must be on simplicity and clarity and not on details. Many people err by attempting to set goals which are too many in number and too elaborate. All the various academic subcultures will have a wide variety of competing goals and interests with continually changing preferences and priorities. Any outline of goals which is too elaborate will quickly be overcome by the details of these side issues.

All effective administrators must be able to tolerate a high degree of ambiguity. You must be able to move forward even if all the details have yet to be worked out to everyone's satisfaction and even if the exact form of the end goal is still in dispute. Waiting for resolution of these issues before taking the next step will result in any change activity becoming stalemated early in its development.

To recapitulate, you must define what you would like to see happen, but don't over-plan. Have a plan. Have a fall-back plan. Have a fall-back fall-back plan, and expect that to change before you get halfway there. The simpler the goal is to state, the easier it is for others to comprehend (e.g., All TAs should speak comprehensible English). As details are added, the degree of misunderstanding and opposition will increase (e.g., The Graduate Division will determine who is a TA and the ESL department will determine what is comprehensible English. [And the ESL department is requesting five years and $750,000 to uphold its part.]) And finally, what started out as a simple idea with general support, becomes a complex issue with several factions and no simple correct answer (e.g., Testing will be paid for out of registration fees, graduate recruitment will acknowledge the standards of spoken English for TAs, undergraduates will be required to have a three unit course which emphasizes the values of cultures different from their own, remediation efforts will focus on non-credit seminars, etc. etc.)

Be prepared through your "fall-back plans" to pursue any of these avenues which support your original plan.

Kenneth Eble (1978, p.14) has good advice for anyone having difficulty in getting started; he suggests that making a list of the things to be done is the first step in achieving them.

B. Trivia

Although this may seem to conflict with the need for setting simple goals, I cannot overemphasize the need to pay attention to details. By this, I mean that you cannot abandon your efforts after having sketched in the framework of goals. Each detail encountered is an addition to the argument for the goal. Each detail ignored is potentially someone else's argument that the change should not take place. This effort has also been referred to as "doing one's homework."

Another aspect of trivia and details is that you should expect to attend to them yourself. Delegation is highly over-rated. The imperial commands of "learn how to delegate" most often come from the business world where objectives are clearly understood and fairly routine. In creating change, the objectives are not only not understood, they may not even be agreed upon. Unless the underlying values (culture again) are shared and the goals well understood, beware of delegating tasks to other individuals.

Part of the impact of properly attended details stems from their operation on a sub-conscious level. Collectively they create an impression which extends beyond the particular facts at hand. For example, Disneyland functions in this way through strict attention to the details of maintenance and cleanliness. No visitor mistakes the environment of Disneyland with that of the carnivals and circuses to which it is related; the gulf between the two need never be stated. Disney's regard for detailed cleaning serves notice that "this is a class act," and in turn, visitors perceive that they are receiving greater value for their money and are in a superior environment. If your concern for details is equally manifest, people are reassured that you also have greater authority on the larger issues at hand. This is particularly critical for members of the "lower echelon" in an organization (and whether faculty or administration). Because you have no public image or reputation to stand on, you must create that impression of competence right at the beginning by having your facts straight and having all the details attended to.

C. Procedure

You must follow procedure. As any lawyer can tell you, solid evidence improperly presented is worthless. Procedure is just as important in academia as it is in the courtroom. The guidelines, unfortunately, are not as explicit. An understanding of the formal structure of authority and the lines of communication are the basic guides in determining: Who do you talk to? In what order do you talk to them? Is formal permission to proceed required at any step? Who gets copies of memos? (This is basically the issue of "blind" copies and the difference between the importance of receiving the memo and publicly receiving the memo.) Should communications include all materials or only cover sheets and summaries?

Do not let your project get canceled for failure to adhere to procedure. Administrators (especially the kind we tend to refer to as "bureaucrats") are outraged when their role in procedure is ignored or bypassed. They will oppose a project for that reason alone, and rarely will anyone openly dispute their right to do so. At the same time, remember that there may be more than one "correct" avenue for procedure to follow. Since there is no monolithic consensus within the university you may find that you have a choice of approaches and your task is to determine the optimum strategy.

D. Culture

How do you really do it? Once you've acknowledged the proper role of procedure, how do you ensure that your project will move forward? (Sometimes procedure is intended to forestall projects.) If you can articulate the cultural elements outlined in part I.A and understand the informal authority described in part I.D, then you are ready to move ahead.

It is easiest to reformulate the terms of your goals to match the cultural context (it's very difficult to achieve the opposite.) As an example, I began a training program that employed ESL graduates to assist foreign TAs in improving their oral English skills. Many of the TAs were insulted or disinterested in the program because it had the appearance of remediation. With the help of a departmental advisor, we repackaged the training into a "seminar" on "professional communication skills." The response was dramatically positive and the training has now been accepted as a routine part of preparation, not for their classroom assignments, but for the delivery of papers at professional meetings. We do, however, use the classroom assignments and situations as "material" for the seminars.

In another instance, we presented a workshop at a

TA orientation on "the evaluation of subjective materials" (what you might call grading papers.) It was successful and many TAs requested that we provide additional workshops beyond the orientation itself. Despite glossy posters, individual mailings, and other advertising, we were only able to draw four TAs to the "campuswide workshop." That was our mistake. Very little is done on a campuswide basis at our school. The departments are the primary academic organizations, and each believes it is so unique that very little of its activities, interests, etc. could be shared by other disciplines. The second time around, we advertised the availability of special workshops to departments (by appointment only) and provided the opportunity to plan for "customizing" the workshops to the precise circumstances of the department. We did in fact make some changes, but ninety percent of the workshop was the same as the previous design, and the acceptance was nearly universal.

As a last example, some departments resist training programs because they either do not believe teaching pedagogy is possible, or they believe pedagogy simply isn't important. Appeals to the needs of the undergraduates, or attempts to describe how training will further the careers of the graduate students are not winning arguments. In these departments (where RESEARCH is all) it is much easier to redefine pedagogical training as a means to improve the efficiency of TAs, or emphasize how training reduces breakage in the lab and simultaneously increases safety, or point out that undergraduate enrollment is likely to increase along with better TA performance. You can always find ways to redefine the terms but continue with your program.

E. People

At a time when powerful spreadsheets make it possible to manipulate numbers with ease, it is difficult to remember that such maneuvers are secondary to the real work, which is dealing with people. <u>You must deal with people</u>, and it is much harder than dealing with numbers or hardware.

Most academic training does us a dis-service because it emphasizes individual effort and solitary working habits. We are not inclined to deal with people, yet almost every other work environment emphasizes such interaction. Rather than thinking of people simply as obstacles to whatever we want done, we must instead value their contribution and accept their presence. It is not efficient, but it is effective.

We must achieve our goals <u>through</u> the efforts of others, therefore much of our time must be spent persuading them of what we want done. This is best done personally, and one to one if possible. It is so much easier to discover hidden reservations and unvoiced concerns when there are no other witnesses. And once you uncover private misgivings, do not be surprised if they are denied in a more public environment. The President really might believe that the undergraduate program is in desperate need of shoring up, but taxpayers and the parents of students will only hear about the quality of the program.

In especially sensitive or difficult discussions, it is best if the discussion is not only one to one, but also face to face. Although the telephone is quick and efficient, it does little to create an impression of intimacy and confidentiality. Likewise, you will not have the advantage of observing body language and facial expressions for revealing additional information. In turn, you will not be able to use body language for emphasizing your own point of view.

Dealing with people in groups is an entirely different procedure. Volumes have been written about the perils and attractions of committees. I recommend that a little research on committees and their behavior (start with your management reference librarian) will be more useful than anything I can write here (although I'm happy to recommend the film, "Meetings, Bloody Meetings," (Videoart, 1976) in which John Cleese manages to explain the groundrules for effective meetings.)

There are times when it is advantageous to formulate your own committee. Keep in mind that it is difficult to control a committee once it is created, so that special care should be taken to ensure that the members' points of view, attitudes, etc. are well understood before appointment. Also make sure that the committee membership is representative of significant groups (subcultures) such as ethnicity, discipline, administration vs. faculty, etc. Strive to work with each member individually so that there are no surprises when they meet as a group. Committees are useful in ratifying work that has already been done, or in condoning actions that have already been taken. This can take the form of position papers, formal statements, administrative reviews, etc. Remember, however, that these documents are most likely to be the work of an individual, and that individual is most likely to be you.

F. Time Line

Create a calendar. Outline the various steps to the completion of your goal and attempt to attach them to a calendar. Pay attention to other schedules (such as meeting dates for committees that must approve certain actions) and incorporate them into your time line. I once conducted a research survey which was dependent for its success on public awareness of certain issues via media. The project was ready to go and only needed final approval from the Human Subjects Protection Committee. I prepared the mailings, watched the news in order to time the survey, and only then discovered that the Committee required a minimum of thirty days for study and review, and that I had missed the last scheduled meeting of the quarter by two days.

In a similar light, as an administrator, I am often frustrated by receiving an excellent proposal after the deadline for submission. Since my grant awards are reviewed (up to twenty or thirty proposals at a time) by a faculty committee which works very hard, I am loathe to ask them to reconvene to consider a single late proposal. So loathe, in fact, that the proposer usually must wait for the next meeting cycle -- which is once every six months!

It is realistic to expect things to take longer than planned, so don't become discouraged if you fall behind your calendar. Faculty are used to changing their lectures, and even their course outlines, in the middle of things, and often expect others to have similar time horizons. It is rare for administrators not to have budgets locked in twelve or more months in advance, and to feel that anything "before next fiscal year" is impossible. These different attitudes for time must also be accommodated. Some people build in buffers of time, if possible, so they have some room for error.

There is likely to be never enough time. Although we may daydream of that nirvana when we may tackle one problem at a time at our own discretion, such scenarios usually remain fantasies. Therefore, rather than bewail the lack of time, begin to think of it as an allocation process. The question then becomes one of, "what is the most essential thing to do now?" "What is the best possible use of my time?"

Also, be sensitive to timing. The best idea presented at the wrong moment has no chance of success. If your project crosses into disputed territory, or if someone can reinterpret it so that it appears to seem so, patience is generally the best recourse.

G. Capture Resources

As difficult as it may be for some people to comprehend, there are no pots of money lying around the

University waiting for good projects to come along and claim them. In an environmental way, we can say there are no "empty niches." No dollars unallocated. No vacuums. Every dollar that comes to the University usually has the address of its destination written all over it, and overseers to ensure it makes its way there. It is your job to create a change of address.

There is a myth, perpetuated by some administrators, that one can "find some dollars." This is an obnoxiously paternalistic attitude that is used to reinforce the administrator's implied position of power and omniscience. This type of administrator will suggest that there are always more resources, it's merely a matter of being smart enough or experienced enough to locate them, or of remembering some account number that the bookkeeper forgot. Wrong. What they should be saying is that even though funds are already allocated, they are willing to change their priorities if a better idea or project comes along. Thus it is your goal to <u>become a priority</u>. The higher the level of interest and anxiety you can raise, the more likely that you will secure funding. I used the term "capture" deliberately, because it indicates that your project will not be funded with unused dollars, but will instead have to take them away, to capture them, from some lesser need.

Becoming a priority without becoming a pain is a delicate process. The first question to ask yourself is, "who cares?", and the second question is, "who ought to care?" Through the joint processes of argumentation and persuasion, you must increase the visibility of the problem you are trying to solve, and then offer its solution.

Schools are adaptable and can move towards new and different goals (although not as fast as students might wish), but they must have a justification for doing so, and the more documented evidence, the better. One strategy is to initiate a pilot project, develop supporting materials and data as the project proceeds, then use that information to justify the case for a bigger project with a full-scale budget. We got lost in our own program for two years while we debated over who was a "foreign TA" and how many such TAs we had. The saving factor was that we did not treat the global argument as necessary to resolve before we began the program. Thus, while on one arena we pondered over visas, immigrants, resident aliens, foreign students who were taught abroad in "English-speaking Universities", etc., we also proceeded with one friendly department, asked "who has trouble with English?", and worked to improve their TAs' skills and understanding. By the time that the national arena defined the concept of foreign TAs as being all non-native English speakers (which is not without its problems as a definition, but at least rendered the local argument irrelevant), we had a decent body of data showing where the TAs had problems and what could be done about it. Since we had for so long complained about the need for oral English ability, we were also perceived to "own" the problem and thus to be the legitimate program to be funded when the University provided special monies.

Resources are, of course, more than just money. They can be space, faculty time, staff salaries, hardware, desirable locations, parking spaces, student assistance, or whatever. All of these are directed towards institutional goals on the basis of priority. You must establish your claim to those resources based on your ability to further the school's interests.

Sometimes you will encounter individuals who are not trying to obscure or belittle a problem, but honestly fail to recognize that a problem exists. Generally they will not object to a gathering of data to prove your point. Make certain that the methodology and the suitability of the data source are agreed upon before you begin your collection. Ask up front, "what will it take to convince you"? In this manner you can begin to marshall your claims to priority.

Finally, I must mention the wonderful little essay by the pseudonymous Harris J. Bullford (1988) who points out, in jest, how any issue may be obscured or postponed indefinitely. Although written as satire, the author is dead-on target, and you can keep to your agenda of becoming a priority by avoiding the situations he identifies.

H. Agreement / Compromise

Agreement with many participating subcultures or units is usually a compromise. This is not a mistake for you, but should be seen instead as an expeditious way of moving forward. About the only time you should avoid making a compromise is when it violates an important principle. If you compromise then, you will never regain the ethical point which was lost.

Agreement is often reached for experiments, or pilot programs. This is an excellent place to agree to compromises since programs are always modified anyway. The pilot project principle can also work to your advantage in discovering if there <u>are</u> weaknesses in what you propose. There is an open quality to experiments and no penalty for keeping things in draft form as long as possible.

Use experimental programs as just that: a chance to experiment. Don't overstate the outcomes, don't exaggerate the measurable results, don't minimize the costs, and don't shorten the time lines. Let the results speak for themselves, and if you are not satisfied with the results, feel free to tinker with the program. Credibility can be maintained if promises are realistic. It is not inappropriate to design a program with a definite cutoff, say after two years, when the whole structure will be reconsidered. This can keep you from becoming wedded to an unworkable policy, program, or process.

Some successful programs have used a modified political decision process:

What is best?
What is workable?
What is achievable?

Answers to each question, moving from the ideal to the practical, should be understood, but the emphasis should be on the last question.

I. Expand Scope of Understanding

You must learn about your environment. Organisms are successful in the wild only to the extent that they have knowledge about, or adapt to, their environments. While we may be sheltered to some degree, our chances for success are improved by the cognizance we can achieve for our surroundings.

A most useful exercise is to ask ourselves, "Who runs the University?":

President/Chancellor
Faculty
Administration
Regents/Trustees/Board of Overseers
Legislature
Populace
Students?

The correct answer is, usually, all of the above. There is no simple hierarchical structure. Unlike corporations and, to some extent, governments, universities have evolved into a form which is frequently described as "shared governance" or a "pluralistic democracy." This emphasizes the occurrence of overlapping influence among the constituent members of the organization. It is therefore our goal to understand the interests of each of them, to identify their priorities, to discern their linkages, and to determine their appropriate areas of jurisdiction.

Armed with this understanding, we have the freedom to move about our environment with a reasonable degree of sureness and confidence in our course. Without this knowledge, we will always be subject to apparent cataclysms and ambushes from which we have no protection.

I should, however, issue a footnote about the special role of tenured faculty. Almost alone among the university's constituents, and descending from a prior pre-eminence, tenured faculty must be considered in almost every action. Whereas others can be pressured and coerced, tenured faculty can only be persuaded, not forced.

III. Analysis

All of the foregoing information is really background for this section, which gets back to our original question, "What do administrators want?" If you are not an administrator, there is at least no reason why you cannot learn to think like one.

By anticipating concerns which are foremost in the mind of an administrator you can not only pave the way for approval of your project, but reassure him or her that you are concerned with your project from the university's perspective as well as your own (even Bambi can thrive in a managed forest.) The following are the issues to which administrators are sensitive when making decisions and evaluating courses of action, and the questions that they are likely to ask themselves. If you can answer these questions in advance for the administrator, you can quickly cut through the effort necessary to get a project or idea off the ground.

A. Utility

Questions (from the perspective of the administrator) to be answered:

What will this do ? What problems are solved? What problems will remain unresolved? Is this idea sufficiently worthy of consideration? Is this idea interesting enough to warrant encouragement and further development?

Your project has to demonstrate utility and practicality. It must be clearly articulated and easy to put into a larger frame of reference. This is the "bottom line" for your idea.

B. Connectivity

Questions to be answered:
Who will support this? Who will oppose this? What is the balance of support and opposition? How can this be evaluated? What can the opponents tell me about this idea?

Your idea will not float, isolated, in a world of its own, so the notion of how it relates to other persons and programs becomes paramount. Relationships can be both positive and negative and a general "force field" approach wherein you assign to your idea both an attitude (positive or negative, weak or strong) and a magnitude (very significant to not so significant) will help to give you an indication of its position within the network of connections. You should attempt to answer these questions within both the formal and informal constructs of the university. Armed with this information, you will know who is on your side in any situation.

C. Responsibility

Questions to be answered:
Using the formal authority structure, is this the right person proposing the idea? Is it appropriate to their position? Is it appropriate to MY position?

People like to "own" their ideas, but in the academic world, there are questions of legitimacy in applying them to problems. A clerk in the mailroom may have the answer to how languages should be taught, but it's unlikely that anyone will bother to listen. Such differences become more sensitive when the question is, does a non-tenured faculty member have the "right" to propose this solution, or must it come from senior faculty?

An administrator has to decide not only if the applicant has an appropriate idea, but also if the administrator is the right person to hear it and do something about it. It may be tempting to some individuals to take an idea which is out of their normal jurisdiction and use it to expand their influence and power. Other administrators will simply refer you to the proper locus for action or consideration.

Use these different attitudes to your advantage. If someone would like to acquire more responsibility, let them take the lead in providing criticism of whoever is currently responsible, or in explaining to the proper audience that there is a problem to be solved. If you are referred elsewhere, explain why there has been no success with the current structure and why a change is necessary. You must make certain that you are not simply assuming the existing authority is disinterested in your ideas. It happens that resources fall into the hands of someone who is incapable of spending them wisely (if at all) for the designated purpose (Loeher 1987). Some offices are grateful for the arrival of someone with a clear sense of need and purpose who can breathe new life into a misguided or stagnant program.

D. Credibility

Questions to be answered:
Using the informal structure, is this the right person proposing the idea? Do they know what they want? Is it clearly thought out or is it still muddled? Does this person have the ability to do the job and see it through to completion?

In counterpart to the preceding issue, these questions assess whether the idea is "workable." Even if the proposer is a dean with all the authority to propose an idea, they may not have any budget to back them up, nor have the respect and cooperation of their peers, nor have the experience necessary to actually plan and implement the project. It's not uncommon to hear the assessment, "This is really Dr. Soandso's area, but he wouldn't know how to pull this idea off." A project must have the support of capable individuals.

E. Continuity

Questions to be answered:
Who is involved in the project? What will happen if the proposer leaves, isn't given tenure, goes on sabbatical, loses interest? This could be called the "Mack Truck" theory of management: "what if so-and-so gets run over by a Mack truck? What then?"

Projects which are dependent on an individual have dual liability; first, they are vulnerable to anything which happens to that individual, and second, they usually fail to expand their support much past the initial proposer. Ideal projects are those which come in with four or five faculty backing the project, plus the department chair, plus the dean -- such projects are very rare, but sometimes they do happen. Even if there is not widespread support initially, if there are contingencies planned <u>should</u> something happen to the proposer, the project will look more secure (similar to getting co-signers on a loan).

F. Accountability

Questions to be answered:
(Primarily fiscal, but also related to responsibility.) Is this an appropriate use of funds, and is the person proposing the project able to oversee them? Further, is this proposal budgeted properly? Is it frugal? Is it adequate? What is the breakdown of costs according to the accepted university accounting system (e.g. faculty personnel, staff personnel, temporary and general assistance personnel, office supplies, travel costs, expendable supplies and equipment, permanent equipment [inventory], benefits, overhead, etc.) What is the one-time cost, and what are the continuing -- including maintenance -- costs? Are the other necessary resources - space, furniture, etc. - available?

As difficult as it is to start a program, it is often true that it is easier to start it than to keep it going (initial interest and enthusiasm fade). A plan which shows not only the sources of funds necessary to start the project, but which also outlines how the long term costs will be covered has an infinitely better chance of being given the chance to prove itself. Since most money comes with strings attached, it is also necessary to demonstrate that the funds are appropriate to the project and will not result in embarrassment when the accountability report is written.

G. Credit

The only question here is who will get the credit if the project succeeds? There is usually more than enough credit to go around, and the more it is spread, the better. James Robinson (1988) quotes former president of Harvard, A. Lawrence Li'l (1938) as saying there is "a general rule that one cannot both do things and get the credit for them." If this is true, and to a large measure it seems so, make sure that the credit is distributed widely but with some reflection of actual contribution. Divided credit may be the most appropriate mechanism; content credit to Ms. X, funding credit to the OID office, supervision credit to Dr. Y, the provision of space and tolerance by the chair and entire department of Z, etc. People most often want to "take" credit if they fear that it will not be given freely. The most successful administrators are lavish in their praise of all the contributions others have made, and usually receive, in turn, the accolades of the other participants. There is no need to blow your own horn if others will blow theirs for you. It's a much nicer sound!

Conclusion

No amount of advice nor good will can ensure the success of any project. I hope, however, that the preceding will be of some use in articulating the design and dimensions of a project, and put it into a framework which will have a strong foundation. If asked rigorously, we often find that the true answers to some of these questions are not the ones we hoped to find. Such introspection and honesty is essential in our task, and we should not be dissuaded if we are uncomfortable with our discoveries. No project need be perfect; it must merely represent an improvement over the circumstances with which we began.

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A Survey of ITA Orientation Programs: Type, Assessment Categories, and Exit Options

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The utilization of teaching assistants to augment instructional personnel is not a new practice. In the past 15-20 years, the ranks of teaching assistants have been expanded by international graduate students whose primary language is not English. As the number of international teaching assistants has increased, so has concern about the ability of these ITAs to meet the classroom needs of undergraduate students in the United States. The concern focuses, not on proficiency in subject matter, but on the mastery of classroom English, and understanding of the cultural patterns permitting effective instructional interaction with undergraduate students. Since 1985, concern about ITA effectiveness has taken a new twist. Increasingly, legislative bodies have focused on the problem, mandating, in a number of ways, universities to address the question of ITA training and certification. Throughout the country, universities are starting new programs and revising those already in place.

Numerous studies describe the problems of ITA/undergraduate interaction (Bailey, 1982), as do studies describing various university programs designed to meet the needs of both the ITAs and the universities (Shaw, 1984). It is the purpose of this paper to present the preliminary results of a survey of universities that offer orientation programs for ITAs. The survey focused on program organization and exit options for those students completing the orientation program. The information from this survey may help to define and answer some of the questions asked by those given responsibility for planning new ITA Programs.

Institutions Surveyed

The thirteen universities surveyed represent those for which information was readily available during the 1989 Institute on Foreign TA Training held at the University of Wyoming. All included were state institutions with programs already in operation. The length of time the program had been in place varied considerably, as did the complexity of the program formats.

Rationale for Item Selection

When planning a new program, many basic questions must be asked. One of the most basic involves the purpose of the program. In the case of ITA programs, it is essential to know whether the program is to serve a certifying or an instructional improvement purpose or some type of combination of the two purposes. Preplanning, particularly with regard to preliminary public relations should differ significantly according to the selected purpose. A related question concerns attendance policy. Will successful completion of the program be mandatory? If so, from whom does the mandate originate? Again, the answer to this question will direct the planning efforts. A related program factor frequently overlooked, but which must be considered as programs become operational, is that of exemption policy. Planners of new programs may also be assisted by the knowledge of the administrative division sponsoring existing programs.

Once these basic questions have been addressed, the planner can turn to logistical questions. When will the program be scheduled? Will there be any preliminary assessments? Will there be an exit evaluation? If so, what type will be selected? What final evaluation categories will be utilized? Significantly related to these questions are those dealing with exit options. What alternatives are available to those who fail the evaluation? Of equal importance, what alternatives are open to those who pass? Will the progress and teaching of those who pass be monitored? If so, who will be responsible for the monitoring?

Seeing how these questions have been answered in institutions with operational programs may provide support for those planners beginning new programs, and for those in the process of program revision.

Results

Program Types. While all of the institutions had programs which were classified as "orientation," the length and scheduling varied considerably. Program length ranged from 8 hours, scheduled over a two-month period, to a semester-long course, offered for two hours of credit. The largest length category was in the 1-3 week range.

While all of the respondents indicated that their programs were responsible for certification of teaching assistants, it is apparent that the category was unclear. The distinction needs to be made between those making certification recommendations and those who are responsible for the actual certification for teaching assistantship eligibility or restriction.

Six of the programs are responsible to the chief academic officer of the institution. One reported being responsible to the International Programs office, and one to the English Language Institute. The survey instrument needs to be refined to include a clearer definition of this category.

Evaluation. The most singular aspect in this category was that no program used the SPEAK or TSE as the sole certification instrument. No school considered TOEFL scores as part of the certifying procedure although most institutions required TOEFL scores of at least 425 for admission. It should be noted that one school exempted students from the program on the basis of high SPEAK or TSE scores and one school allowed exemption on the basis of TOEFL scores alone. Only two other schools specified exemption procedures. In some institutions, TOEFL requirements were specified by the departments and were unknown by the respondent. The most frequently used (six schools) assessment instrument was a teaching simulation combined with a question and answer period. Three institutions utilized oral performance evaluations, in combination with other instruments. Only one school utilized a Pass/Fail final evaluation category, where "Pass" certified the students for any type of teaching assignment and "Fail" prevented the awarding of a teaching assistantship. Eight of the schools use two Pass options and one Fail, where the "qualified pass" allows the ITA restricted classroom lecturing, but does permit the awarding of a teaching assistantship. Two schools use more complicated evaluation categories with up to four Pass and two Fail options.

Exit Options and ITA Monitoring. Most schools provided several exit options, depending on the category of Pass or Fail achieved by the student. The most complex options were available in schools with large English as a Second Language programs. Oral skills courses of various levels of complexity were available, some concentrating on language skills and others on presentation skills. In several schools, successful completion of the orientation program allowed enrollment in the teacher training program. The category, "Exit Options," was ambiguous and renders utilization of the responses difficult. The category needs to be expanded to specify options for those successfully completing the orientation, as well as for those who fail. It is significant to note that only two schools report no planned options following the orientation except repeating the course.

Seven institutions report provisions for some type of formal monitoring procedure. All of those report monitoring by those offering the orientation program, and five also report ITA monitoring by the appropriate academic unit. Two schools report no monitoring procedure, but information was not available from all of the institutions.

Conclusion

While this survey is very limited and incomplete, several conclusions might be noted. There seems to be a marked tendency to offer required programs, with certification for a teaching assistantship as an end result. Few schools offer exemption procedures. Assessment instruments were interactive, with multi-category evaluation categories. The response to "Exit Options" was incomplete, but there was a strong tendency for respondents to indicate the desire for more, rather than less, follow-up. Monitoring programs were not available in many of the institutions, but those reporting follow-up programs shared, for the most part, responsibility with academic units.

The Ideal FTA Environment: Notes Based on One Trainer's Experience

Mike Lyons, Wayne State University

A. Underlying Beliefs

1. The FTAs are a positive and important part of campus life both in terms of teaching and the internationalization of the campus and surrounding community.
2. FTAs should be given extra support to allow them to succeed in their teaching roles.
3. FTAs must possess an adequate command of English before being allowed to perform teaching related duties.
4. The various colleges and departments will be highly involved in any and all phases of the overall FTA program to include the orientation, assessment, pre-service training and in-service training components.
5. Some type of selection/screening process must exist to allow only suitable candidates to become FTAs (think about the harm one really unsuitable FTA can do to the whole FTA image).
6. Departments must not be allowed to pressure to have unsuitable FTAs assume teaching duties because of inadequate departmental logistics or resources.

B. Realities Present Outside the Ideal FTA Program

1. An undergraduate population which
   a. has been sensitized to the need for and benefits of having FTAs on campus and
   b. has been given and uses strategies for dealing with any FTA related problems which they may encounter.
2. A university administration which
   a. views FTAs on campus as a positive thing and not merely as a holding operation until more American TAs (ATAs) are found,
   b. makes funds available to run a fully developed FTA program to include orientation, assessment, and pre-service and in-service training where necessary,
   c. establishes university-wide policies to foster a positive FTA experience, both for the FTAs and the undergraduates, and

    d. views the people who run FTA programs as valuable assets and demonstrates this in terms of job security and remuneration.
3. College deans and departmental chairs who also follow all of the items in #2 above.
4. Local, state, and national governments which have a positive attitude to the whole notion of FTAs on American campuses and show this attitude by passing appropriate and vetoing inappropriate legislation.
5. An FTA population which has
    a. an undiminished view of their own worth to the university and their departments both as teachers and as human beings,
    b. more than just adequate language skills to function effectively in academic settings,
    c. a knowledge of and sympathy for any cultural practices, both within the university and the classroom in order to be effective teachers,
    d. the necessary pedagogical skills to ensure a rewarding and successful learning experience for their students, and
    e. sympathetic and knowledgeable people they can go to when problems arise.

C. Realities Present Inside the Ideal FTA Program

1. The overall FTA program will
    a. have at least 4 components: orientation programs, assessment programs, pre-service training programs, and in-service support programs,
    b. be run by people who believe in the positive value of having FTAs in terms of teaching and intercultural understanding, and
    c. receive sufficient funding to carry out a multi-faceted FTA program.
2. The orientation program will
    a. be centralized but also decentralized wherever appropriate,
    b. not be required but will be highly desired by the FTAs,
    c. sensitize the FTAs to the culture of the university and the specific college and department of the FTAs,
    d. provide an opportunity for the FTAs to recognize and improve language deficiencies which may prevent successful teaching,

e. provide pre-assessment training in order to maximize the chance of success on the assessment exam,
f. sensitize the FTA to the most important and immediate cultural differences outside the university setting which might cause the FTA to be less effective inside the university setting,
g. foster a feeling of equality between the FTAs and the ATAs,
h. reaffirm, if necessary, the value of the university, the department, and the community,
i. start to break down any barriers (linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, etc.) that might exist among the TAs and between the FTAs and the ATAs,
j. link each FTA with an American who will then become a resource for the FTA, and
k. involve the colleges and departments in the planning and implementation of the program.

3. The assessment program will
a. use an instrument(s) which asks potential FTAs to demonstrate job-related skills,
b. provide diagnostic feedback for both those who pass and those who fail the assessment,
c. have trained people administer the assessment,
d. provide for re-testing after a reasonable length of time,
e. involve the departments in every phase of the assessment to include design, selection, administration, and evaluation of the assessment instrument,
f. provide departments with more than just pass/fail information, and
g. require/suggest courses of action for those who fail the evaluation.

4. The training (pre-teaching) program will
a. involve the departments at every phase to include planning, teaching, and evaluation,
b. be of sufficient length and number of hours to allow for realistic goals to be attained,
c. happen before any teaching duties are allowed,
d. have clear, realistic and relevant goals,
e. not be for those whose English is not

sufficiently high enough to benefit from the specific content of the training,

f. have multiple opportunities for assessing progress, not just a final "performance,"

g. have class sizes small enough to maximize teacher/student contact,

h. include components on classroom culture, pedagogical skills, intercultural communication skills, and language enrichment,

i. allow for individualization of instruction/performance as much as possible,

j. emphasize the candidates' positive aspects rather than focusing on the deficiencies,

k. be taught by people who have been given sufficient time and support to do the job well, and

l. not require that the potential FTA lose his/her identity as an individual teacher (not require that they all come to fit the same "correct" mold).

Designing and Implementing an FTA Orientation

Nancy Pfinstag, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Introduction and Background

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (student population 13000+) offers 60 undergraduate and 40 master's degree options. For the 1989-90 academic year, the Graduate School awarded 26 (out of 119) assistantships to non-native speaking graduate students in the departments of Business Administration, Chemistry, Education, Computer Science, Engineering (Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical), Geography, and Mathematics. The responsibilities attached to these assistantships varied--classroom teaching, lab teaching, grading, research--with most international graduate assistants involved in grading and/or research. A small number, however, were expected to teach, in classrooms and in labs, without an introduction to the University or its students, without training in U.S. classroom procedures, or without language assessment.

In the spring of 1988, the University's intensive English program was asked by the International Student Study Committee, a Chancellor-appointed committee charged with overseeing the needs and concerns of international students, to begin studying the needs of foreign teaching assistants and to make recommendations based on the findings. After conducting surveys of FTAs, department chairs, and graduate advisors, ELTI recommended that the University begin a program to orient FTAs to the University and its students and to assess the oral proficiency of the FTAs. Our first step was to bring Dr. Pat Byrd, Georgia State University, to campus as a NAFSA consultant to verify our findings and to make specific recommendations for UNC Charlotte. One of her recommendations was that I, as director of the University's intensive English program, attend the Wyoming/NAFSA Institute on Foreign TA Training. In 1988, I attended the Institute's Basic Workshop to learn about FTA programs in general and how they are planned and implemented at other institutions, and in 1989, I attended the Institute's Advanced Workshop to plan an FTA orientation with a basic language assessment component for UNC Charlotte.

Working Questions

My first project at the Institute's Advanced Workshop was to prepare a list of working questions in order to identify the FTA needs and concerns on my campus. These questions (Table One) helped me focus on the specific areas I would need to address in planning an orientation and language assessment for UNC Charlotte FTAs. As can be seen from the list, the questions range from the philosophical to the practical. As those of us who work in universities know, the best programs can end up in the circular file if everyday details are overlooked.

Table One
Working Questions

1. Why does UNC Charlotte need an FTA orientation?
2. When should UNC Charlotte have an orientation?
3. Where should the orientation be held?
4. How long should the individual sessions be?
5. Who should conduct the sessions?
6. What aspects/issues need to be covered in the orientation?
7. How will these aspects/issues be decided?
8. Who will decide on these aspects/issues?
9. Who will pay for the orientation?
10. Who from the administration/faculty will be invited to the orientation?
11. Who from the administration/faculty will be asked to speak at orientation?
12. How will new FTAs get the information about the orientation?
13. Who will get the information to the FTAs?
14. Who has the power to make new FTAs come to an orientation?
15. How will the FTAs' oral/aural proficiency in English be assessed?
16. Who will assess the FTAs' oral/aural proficiency?
17. Who will care about the FTAs' oral/aural proficiency?
18. How will the orientation be evaluated?
19. Should there be a follow-up to the orientation later in the semester?
20. What other questions need to be asked?

Proposed Schedule for a Two-Day FTA Orientation/Assessment with Follow-up Semester-Long Workshop

Working through the questions with Pat Byrd, my project adviser at the Advanced Workshop, enabled me to put together a proposed schedule for an FTA orientation with a basic language assessment component that I felt my staff and I could reasonably and realistically program for the fall semester.

Day 1: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Understanding UNC Charlotte

Guests: UNC Charlotte Chancellor
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
College Deans
Department Chairs
Graduate Advisers
panel of UNCC Undergraduates

Sessions: UNCC Regulations and Policy

Resources: Learning Center, Media Center, Counseling Center, Writing Resources Center, Campus Security Video of UNC Charlotte

Extracurricular Activities: Venture Program, sports, social clubs
TA Responsibilities
Rights of Students
Profile of UNC Charlotte Undergraduate
Panel of UNC Charlotte Undergraduates for Questions/Answers

Day 1: 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. First Day Information

Guests: Department Chairs
Graduate Advisers
Experienced TAs

Sessions: Getting to Know the Students
First Day "Housekeeping Duties" in Class
Small Group Roleplay: Introducing Yourself to a Class
Learning Styles of Students
Managing Class Interaction and Dynamics
Using Materials/Equipment/Blackboard in Class

Discussion: What are FTAs' Perceptions of U.S. Students?
What are U.S. Students' Perceptions of FTAs?

Day 2: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon   Communications in the Classroom

Guests: Graduate Advisers
Experienced TAs

Sessions: Appropriate Speaking Styles for the Classroom
Speech Characteristics: Fluency, Intonation, Accent, Pronunciation

Roleplay: Presenting Key Vocabulary to Students
Listening and Responding Skills
Non-verbal Language: Eye Contact, Gestures, Physical Movement
Pop Quiz on Classroom/University Jargon

Day 2 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Guests: Graduate Advisors
Sessions: Small Group Video-taped Skits
Small Group Viewing and Analysis of Tape with ESL Consultants

Proposed Semester-Long Workshop

Time: One 2-hour Evening Session per Week

Format: Hour 1: Practice for Teaching
Hour 2: English for the Classroom

Textbook: *The Foreign Teaching Assistant's Manual*
Byrd, Constantinides, Pennington

Materials: Video Camera, Tapes

Discussion

Designing and implementing an FTA orientation requires the planners to know the politics of their campus, to know the needs of their FTAs, and to know their money sources and supporters. Addressing the working questions above and developing an FTA orientation program based on the answers to the questions allowed me, when I returned to my institution, to approach key University administrators and college deans with a workable and affordable plan.

Epilogue

In the fall of 1989, UNC Charlotte held its first FTA orientation with a basic language assessment component. Because of the shortness of time--only four weeks to prepare before the start of classes--the orientation was reduced to one day. The sessions which had to be omitted were placed in the semester-long workshop, which was also approved. Support from the college deans and department chairs for language assessment was strong, even though the teaching assignments for the semester had already been scheduled. Immediate and follow-up feedback from the FTAs indicate that they both enjoyed and benefitted from the orientation. Attendance at the workshop, which is not mandatory, has been steady.

Currently, the Graduate School and the English Language Training Institute are formulating plans for the fall of 1990...and beyond.

A Program to Improve Student Attitudes Toward Foreign Teaching Assistants

Kim E. Gilmore, University of Idaho

There has been a great outcry against the use of foreign students as teaching assistants on campuses across the nation. Undergraduate students state that they are unable to learn from foreign instructors because instructors and students can't understand one another. Parents feel that the tuition they have paid is being wasted because their children are not being taught properly. Legislators threaten to cut funding to institutions unless "the problem is solved," and the press often aggravate the situation by exaggerating its severity or publishing inaccurate reports.

The university-wide training program for foreign teaching assistants at the University of Idaho was initiated in Fall 1988 in response to such an outcry. This program addresses communication skills; American pronunciation (with emphasis on stress and rhythm); American university culture; and teaching skills and strategies. The program is being evaluated and modified to increase its effectiveness, and this process will, not doubt, continue for several years.

As Coordinator of Freshman Programs in the chemistry department, I often handle questions, problems, and complaints from students concerning their laboratory classes. When the problem involves a foreign teaching assistant, I only see the students when their level of anger and frustration exceeds their natural reluctance to approach a faculty member about another instructor. At this point, students often express a great deal of hostility toward a particular teaching assistant, and bitterness about the system that employs them. As a course instructor, I also direct a small group of recitation (small-group review session) instructors, some of whom are foreign. While the nature of the activity differs in lab and recitation, the essence of the complaints remains the same: "I can't understand him/her; I want a different (English-speaking) TA."

For this reason, it seems that an effective training program is only part of the solution. Something must be done to change the attitude of the students toward foreign teaching assistants as well. Students seem to feel that they are being robbed of their opportunity for a quality education if their classes are taught by foreign graduate students. They seem to be unaware of the opportunity to expand their understanding of the world beyond their previous experience. They are also largely unaware of the quality of these graduate students--foreign graduate students often have knowledge of the subject matter at least equal to that of their American counterparts (and sometimes much better). If American undergraduates were presented with this information in a positive way, they might be more receptive to the idea of being taught by foreign students.

The purpose of this project is to gather information about the materials available for use in the student orientation program and introductory courses and to develop a plan for using these materials at the University of Idaho.

The brochure developed by Diane vom Saal at University of Missouri-Columbia could be modified to be more applicable to our population. The ideas presented and the basic approach are very good. However, her institution has a more well-defined program, in terms both of assessment/screening and intervention/training. We cannot make the same strong statements about the quality of training that our TAs receive, nor about their enthusiasm and commitment to teaching. A modified brochure could be distributed to freshmen on the first day of class, along with syllabi and related materials, in the courses which generally employ teaching assistants, whether foreign or American. The chief elements of such a brochure follow:

Teaching assistants: Who they are and what they do
Training for TAs: A brief description
Positive aspects of having student instructors
Effective communication with TAs in general
Special strategies helpful with FTAs
Student rights in the classroom
Appropriate ways to deal with conflict

The videotape developed by Rosslyn Smith at Texas Tech University is also very good. It does not present the same information as the brochure but focuses on strategies that students can use to improve the quality of communication with their TAs and uses interviews with administrators and foreign TAs to present additional views of this issue. It is 24 minutes long and has both pre- and post-viewing questions around which to conduct discussions. This videotape might work very well in University 101, an experimental semester-long freshman orientation course being introduced at the University of Idaho during the Fall term 1989. There might be difficulties trying to use the video and encourage lively discussions in large lecture settings, which are common to many introductory courses. Foreign TAs are often in charge of the recitation sessions, which are smaller meetings for these classes, and it seems less likely that open discussions of students' attitudes of this issue would take place under these circumstances.

Diane vom Saal also sends a letter to parents discussing this issue. If parents could be shown the benefits of having foreign TAs and reassured about the quality of training that their children receive, it seems that incoming students might begin with a more receptive attitude. Careful thought about the wording and approach of this letter is necessary to avoid antagonizing already skeptical parents (and taxpayers!).

There are several other resources that will bear further investigation. Several NAFSA publications explore the areas of cross-cultural communication. While the majority of these deal chiefly with the methods of acculturating foreign visitors to our institutions and way of life, many of the ideas presented can be adapted to the process of increasing American appreciation of other cultures, as can specific exercises available for the same purpose.

Assessment for International Teaching Assistant Institute

Lavon Gappa, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Introduction

In August of 1988, the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), the English as a Second Language Department (ESL), and the International Educational Services at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted a three-week International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Institute to prepare international graduate students for their roles as teaching assistants. The purpose of the Institute was threefold: (1) to improve fluency in the English language; (2) to increase awareness of American educational practices and American culture; and (3) to improve participants' teaching and communication skills. Toward these goals, the Institute instructors employed a variety of methodologies, including regular videotaping of participants in micro-teaching simulations, small group discussions, language laboratory sessions, and classroom instruction.

The ITA Institute was attended by twenty-eight participants from nine countries, representing ten disciplines. Fifteen of the participants were recommended for consideration for teaching assignments following a final presentation and evaluation by a group including the Institute staff, an ESL evaluator, faculty members from the respective departments and some undergraduate students.

During the fall and spring semesters 1988-89, a follow-up program was conducted by the Teaching and Learning Center's TA Coordinator. The purpose of the follow-up activities was to assess the effectiveness of the Institute's training in three areas: language, intercultural skills and teaching skills. It is hoped that the data collected during the follow-up survey will be helpful in instructional decisions and curriculum choices for future ITA programs. The follow-up program consisted of three activities: (1) an ITA Survey, (2) classroom observation by the TA coordinator, and (3) a Student Survey.

Procedures

<u>ITA Survey</u>. The ITA Survey was sent to the twenty-eight participants who completed the Institute. Information was collected as to the ITAs' current teaching or research assignments and the

responsibilities these assignments entailed. The survey also asked if the ITAs intended to enroll at a future time for coursework in the areas of language, intercultural skills, or teaching skills. Information was also collected on the reasons the respondents attended the Institute, the ways the Institute had prepared them for their teaching assignments, and the areas in which they needed better preparation.

Classroom Observation of ITAs. The Teaching and Learning Center's TA Coordinator observed the ITAs who had classroom teaching responsibilities (ten during the fall semester and two during the spring semester.) Following the observation, the ITAs met with the TA Coordinator. The ITA's teaching skills and intercultural skills were noted and areas needing attention were identified with alternative strategies suggested. For three of the ITAs, a second observation was made to monitor improvement in instructional skills.

ITA Student Survey. After observing and informally interviewing students in three ITA taught classes, a survey was designed to provide a more tangible assessment of the ITAs' skills. The survey was conducted in nine ITA classes with a sample of one hundred thirty-four students.

Results

ITA Survey. Of the twenty-eight participants surveyed, fifteen responded. Eleven of the respondents indicated they had fall semester 1988 teaching assignments: four ITAs had total classroom responsibilities, five ITAs were conducting laboratories, one respondent was leading a recitation section, and one ITA had been assigned grading responsibilities. Two of the respondents had been assigned Research Assistantships for the fall semester, 1988 and Teaching Assistantships for the spring semester, 1989. The remaining two respondents had not been recommended for teaching assignments by the Institute and had been assigned Research Assistantships.

In response to the question, "Why did you take the Institute?", seven of the respondents indicated it was a departmental requirement. Other responses included:

"I want to be a qualified TA."
"To improve spoken English."
"I want to pass the panel."
"So I can better understand American teaching."
"To improve communication skills in the classroom."

"To get TA status."
"Because I could not pass the TSE."

Table 1 summaries the ITAs' fall semester 1988 activities and intentions to pursue coursework in the areas of language, intercultural skills, and teaching skills. The ITAs were generally negative about doing additional coursework in language and intercultural skills. During the fall semester, three of the fifteen respondents were enrolled in ESL classes and only one respondent intended to enroll in future language work. Nine respondents replied negatively to "additional instruction in the area of intercultural communication."

"Additional instruction in the area of teaching" (66.7%) and "participation in monthly noon gathering in which pertinent TA topics would be discussed" (60%). However, only one respondent intended to enroll in a college teaching seminar and six respondents would participate in a follow-up seminar.

During the fall semester, 1988, seven of the ITAs indicated they were receiving teaching instruction from their departments.

The participants were asked, "What ways did the Institute best prepare you for your teaching assignment?" The ITA responses varied:

"Taught me about TA roles and how to prepare for teaching."
"Communication with the students/teaching methods."
"Teaching methods, language practice."
"Equality."
"By gaining self-confident when standing in front of the class."
"All the way."

When asked in what areas they could have received better preparation, the ITAs responded:

"Language lab and cultural learning."
"More talking."
"Confidence."
"Pronunciation."

Classroom Observations and Feedback. In varying degrees, all of the ITAs demonstrated the following strengths in their classrooms, laboratories, and recitation sections:

*Enthusiasm about the subject and teaching
*Willingness to work with students individually

TABLE 1

COMBINED RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF
INSTITUTE ITA'S RESPONSES RELATING TO FALL SEMESTER 1988 ACTIVITIES AND
FUTURE INTENTIONS IN LANGUAGE, INTERCULTURAL AND TEACHING COURSEWORK

Item	Yes Response No.	Yes Response Percent	No Response No.	No Response Percent	Omits	Total Number
1. Would like additional intercultural instruction.	6	40.0	9	60.0	0	15
2. Would like additional teaching instruction.	10	66.7	5	33.3	0	15
3. Presently taking ESL coursework.	3	20.0	12	80.0	0	15
4. Plan on taking ESL course in future.	1	11.1	8	88.9	6	15
5. Attended GTA workshop, August 24-25, 1988.	1	7.7	12	92.3	2	15
6. If offered, would repeat ITA Institute.	4	28.6	10	71.4	1	15
7. Intend to enroll in C&I 936, Seminar in College Teaching.	1	7.7	12	92.3	2	15
8. Presently receiving teaching instruction from department.	7	46.7	8	53.3	0	15
9. Would participate in follow-up seminar.	6	40.0	9	60.0	0	15
10. Would participate in monthly noon gathering.	9	60.0	6	40.0	0	15
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES:	48		91		11	150
PERCENT AVERAGE OF TOTAL:		32.0		60.7	7.3	100.0

during class and outside of class
*Skillful chalkboard use
*Organization in presenting material

In informal interviews with the ITAs' students, "patient," "enthusiastic," "well prepared," and "interested in us" were repeatedly used by students to describe their instructors.

The following weaknesses were also observed by the TA Coordinator:

*A failure to understand questions asked by students and to respond appropriately
*An inability to explain ideas clearly and use relevant examples
*A tendency to rely too heavily on lecture with little interaction with students
*An inability to provide clear, succinct instructions in class and in the laboratory

Although all the ITAs exhibited these weaknesses to some degree, they were particularly evident in three ITA classes. In these classes, the students visibly displayed a wide variety of negative behaviors, including strong indications of boredom, restlessness, and frustration. During information interviews, students from these sections commented:

"He doesn't understand questions very well, so he doesn't give relevant answers."
"... he should explain things slower."
"It takes time to adjust to the accent."
"It's harder to understand them and if you don't you lost interest."
"This is an important class and I'm not doing well."

Following the observations, the TA Coordinator met with the ITAs to discuss problems they were having and to suggest alternative strategies. A second observation was made of three ITAs identified as consistently weak in language, intercultural skills, or teaching skills to monitor their improvements.

One of the ITAs was experiencing severe language and intercultural communication problems both in recitation and in the laboratory. After recommending strategies to improve instruction (more boardwork, handouts, structure announced at the beginning of class/lab), the TA Coordinator consulted with the departmental supervisor concerning the problem. The supervisor suggested having the ITA observe other laboratories with the TA Coordinator. This was done.

The department also monitored the ITA's recitation classes and laboratory. In addition, the TA Coordinator continued observation of the ITA's recitation class and laboratory and consulted with the ITA to suggest additional strategies to compensate for the language and communication barriers.

ITA Student Survey. A student survey was administered which provided students in ITA classes an opportunity to express their feelings about their ITA's skills in the areas of language, teaching, and intercultural skills. The survey was conducted in nine ITA classes with a sample of 104 students. Table 2 summaries the students' ratings of the combined ITAs' teaching and communication skills. Table 3 summarizes students' ratings of individual ITA's skills in the areas of teaching and communication skills. The students were asked to respond on a five point Likert scale [A = Very High, B = Above Average, C = Average, D = Below Average, and E = Very Low] to fourteen positively stated items.

Table 2 indicates that when scores of all ITAs were combined, 80.0 percent of students' rating of the ITAs' teaching and intercultural skills were average or above. The most positive ratings were for accessibility to students (97.0% average or above), enthusiasm about the subject (96.3% average or above), command of the subject (94.8% average or above), writes on the chalkboard legibly (92.4% average or above), being well-prepared (87.9% average or above), and compensates for limitations in English with the chalkboard and examples (83.4% average or above). On these six items over half of the students rated the ITAs above average to very high.

Areas of possible improvement include the ITAs' ability to understand questions asked or statements made in class by students (40.6% rated as below average), ability to grasp questions quickly (34.6% rated as below average), encouraging class discussion (28.7% rated as below average), and explaining ideas clearly (25.7% rated as below average). Students' ratings of ITAs' intercultural and teaching skills were consistent with the ITAs' strengths and weaknesses noted in classroom observations and identified by students during informal interviews.

In Table 3, students' ratings of individual ITA's teaching and intercultural skills were average or above for all fourteen skills for five ITAs. ITA #4 was average or above in thirteen skills. Seven ITAs did not receive ratings below average in any of the fourteen skills. Two ITAs had ratings of below average in nine skills.

In Table 4, students' ratings of the ITAs'

TABLE 2

COMBINED RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF
STUDENTS' RATINGS OF INSTITUTE ITA'S ON TEACHING AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS
IN FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS 1988-1989

Item	Very High		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Very Low		Omits	Total Number
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
1. Has command of subject.	48	36.1	57	42.9	21	15.8	4	3.0	3	2.3	1	134
2. Able to relate subject to other fields.	8	6.2	28	21.7	60	46.5	24	18.6	9	7.0	5	134
3. Is well prepared.	44	33.3	41	31.1	31	23.5	15	11.4	1	0.8	2	134
4. Understand questions/statements.	12	9.0	31	23.3	47	35.3	27	20.3	16	20.3	1	134
5. Explains ideas clearly.	21	15.9	41	31.1	36	27.3	23	17.4	11	8.3	2	134
6. Enthusiastic about subject.	53	40.2	54	40.9	20	15.2	4	3.0	1	0.8	2	134
7. Stimulates interest in course.	15	11.4	37	28.0	52	39.4	20	15.2	8	6.1	2	134
8. Encourages class discussion.	19	14.7	29	22.5	44	34.1	27	20.9	10	7.8	5	134
9. Grasps questions quickly.	10	7.5	33	24.8	44	33.1	29	21.8	17	12.8	1	134
10. Answers questions fully.	26	19.7	31	23.5	44	33.3	20	15.2	11	8.3	2	134
11. Accessible to students.	78	59.1	33	25.0	17	12.9	4	3.0	0	0.0	2	134
12. Compensates for English.	45	33.8	43	32.3	23	17.3	18	13.5	4	3.0	1	134
13. Writes on chalkboard legibly.	61	46.2	33	25.0	28	21.2	9	6.8	1	0.8	2	134
14. Easily understood one-on-one.	25	19.7	40	31.5	37	29.1	20	15.7	5	3.9	7	134
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES:	465		531		504		244		97		35	1876
PERCENT AVERAGE OF TOTAL:		24.8		28.3		26.9		13.0		5.2	1.9	100.0

TABLE 3

MEAN RESPONSES OF STUDENTS' RATINGS OF INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTE ITAs ON TEACHING AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS IN FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS 1988-1989

Item	ITA #1	ITA #2	ITA #3	ITA #4	ITA #5	ITA #6	ITA #7	ITA #8	ITA #9
1. Has command of subject.	4.56	4.56	4.00	4.73	3.46	4.67	4.29	4.21	3.29
2. Able to relate subject to other fields.	4.00	3.11	3.42	3.07	2.63	3.50	3.10	3.00	2.30
3. Is well prepared.	4.13	4.56	4.29	4.53	3.13	4.83	4.05	4.07	2.70
4. Understands students questions and statements.	4.13	3.56	3.29	3.13	2.38	4.50	2.86	3.50	1.62
5. Explains ideas clearly.	4.25	3.78	3.86	3.60	2.50	4.83	3.25	3.79	2.10
6. Enthusiastic about subject.	4.88	4.67	5.00	4.27	3.58	4.33	4.24	4.21	3.55
7. Stimulates interest in class.	4.56	3.11	4.29	3.07	2.46	3.83	3.29	3.64	2.40
8. Encourages class discussion.	4.63	3.22	4.29	2.83	2.71	3.50	3.52	3.25	3.10
9. Grasps questions quickly.	4.06	3.44	3.29	3.47	2.33	3.57	2.76	3.07	1.71
10. Answers questions fully.	4.50	3.89	3.57	3.71	2.58	4.67	2.95	3.64	2.38
11. Accessible to students.	5.00	4.44	4.86	4.50	3.71	4.83	4.71	4.57	3.95
12. Compensates for English.	4.50	4.33	4.43	4.40	3.00	4.67	3.81	3.93	3.00
13. Writes on chalkboard legibly.	4.63	4.56	4.57	4.27	3.00	4.50	4.29	3.79	4.35
14. Easily understood one-on-one.	4.69	3.56	4.43	3.23	2.65	4.75	3.85	3.57	2.57

RESPONSE KEY:
5.0 = Very High
4.0 = Above Average
3.0 = Average
2.0 = Below Average
1.0 = Very Low

language skills are summarized. Students were asked to respond on a five point Likert scale [A = Does not interfere with understanding; B = Interferes slightly with understanding; C = Interferes somewhat with understanding; D = Interferes considerably with understanding; and E = Interferes completely with understanding].

Over a fourth of the students indicated the ITAs' language did not interfere with understanding. One-half of the students indicated that the ITAs' language interfered "slightly" and "somewhat" with understanding. Only 14.3 percent of the students indicated the language of the ITA interfered "considerably" to "completely" with understanding.

The students' ratings identified language areas which interfered "considerably" to "completely" with understanding: the ITA's ability to communicate in English was identified by 17.4 percent of the students, followed by pronunciation (16.6%), grammar (13.5%), and vocabulary in the subject (10.5%).

Students gave positive language ratings to six ITAs in Table 5. ITAs #1, #3, and #6 had language skills which did not interfere with understanding while the language skills of ITAs #2, #4, and #8 interfered "slightly" with understanding.

Less positive ratings were give to ITAs #5 and #7, who the students identified as having language skills which interfered "somewhat" with understanding. The language skills of ITA #9 were given a negative rating by students who judged the ITA's English as interfering "considerably" with understanding.

In Table 6, the ITA Institute's Pre-Test of Spoken English scores are compared with the ITA Student Survey ratings. Five ITAs with pretest Spoken English scores of 200 or above were given high language ratings by students with the exception of ITA #5. Students' ratings for teaching and communication skills were not relatively high for ITAs #2, #5, and #8, who had high pretest language scores and high student ratings in language skills. There is a notable inconsistency between ITA #5's pretest score of 260 and students rating (2.87) for teaching and intercultural skills. Three ITAs had pretest Spoken English scores below 200. Student ratings are positive for the language, teaching, and intercultural skills of ITAs #1 and #4. ITA #9 was rated negatively for all three areas.

In Table 7, students were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to three questions: whether they had previous experience listening to someone with a foreign accent, whether they could learn the subject taught by an ITA as well as taught by a U.S. instructor, and would they recommend the ITA's course to a friend. Nearly eighty

TABLE 4

COMBINED RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF
STUDENTS' RATINGS OF INSTITUTE ITAs ON LANGUAGE SKILLS
IN FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS 1988-1989

Item	A Response		B Response		C Response		D Response		E Response		Omits	Total Number
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
15. Pronunciation of English.	31	23.3	49	36.8	31	23.3	15	11.3	7	5.3	1	134
16. Instructor's English grammar.	40	30.1	43	32.3	32	24.1	14	10.5	4	3.0	1	134
17. English vocabulary/subject.	49	36.8	42	31.6	28	21.1	10	7.5	4	3.0	1	134
18. Ability to communicate in English.	33	25.0	42	31.8	34	25.8	17	12.9	6	4.5	2	134
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES:	153		176		125		56		21		5	536
PERCENT AVERAGE OF TOTAL:		28.5		32.8		23.3		10.4		3.9	0.9	100.0

RESPONSE KEY:
A = Does not interfere with understanding.
B = Interferes slightly with understanding.
C = Interferes somewhat with understanding.
D = Interferes considerably with understanding.
E = Interferes completely with understanding.

TABLE 5

MEAN RATINGS OF STUDENTS' RATINGS OF INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTE ITAs
ON LANGUAGE SKILLS
IN FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS 1988-1989

Item	ITA #1	ITA #2	ITA #3	ITA #4	ITA #5	ITA #6	ITA #7	ITA #8	ITA #9
15. Pronunciation of English.	4.56	3.78	4.43	3.87	3.25	4.83	3.57	3.79	2.38
16. Instructor's English grammar.	4.63	4.11	4.29	4.20	3.17	5.00	3.57	4.07	2.62
17. English vocabulary/subject.	4.75	4.78	4.14	4.47	3.63	4.83	3.62	4.14	2.67
18. Ability to communicate in English.	4.69	4.33	4.14	3.67	3.09	4.83	3.67	3.93	2.14

RESPONSE KEY:
5.0 = Does not interfere with understanding.
4.0 = Interferes slightly with understanding.
3.0 = Interferes somewhat with understanding.
2.0 = Interferes considerably with understanding.
1.0 = Interferes completely with understanding.

TABLE 6

COMPARISON OF ITA INSTITUTE PRE-TEST SPOKEN ENGLISH SCORES AND STUDENT SURVEY RATINGS

ITA #	ITA Institute Pre-Test Spoken English	Teaching/Intercultural Skills Rating Average*	Language Skills Rating Average**
1	190	4.47	4.66
2	220	3.91	4.25
3	200	4.11	4.00
4	190	3.77	4.05
5	260	2.87	3.29
6	200	4.36	4.87
7	***	3.64	3.61
8	220	3.73	3.98
9	150	2.79	2.45

* RESPONSE KEY:
5.0 = Very High
4.0 = Above Average
3.0 = Average
2.0 = Below Average
1.0 = Very Low

** RESPONSE KEY:
5.0 = Does not interfere with understanding
4.0 = Interferes slightly with understanding
3.0 = Interferes somewhat with understanding
2.0 = Interferes considerably with understanding
1.0 = Interferes completely with understanding

*** Enrolled late for Institute.

-five percent of the students indicated they had had previous experience listening to a foreign accent (with other ITAs or foreign students). Sixty-nine percent of the students believed it was possible to learn the subject taught by an ITA as well as a U.S. instructor. Nearly sixty-three percent of the students would recommend the ITA's class to a friend.

In Table 8, students in each ITA class were asked whether they had experience listening to a foreign accent, if they could learn the subject taught by an ITA, and would they recommend the course to a friend. With the exception of ITA #3, a high percent (89.6%) of the students in each ITA class had had experience listening to a foreign accent. One half of the students (50.0%) in ITA #5's class and over one half (55.0%) of the students in ITA #9's classes indicated they cannot learn the subject taught by an ITA as well as from a U.S. instructor. Students would not recommend ITA #5's (72.9%) or ITA #9's (90.0%) course to a friend.

In the Student Survey, students were asked "What do you think is the greatest asset of this instructor?" The responses varied:

> "He is always willing to help at any time."
> "She is friendly and helpful and, to frankly put it, she is one heck of a teacher."
> "Very concerned how students are doing."
> "I liked his opening; I will learn from you and you will learn from me."

Students were asked to respond on a four-point Likert scale [A = Great deal, B = Average, C = Very little, D = Not at all] to one item: whether they had learned a lot from the ITA. Tables 9 and 10 summarize the student's own assessment of learning. Over three-fourths of the students (76.8%) reported they had learned an average amount to a great deal in ITA courses, while a fourth (23.2%) of the students assess their learning as very little or not at all. In Table 10, students indicated they learned an average or above amount in seven ITA classes. The exception was ITA #5's class (very little to average amount) and ITA #9's class (very little to average amount).

Problems Identified

The classroom observations, Student Survey ratings, and informal conversations with the ITAs' students identified problems in the areas of:

I. Teaching and Intercultural Skills
   A. Ability to relate subject to other fields

TABLE 7

COMBINED RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF STUDENT'S SELF-REPORTED EXPERIENCES LISTENING TO SOMEONE WITH A FOREIGN ACCENT OF THOSE ENROLLED IN INSTITUTE ITA'S CLASSES IN FALL AND SPRING 1988-1989

Item	Yes Response No.	Yes Response Percent	No Response No.	No Response Percent	Omits	Total Number
19. Previous experience listening to a foreign accent.	112	84.8	20	15.2	2	134
20. Learn subject taught by ITA as well as by U.S. instructor.	85	69.1	38	30.9	11	134
22. Recommend course to friend taught by this instructor.	81	62.8	48	37.2	5	134
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES:	278		106		18	402
PERCENT AVERAGE OF TOTAL:		69.2		26.3	4.5	100.0

TABLE 8

SUMMARY OF THE STUDENT'S SELF-REPORTED EXPERIENCES LISTENING TO SOMEONE WITH A FOREIGN ACCENT OF THOSE ENROLLED IN INSTITUTE ITA'S CLASSES IN FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS 1988-1989

Item	ITA #1	ITA #2	ITA #3	ITA #4	ITA #5	ITA #6	ITA #7	ITA #8	ITA #9	Total Responses
19. Previous experience listening to a foreign accent.										
Total Number of Yes Responses	13	8	3	11	23	4	20	12	18	112
Percentage of Yes Responses	81.3	100.0	42.9	73.3	95.8	66.7	95.2	85.7	85.7	89.6
										132
Total Number of No Responses	3	0	4	4	1	2	1	2	3	20
Percentage of No Responses	18.7	0.0	57.1	26.7	4.2	33.3	4.8	14.3	14.3	10.4
20. Learn subject taught by ITA as well as by U.S. instructor.										
Total Number of Yes Responses	15	6	7	10	11	5	12	10	9	85
Percentage of Yes Responses	100.0	66.7	100.0	76.9	50.0	100.0	63.2	76.9	45.0	69.1
										123
Total Number of No Responses	0	3	0	3	11	0	7	3	11	38
Percentage of No Responses	0.0	33.3	0.0	23.1	50.0	0.0	36.8	23.1	55.0	30.9
22. Recommend course to friend taught by this instructor.										
Total Number of Yes Responses	14	8	6	11	6	6	15	13	2	81
Percentage of Yes Responses	87.5	100.0	85.7	73.3	27.3	100.0	71.4	92.9	10.0	62.8
										129
Total Number of No Responses	2	0	1	4	16	0	6	1	18	48
Percentage of No Responses	12.5	0.0	14.3	26.7	72.7	0.0	28.6	7.1	90.0	37.2
Total Number of Yes Responses	42	22	16	32	40	15	47	35	29	338
Percentage of Yes Responses	89.4	88.0	76.2	74.4	58.8	88.2	77.0	85.4	47.5	76.1
										384
Total Number of No Responses	5	3	5	11	28	2	14	6	32	106
Percentage of No Responses	10.6	12.0	23.8	25.6	41.2	11.8	23.0	14.6	52.5	23.9

TABLE 9

COMBINED RAW NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF
STUDENT'S ASSESSMENTS OF OWN LEARNING IN CLASSES TAUGHT BY INSTITUTE ITAs
IN FALL AND SPRING 1988-1989

Item	Great Deal		Average		Very Little		Not At All		Omits	Total Number
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
23. Learned a lot from this instructor.	33	26.4	63	50.4	21	16.8	8	6.4	9	134

B. Explaining ideas clearly
C. Understanding student questions and statements
D. Encouraging class discussions
E. Ability to communicate interculturally

II. Language Skills--Individual ITA's poor language skills

Strengths Identified

Teaching and Intercultural Skills
A. Command of the subject
B. Enthusiasm about subject
C. Accessibility to students
D. Compensation for English with chalkboard, visual aids
E. Understanding readily in one-on-one situations
F. Communicating interculturally

Observations

1. Generally students in ITA classes believe that they are receiving good instruction and learning a lot.

2. Severe language problems (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary in the subject, and ability to communicate in English) interfere with student learning and result in frustration and fear.

3. Minor or moderate language disabilities can be compensated for with good teaching and intercultural skills.

4. Strong language skills alone do not assure success in the classroom. The ITA must also have instructional skills and the ability to communicate interculturally with students.

Issues for Institute Consideration

1. Follow-up activities (observations, teaching, seminars, informal gatherings) should be attached to the Institute, and the departments should encourage their ITAs to participate.

2. Accessibility and friendliness, chalkboard skills, tutoring skills, ability to answer questions carefully and fully, and being well-prepared are skills which should be renewed and improved upon in future ITA

TABLE 10

MEAN RATINGS OF STUDENT'S ASSESSMENTS OF OWN LEARNING
IN CLASSES TAUGHT BY INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTE ITAs
IN FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS 1988-1989

Item	ITA #1	ITA #2	ITA #3	ITA #4	ITA #5	ITA #6	ITA #7	ITA #8	ITA #9	Total Number	Omits
23. Learned a lot from this instructor.	3.64	3.38	3.29	3.13	2.29	3.67	3.16	3.21	2.28	125	9

RESPONSE KEY:
4.0 = A Great Deal
3.0 = Average Amount
2.0 = Very Little
1.0 = Not At All

77

programs.

3. A standardized criteria for evaluating language, intercultural skills, and teaching skills should be established for the final presentation and evaluation of ITA Institute participants.

4. A 200 pre-test Spoken English scores should be required for Institute participants.

Short But Sweet: A One-Day ITA Orientation Workshop

Janet M. Goodwin, University of California, Los Angeles

As part of the campus-wide TA Training Program, the Office of Instructional Development at UCLA offers a one-day conference prior to Fall Quarter for all new and returning TAs. TAs register in advance for three 75-minute workshops of their choice, e.g., Running a Lab, Meeting that First Class, Motivating Students, etc. In the past, only one session has focused specifically on ITA concerns; in 1988, however, a "Foreign TA Mini-Conference" package was scheduled. The framework for this three-session workshop is as follows:

Session 1:	<u>Effective Teaching Skills</u> -What do you think is "good teaching" -Panel discussion with experienced ITAs
Session 2:	<u>The Culture of the American Classroom</u> -Description of UCLA student body -Panel discussion with undergraduates
Session 3:	<u>Self-Assessment through Videotaping</u> -Sample pre-recorded lesson for evaluation -Videotaping of participants -Re-play with feedback
<u>Wrap-up</u>	-Evaluation of orientation sessions -Discussion of available resources

This overview displays the approach that is taken to move ITAs toward actively understanding their roles as teaching assistants in the UCLA community. In the first session, the ITAs' own ideas of good teaching are elicited and discussed as a group. The subsequent panel discussion allows these new ITAs to place their own ideas into the context of the real-life experiences of successful ITAs. During the second session, undergraduates are invited to offer another perspective on what makes an effective TA. Finally, each participant makes a brief videotaped presentation and receives feedback both from fellow participants and the workshop leader, after making his or her own observations on the presentation. This format is designed to promote each individual's awareness of the process of teaching, to hear the viewpoints of both experienced ITAs and UCLA undergrads, and finally to allow these ITAs--perhaps for the first time--to view themselves as teachers.

Session One

The first session, *Effective Teaching Skills*, is divided into two parts; one conducted by the workshop leader and the other a panel discussion with experienced ITAs. First, the workshop leader introduces him or herself and writes an overview of the orientation on the blackboard, outlining the main points and key vocabulary. The videotaping task in the third session is explained at this time. Depending on the time available, either a general round of introductions (at least name, country, and major) or perhaps paired interviews takes place.

The next step is to have the ITAs brainstorm on the characteristics of a good teacher. After everyone has paused for a moment to think of the best teacher they have ever had, each group builds up a list of characteristics. This list then becomes the springboard for the entire day's discussion and activities--namely, the internal image of good teaching that each participant brings with him or her. Many of these ITAs have never been teachers, but all have been students and, as a result, do have a basis for describing good teaching. Though this may vary from culture to culture, it is necessary to acknowledge this internal image before attempting to overlay the idiosyncracies of a specific department at a specific American university upon the individual.

After eliciting a group list of characteristics, the leader poses a series of questions to re-focus on the presentation of this session:

How did this session begin? List the actions as you remember them.

Describe the following: eye contact, gestures, movement in the classroom, etc.

Were you involved in any way? If so, how?

In your opinion, what were the most important pieces of information so far? What clues told you this?

Of the good teaching characteristics you listed above, have you seen any demonstrated? Which ones? Which ones weren't?

These questions can be discussed in small groups and then with the group as a whole. At this point, the handout, *TAs: Communicating Effectively*, is distributed and discussed (see Appendix A). This handout includes a list of communication strategies and a variety of campus resources, e.g., ESL courses, language lab tapes, tutoring services, etc.

The second half of the first session is a panel consisting of 3-4 experienced ITAs who best represent the nationalities and disciplines of the current workshop participants. The panel members prepare the following questions in advance:

1. *What was hardest for you as a beginning TA? What was it like the first day?*
2. *What strategies did you use to feel more confident?*
3. *What are American undergraduate like? Feel free to comment on dress, classroom behavior, academic preparation, office hours, or what surprised you the most.*

After this initial discussion, there is a question-answer forum. Depending on the number of participants vs. experienced ITAs, it is also possible to break into smaller groups with one experienced ITA per group. On the other hand, it is useful to hear the variety of opinions and/or consensus among the different panel members.

The panel discussion serves several purposes. IT provides new ITAs with a first glimpse of life as a TA at UCLA. Furthermore, it allows them to compare their own thoughts on good teaching with the real life experience of the panel members. In order to promote respect for both the teaching systems that these new ITAs arrive from as well as the teaching system here, it is important to acknowledge that we are speaking about good teaching in the context of their individual departments on this campus, not necessarily some corpus of teaching universals. As a result, many of their beliefs about good teaching will apply here as well; however, there may be some common U.S. classroom practices which are new or different and may require adjustment of teaching style. Another purpose of the panel discussion is to begin raising awareness of the UCLA undergraduate population--from the perspective of the ITA.

<u>Session Two</u>

The second discussion, *The Culture of the American Classroom*, is also structured as a panel discussion with 4-5 undergraduates who have had experience with ITAs in their classes. These undergraduates represent a variety of disciplines, especially those of the new ITAs. The experienced ITAs from the first session may be invited to participate (or not, depending on how open the undergraduates will feel in their presence).

As a brief introduction, the workshop leader presented an overview of the student body at UCLA with such statistics as age, ethnicity, major, and application/admission ration. The panel discussion begins with the undergraduates introducing themselves, highlighting their experiences with ITAs, and talking about *their* idea of what makes a good TA. The rest of the session consists of an open forum with the following goals:

1. to promote interaction and understanding between undergraduates and new ITAs;
2. to confirm (or deny) the experienced ITAs' views on UCLA undergraduates (as expressed in the first session);
3. to compare the participants' original ideas on good teaching and the experienced ITAs' tips on what works with the undergraduates' views on good teaching.

At the end of this session, participants are given two handouts. One is an adaptation of a classroom observation guide (Byrd et al., 1989). ITAs are instructed to locate a successful TA in their department and then to complete the guide questions while observing one of this TA's classes (see Appendix B). The second handout is a short list of academic jargon that undergraduates may use in the classroom, such as "Do you give *pop quizzes*?" These expressions may vary from campus to campus so it is best to solicit them from several sources (see Appendix C).

Session Three

The final session, *Self-Assessment through Videotaping*, is designed to offer participants a brief experience of videotaped feedback to help them prepare for their teaching assignments. During the first few minutes,participants view a pre-recorded teaching lesson and then discuss various aspects of this lesson, such as pronunciation, eye contact, fluency, volume, use of the blackboard, and audience involvement. This activity has several objectives: to provide a model for what participants are expects to do; to familiarize them with the many components of communication in the classroom, and to model effective, non-threatening forms of feedback.

At this point, it is best to have no more than 7-8 people per videotaping group. Each person has approximately 5 minutes to either:

1) introduce the course to us as a TA would on the first day of class:
2) explain a word/concept from his/her field.

As one person is being videotaped, the others act as students and then fill out the evaluation form for the mini-lesson (see Appendix D).

Following the mini-lessons, the tapes are played. Participants first evaluate their own performance before receiving peer comments and evaluation forms. The workshop leader guides the feedback in a non-threatening direction and also makes additional comments, if any important aspects have been overlooked. After all the performances have been reviewed, there is a general discussion what the participants feel they have learned from the videotaping experience.

The final wrap-up for the orientation is an opportunity for participants to discuss the orientation itself with evaluation of each of the session. In addition, it is important to make sure each participant has a clear idea of the resources available to him or her on campus. Possible discussion questions might include:

What are you most concerned about in your upcoming TA assignment?
What do you feel you need to know more about? How can you find out this information?
What are you going to do now to prepare for your teaching assignment?
What resources would you like to find out more about?

As stated in the title, this is a very brief orientation for new ITAs. However, given a larger block of time, any or all of these three sessions could be expanded. This particular format, which begins by eliciting ideas from the participants, then moving to panel discussions with both experienced ITAs and undergraduates allows the participants to consider their own perspective first before placing it into the context of this university. The final session of videotaping gives the new ITAs some hands-on practice and sharing of ideas. At each step, campus resources are discussed since they will constitute the ongoing source of help throughout the year.

REFERENCES

Byrd, P., Constantinides, J., & Pennington, M. (1989). *The Foreign Teaching Assistant's Manual*. New York: Collier Macmillan.

Appendix A

TAs: Communicating Effectively

Organize Clearly in the American Style

1. review last session's material
2. preview today's material
3. present today's material
4. sum up today's material
5. preview next session's material

Highlight Important Information..but how?

1. transitional expressions
   First, I'd like to discuss
   The most important feature is...
   This results mainly from...

2. stress, intonation, and pauses
   FIRST, I'd like to discuss...
   The MOST IMPORTANT feature is...
   This results MAINLY from...

3. redundancy
   In other words...
   Let me give you another example...
   In conclusion, the points we discussed today were...

4. visual reinforcement
   effective blackboard use
   OHPs
   handouts
   modelling as an example for students

Involve the students (and check comprehension!)

1. <u>non-verbal communication</u>
   eye contact
   gestures
   movement in the classroom

2. <u>questions</u>
   What makes a "good question?
   wait for the answer
   reformulate unclear questions
   responding to questions

3. <u>humor</u>

Biggest cultural adjustments for non-native TAs...

1. TA's availability to students
2. Informality of classroom atmosphere
3. Students' attitudes/preparation in the subject matter

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

Brown, Lecturing and Explaining (ASUCLA bookstore)
Kayfetz & Stice, Academically Speaking (ASUCLA bookstore)
Byrd, Constantinides, and Pennington, Foreign Teaching Assistant's Manual
Ruetten, Comprehending Academic Lectures (book & tapes in Powell 190, the language lab)
Bailey, Teaching in a Second Language, PhD dissertation. (Education & Psychology Library in Powell)

Audiotapes (Powell 190 Language Lab, see attached handouts)

Videotapes (in Powell 270, the Media Lab)

Phrase by Phrase--a self-study videotape pronunciation series by Marsha Chan
Teacher training tapes (ask at the desk for the Madeleine Hunter series)

ESL Service Courses (see handout of oral communication courses)

Tutoring

Academic Resource Center--ESL Tutorial Lab
Kinsey 339, TEL 206-1491
Monday-Friday, 9:00-4:00
Call or just drop in

Other

AV Videotaping Service

Conversation groups sponsored by:
the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)
the International Student Center (ISC)
See the Daily Bruin for times & location

Appendix B

Classroom Observation Guidelines

Instructions: To become better acquainted with undergraduate courses at UCLA, attend a section of a course in your department that you have not observed. Ask a fellow TA or grad student to recommend a good teacher. Use this sheet to get a general impression of the teacher, the student, and their interaction as a class.

1. How did the teacher signal that s/her was ready to begin class?

2. What kind of audiovisual equipment was used?

3. What kind of seating arrangement was there?

4. What kind of non-verbal communication did the teacher use in the classroom (eye contact, facial expression, movement, etc.)?

5. How did the students indicate that they were interested?

6. How did the students indicate that they were bored?

7. What kind of questions did the students ask?

   How did the teacher respond?

8. What kind of questions did the teacher ask?

   How did the students respond?

9. How did the teacher check for understanding? (with gestures? words? questions?)

10. What did the teacher do to indicate that the class was over?

11. What did the students do to indicate that they thought the class was soon to end?

12. What happened immediately after the lecture ended?

13. What techniques(s) did you notice that would be useful to you as a TA?

Adapted from: Byrd, P., J. Constantinides & M. Pennington. *The Foreign Teaching Assistant's Manual*. *Collier Macmillan, 1989.*

Appendix C

Student language that might not be in your dictionary

Do you know the meaning of the following words and expressions? If not, find a native speaker and ask what they mean.

quiz

pop quiz

take-home test

make-up exam

mid-term

to grade on a curve

to grade on a straight percentage

to cram

extra credit

cheat sheet

to pull an all-nighter

to bomb a test

to ace a test

<u>Other slang you might hear in class</u>:

I don't get it.

Run that by me again.

Huh?

Appendix D

VIDEOTAPED DEMONSTRATION
PEER EVALUATION FORM

Name of Presenter ____________________________

What did you like most about this presentation?

Give one suggestion for improvement:

Proposal for Vanderbilt University FTA Program

Janette Lanier, Vanderbilt University

Goals: To compare methods of assessment used by several schools for evaluation of the teaching simulation to determine English ability. From this information, I hope to be able to identify specific criteria to be evaluated during our teaching simulation. The result is an evaluation form which may be used in the Fall semester 1989. Results obtained from this evaluation form will be compared with scores on the SPEAK to determine if the SPEAK, or a similar ESL test is a necessary part of our assessment procedure.

Method: Evaluation sheets from the University of Minnesota, University of Missouri at Columbia, Marquette University, Iowa State University and the University of Southern California were examined for criteria. A list of standards used for evaluating the language portion of teaching simulations was compiled. The classifications are as follows:

overall intelligibility	intonation
pronunciation	language variety
fluency	gestures
delivery	facial expression
eye contact	poise
confidence	posture
grammar	clarity
vocabulary	rate of speech
listening	volume
question handling	pitch
clarity of expressions	sentence stress
communicative competence	

From these criteria, several categories are of specific importance to the testing program at V. U. Therefore, the following form is to be used after modification in the Fall semester with incoming FTAs. The results of this will be compared to those from the SPEAK in an attempt to find out if the teaching simulation without the SPEAK is an adequate ESL assessment tool.

TEACHING SIMULATION ASSESSMENT FORM
COPE--VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

ITA's name ______________________
ITA's native language ______________________
Date of assessment ______________________
Department ______________________

As you listen to the videotape, keep in mind that you are not to evaluate teaching skill. It is your job to evaluate only the language ability. Please preview the following list of criteria prior to viewing the videotape.

Rate each item on a scale from 1 (very weak) to 5 (almost native speaker quality). Please be as objective as possible.

final sounds	________		
medial sounds	________		
initial sounds	________		
consonant clusters	________		
intonation	________		
sentence stress	________		
hesitations	________		
rate of speech	________		
PRONUNCIATION SCORE = TOTAL			________
verb tenses	________	x 3 ________	
vocabulary choice	________	x 1 ________	
article usage	________	x 1 ________	
function words	________	x 1 ________	
syntax (word order)	________	x 3 ________	
GRAMMAR SCORE = TOTAL OF SECOND COLUMN			________
question response	________		
sensitivity to audience	________		
posture, gestures, facial expression	________		
FEATURES INFLUENCING INTELLIGIBILITY =			________

FINAL SCORE IS EQUAL TO ADDITION OF RIGHT-HAND COLUMN ________ out of 100

In the space provided below and on the back of this sheet, please write your subjective analysis of this person's English ability. Please include any recommendations for helping this ITA that you might have.

Plea for an Integrated Approach to Language Testing and Training for Foreign Teaching Assistants: Potential ESL Applications

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The world has indeed become a very small place, and our need to understand one another has never been greater. During a recent trip to Paris, my attention was caught by a front-page headline of Le Monde, which announced: "The government is preparing a group of measures to integrate immigrants." On college and university campuses across the United States, administrators and faculty are grappling with the integration of overseas teaching assistants in classrooms and laboratories. A local Illinois newspaper featuring an article on the blending of two cultures at the new Diamond-Star facility cited as an unanticipated "nightmare" the language problems of the Mitsubishi/Chrysler employees working there together for assignments of six months to two years duration. In an additional manifestation of concern about language, the U.S. Accrediting Board of Engineering and Technology now requires that each institution vouch for "the literacy in English" of its engineering faculty. At the basis of either integration or simply cooperative effort, of either learning or teaching, is language; the bottom line, after all, is whether or not the language used is also understood. In a milieu which has potential for being a model microcosm displaying functional strategies for the development of new language skills wherever they are needed., what are U.S. institutions of higher education doing about "the problem of the foreign T.A.?"

The responses to "the problem" thus far appear to be as varied as the institutions themselves. However, initiatives seem to be less strongly affected by the size of the institution and whether or not it has a well-developed ESL program than by the engagement, or lack thereof, of the institutions practitioners and administrators in cooperative planning and program development. The degree or urgency attached to institutional response has, unfortunately, in many cases been a factor of recent state legislation and/or the influence of political proclamation, and with precipitous haste to do something, those in authority have frequently set inadequate measures in motion, which, in turn, have had the potential for becoming promptly institutionalized.

Fortuitously, at those colleges and universities where there has been cooperative effort, positive models have emerged for both large and small programs. Examples in point can be drawn from two programs represented at the 1988 Wyoming/NAFSA Institute on Foreign T.A. training, that of Michigan State University, where the remedy includes opportunities for general and focused testing at various junctures and instruction at several levels, and that of Georgia Institute of Technology, where referrals, testing, teaching and feedback to the sponsoring departments are handled by one individual who also reports directly to the president.

Ideally, administrators and course planners alike need to realize that a thorough "remedy" will include 1) initial diagnostic testing with a potential for ESL placement, 2) specially-designed coursework with additional instruction to deal specifically with the diagnosed needs of the individual T.A., and 3) a well-specified means of periodic re-evaluation of the T.A.'s progress toward clearly stated performance objectives known to the parties involved, and preferably refined from general university/college guidelines through the efforts of departmental and ESL staff in consultation with each other and with the administration.

Let us look briefly at each component of the remedy, starting with diagnosis.

As a standard test with multiple forms available from Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, the SPEAK test was quickly and widely adopted nationally by universities seeking to upgrade the standards of classroom performance of their teaching assistants from overseas, and, in many instances, in addition, to comply with state legislative mandates for the screening of the aspiring-to-be teaching assistants from overseas. As with any other tool designed for widespread distribution and use, the SPEAK test has been found to have limitations as well as advantages.

At the 1988 Wyoming/NAFSA Institute on Foreign T.A. Training, our informal exchange soon made it clear that several universities which had adopted SPEAK more than a year or two ago had now changed their position concerning its exclusive use as a screening/placement tool. Such changes ranged from complete abandonment in favor of a straightforward yet multi-faceted English oral skills test battery (Michigan State University) to supplementation of the SPEAK test by videotaped micro-teaching simulation (Georgia State and UCLA). At UCLA, a bank of field-specific micro-teaching topics has been readied for use by Janet Goodwin and Larry Loeher. The comprehensive Michigan State testing material is being continually further refined by Ralph "Pat" Barrett.

Detailed information from both institutions could be very helpful to colleagues contemplating or engaged in the process of modification of their present screening practice.

In concert with more focused diagnostic testing, of course, is something beyond general instruction, or the "one-size fits all" approach. Accurate performance needs to be coupled with awareness of institutional expectations concerning performance of assigned duties. The foreign teaching assistant may be engaged in lecturing, in conducting a quiz section, or in laboratory consultation; s/he may be teaching language or literature, math or chemistry, or dealing with broad concepts of anthropology or philosophy. What language components and cultural know-how will s/he need when a seasoned junior comes during an office hour for further clarification of a physics concept, when a freshman enrolled in Math 101 wants to be excused from the last quiz section meeting before vacation because of illness in the family, or when half the students under the teaching assistant's purview fail a quiz? Is it thought that a one week (or one-day or three-week) summer orientation before classes begin will take care of all such eventualities? Or is it expected that a course taken during the first semester of graduate study and prior to an actual teaching assignment will adequately prepare any aspirant for his/her assignment? Now that considerable time, experience and study have contributed to a far better understanding of the problem, there is widespread consensus that pre- and in-service training are most effective when there is subsequent periodic reassessment of performance and on-going dialogue concerning progress toward established and articulated goals. A flow chart prepared by Ralph Barrett illustrates the well-established Michigan State University pattern of diagnostic testing, coursework as needed, achievement testing, additional coursework if necessary, further testing, and monitoring of T.A. teaching. Reflected also is the inter-relationship of ESL instruction for graduate students *per se* and the instruction offered for the graduate students as teaching assistants.

Appreciation of the rationale for comprehensive treatment of the problem is fundamental. The fact is that an increasingly significant part of undergraduate instruction from New York to California and from Minnesota to Florida is carried out by overseas teaching assistants; moreover, institutional efforts needed to engender the best possible results have been hasty and piecemeal.

If a young Brazilian teaching assistant in biochemistry at the University of Illinois is to reach her students in a mutually stimulating exchange, if the Japanese and American consultants at Diamond-Star are to pool their combined expertise without losing valuable time--and profits, and if the increasing numbers of refugees and immigrants worldwide are to be assisted in their integration into community life, wherever it may be, what do they all have in common? The pressing need for communication skills, made possible through the combined insights and efforts of policy makers and language professionals to provide specifically planned language testing and training programs tailored to their special needs.

II. The Cross-Cultural Connection

Cross Cultural Communications: Understanding the Situation

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The following questions will be addressed in this paper:

1. What are some of the cultural settings and issues relevant to an FTA Training Program?
2. What are some of the expectations of the university administration, the foreign TA, and the American student? Why does one have these expectations? And how can we plan to better meet those expectations?

Part One: CULTURAL ISSUES

Culture can be defined in many different ways. It includes one's behavior in a particular setting. One's behavior is composed of and influenced by many factors, including one's past, values, experience, identity, society, assumptions, habits, expectations, acceptance, awareness, and other people's opinions. Levine, a social anthropologist, defines culture as "an organized body of rules concerning the ways in which individuals in a population should communicate with one another, think about themselves and their environments, and behave toward one another and toward objects in their environments." Thus, understanding the different types of "environments," or settings, in which the FTA will find himself or herself on an American campus helps us focus on topics to include in training programs.

Many cultural orientation programs focus on the general, immediate needs of a foreign visitor in the new country, i.e., survival skills. Indeed, Barnes states that "the most successful orientation efforts seemed to provide the trainees a vision of a structure for carrying out aspects of their daily lives." In addition to immediate personal survival needs, an FTA will want to know what to expect in his new professional role as a teacher in an American university; one might consider these "professional survival needs." To that end, in considering the circumstances affecting the FTA, this writer specifies apparent "cultures" in an academic setting.

Four specific cultural settings can be identified: (1) the academic culture which sets the expected conduct at the specific university; (2) the departmental culture which expresses the accepted procedures for that department; (3) the classroom culture which includes the behavioral expectations of the American university student; and (4) the professional culture which includes interactions with colleagues and superiors as well as affiliations with professional organizations.

In order to best learn new information about these cultures, a general educational premise of this writer is to proceed from the known to the unknown. Therefore, understanding the experiential core of our FTAs is helpful in introducing new cultural settings to them. Such a cross-cultural approach can be very beneficial to trainers. We discover what is different for our foreign guests in the new "culture" and, therefore, what must be the focus of training and discussion as well as how misunderstandings could arise. Moreover, this comparative approach helps the FTA see the differences and more easily accept that he or she is simply in a new setting with new rules which, through understanding them, will help him or her to be more successful in the teaching role.

What is the FTAs' past experience and , therefore, their expectations about a university classroom? These questions will be answered differently by students from each culture. There are, however, some areas where one can expect to see common differences.

For example, one common difference is in the area of time allotted to structured class settings. Some foreign educational systems have classes from mid to late October until sometime in mid-spring, possibly April. Many do not have summer class sessions. Thus, another country may have as few as 20 weeks of instruction, considering the short academic year and the vacations and holidays during the year. U.S. universities have quarter or semester systems during the academic year totaling up to 30 or more weeks with the possibility of further study in the summer time of possibly another 8 weeks. Furthermore, attendance is often not required in foreign universities and classes may have 100 or more students with little opportunity for teacher-student interaction.

Another area of difference lies in the method of learning. For example, many systems in other countries rely heavily on memorization; many courses in the U.S. system rely on analysis and synthesis. This, of course, affects not only the way a teacher teaches, but also how the teacher evaluates acquisition of knowledge. Note-taking and studying are approached differently if one is expected to memorize. Yet another area of difference is testing in the foreign educational system which, for example, may be limited to one major, oral or written exam of possibly 2 or more hours which may be open to public viewing if it is oral and which generally occurs at the end of the year after a purposeful hiatus of one or two months specifically for preparing for the exams. Typically exams are not given regularly throughout the academic year.

Recognizing these common differences helps us understand and accept why an FTA training program should address such areas. This brief paper cannot purport to do a contrastive analysis of educational systems. Its intent is to suggest the use of the comparative approach in a training program in order to facilitate understanding among FTAs, American TAs, and their trainers, departments, and universities.

Some of the topics that can be covered in an FTA training program in order to address each of these four cultural environments are included in Appendix 1, "Some cross-cultural issues to be addressed in a foreign TA training program." Trainers will find more issues to add to these lists depending on the backgrounds of their FTAs and depending on their particular university setting. You will note that "Academic and Departmental Culture" are presented together. Some general university policies, such as "office hours', are spelled out more specifically in the particular department. Thus, such topics can be discussed first from the university viewpoint and then from the departmental perspective.

Some of the topics are simply technicalities to be learned. Others entail attitude and behavior change on the part of the FTA. The latter is the hardest type to learn and takes the longest time to absorb. However, one should not minimize the importance of knowing those technicalities; every fact that is grasped by the FTA gives him or her more self-confidence about the new system in which they are operating--the survival skills of the profession. Both the technicalities and the behavior changes are necessary for the FTA to grasp in order to be more successful.

One approach to presenting these cross-cultural issues is to have an open discussion on each topic among the FTAs, each FTA describing the issue as it is in the familiar university setting of their home country. For example, on a known topic such as grading, once everyone has had a chance to hear the probable differences that there will be from country to country and even from university to university in the same country, the discussion leader can proceed to describe the American setting and expectations. The leader might initiate the description of the American environment by questioning the FTAs about their understanding of the topic in the American setting. Accurate interpretations can be listed and inaccurate information can be corrected. The end product of the discussion on some visual (the blackboard or an overhead) would be a list of the descriptive points of the issue.

Some concepts may not even exist in another culture, such as "reserve books." On an unknown topic such as this, the trainer should be prepared to describe the issue first, ideally with a handout to which the FTA can refer afterwards. After such a discussion, an FTA may see that this concept does exist, but is approached in an entirely different manner in his or her country. Therefore, it is advisable that the leader still check with the group to see if some version of the idea exists in their country. In this way, the trainer continues to acknowledge the values established in other educational systems and indicates that the FTA is simply learning a different system.

Ideally, American TAs are present to describe their experiences as well. The discussion leader's point of reference would always be from the perspective of the home institution where the FTA will be teaching. In applying a cross-cultural approach, the leader points out the similarities and the differences indicating that the differences are what needs to be learned by the FTA in order to be more knowledgeable and, thus, more comfortable and successful in his or her new professional environment.

FTAs must be assured that there is nothing wrong with their cultural systems in another cultural setting. The issue is not one of wrong or right, but rather what will be understood and accepted by the community of people with whom the FTA will be involved. Indeed, Mestenhauser's model of three concentric circles representing the three major variables of culture, learning and academic discipline presents the importance of utilizing <u>all</u> of one's information at hand for the "transfer of knowledge" to the new cultural and academic setting. The system to be followed at X University in Y Department for Z class simply needs to be understood by the FTA in order to insure quality and standards and to avoid misunderstandings.

Furthermore, FTA trainers must recognize that, as with all learning, the vast amount of new information will take time to be absorbed. Ideally, there should be ongoing open discussions about these new cultural settings so that the FTA can continue to clarify and improve upon his or her understanding of the issues. This kind of continued support will facilitate an even better integration of the FTA into the academic setting.

PART TWO: EXPECTATIONS

Cultural misunderstandings occur partly because of preconceived notions about a particular situation. These expectations do not offer problems if, indeed, they are met. It is only when the expectations are not met that difficulties arise. Within the Foreign Teaching Assistant situation, three groups of people can be identified as having preconceptions which may or may not be met in reality. Those groups are the university administration, the foreign TA, and the American student. For further reference, Shaw and Garate have also briefly addressed the topic of expectations on the part of two of the groups by formulating "three unbalanced equations" which express the unmet expectations of U.S. students and the international TAs.

Each of the three groups that this paper identifies has particular expectations about the FTA experience. There are reasons why each expectation exists, and yet, the reality may be different. In other words, the expectation may not be met and this becomes the source of misunderstanding. This paper lists some of those expectations and proposed solutions or means to satisfying those expectations in order to avoid cultural miscommunication. Appendix 2 presents a schema dividing these issues into four sections: (1) some of each group's expectations; (2) reasons for the preconceptions; (3) the reality; and (4) solutions to the problem.

One could question the validity of the expectations. That is, should the expectation even exist? This paper does not attempt to critique the expectation, but instead to simply recognize its existence and to deal with the effects of its existence. This author has identified, from her experience, some of the issues that exist as expectations in an attempt to address solutions to unmet expectations. One could expand the list of expectations for each group which would further identify possible problem areas to be resolved. Foreseeing these preconceptions helps trainers of FTA programs to plan strategies in their training efforts.

You will note as you study Appendix 2 that pre-reading is recommended as a solution in several instances. A set of materials could be developed which would include already-published articles relevant to particular topics. This packet could then be sent to the FTA before arrival in the United Sates. However, it is important to recognize that integration of this information will not be automatic and immediate. As mentioned before in this paper, time is important in the actual integration of new concepts along with continued questioning, requestioning, discussion and acceptance, possibly in the form of on-going orientation workshops which are also presented as part of the solutions. Pre-reading, as an intellectual endeavor, needs to be followed with practical applications and experience with continual opportunity for feedback and clarification of information.

SUMMARY

Identifying cultural settings as well as expectations within the foreign Teaching Assistant context is a first step to resolving problem areas. A comparative cultural perspective acknowledges the differences in educational settings, providing a basis for discussion and raising issues to address. Recognizing which expectations are not met and seeking solutions to meeting those expectations will further develop an effective training program for FTAs.

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APPENDIX 1

SOME CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN A FOREIGN TA TRAINING PROGRAM

A. ACADEMIC AND DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE

1. Drop/add
2. Section changing
3. Grade reporting
4. Academic advising
5. Standardized testing
6. Office hours
7. School calendar, semester/quarter system
8. Departmental policies and requirements
9. Department meetings
10. Class schedules, length of class
11. Clerical support and copying procedures
12. Audio-visual support
13. Library use, including study rooms, reserve books
14. Other services

B. CLASSROOM CULTURE

1. Before/after class time
2. Arrival in class (teacher/student)
3. Respect/formality
4. Discipline issues
5. Attendance
6. Participation
7. Note-taking
8. Homework
9. Textbooks
10. Memorization vs. analysis/synthesis
11. Blackboard use
12. Movement in the classroom
13. Testing
14. Cheating
15. Grading
16. Subjectivity vs. objectivity
17. Theoretical vs. practical

C. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

1. Interaction with colleagues/staff
    a. Other TAs
    b. Professorial superiors
    c. Other department personnel
    d. Secretaries
    e. Work-studies
    f. Assistants (lab, research)

2. Professional organizations and extracurricular commitments
    a. Memberships
    b. Participation
    c. Publishing
    d. Volunteering for committees
    e. Money involved

D. <u>SOCIETAL CULTURE: General Cultural Issues</u>

1. Dress code
2. Body odors
3. Touching and physical closeness
4. Male/female relationships
5. Teacher/student romantic relationships
6. Socializing with students
7. Greetings in and out of the classroom
8. Profanity

APPENDIX 2
Part 1
"UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION"

EXPECTATIONS about FTA	REASONS Expectation based on:	SOLUTIONS
1. Competent linguistically	TOEFL Reality: FTAs not competent enough	a. Oral proficiency should be demonstrated b. Univ. seeks higher TOEFL scores * c. FTA takes special ESL courses
2. Competent academically	a. Degree b. Grades/GPA c. GRE Reality: FTA doesn't communicate knowledge	* a. FTA team-teaches first * b. FTA does research first year observing teacher; teaches second year. * c. FTA passes graduate core courses before teaching in the fall.
3. Competent pedagogically	References Reality: References not required or are inflated	a. Video of teaching b. Evidence of teacher training courses c. Pre-reading required * d. Workshops on pedagogy (as in #2): * e. Team teach first * f. Observe teaching first year; teach second year
4. Competent culturally and interpersonally	References Reality: (as in # 3)	a. Pre-reading required * b. Cross-cultural workshops
* Actions to be taken when FTA is already at the university.		

OVERALL SOLUTIONS:
1. Pre-service and in-service training programs to address each area.
2. Arrangements with American expatriate teaching/English language communities abroad, such as American Cultural Centers, Binational Centers, Fulbright Commissions, to interview and make recommendations about the candidate before final selection is made.

APPENDIX 2
Part 2
"FOREIGN TEACHING ASSISTANT"

EXPECTATIONS	REASONS Expectations based on:	SOLUTIONS
1. Considers himself competent	a. Accepted at American university b. Thinks it's difficult to be accepted and to be given job Reality: University needs graduate students	a. Inform FTA of training programs (pre-service and in-service) in all materials mailed * b. Build team spirit and sense of competency among all TAs
2. Thinks students are "respectful"	Home country's culture demands such respect Reality: Respect defined differently by American student	a. Reading in advance * b. Workshops to include American students
3. Classroom events and behavior similar to past experience	No exposure to another culture's classrooms Reality: American university classroom very different	a. Visit American school or university in own country b. Discuss differences with American expatriates * c. Observe different types of classrooms * d. Interview teachers, students
* Actions to be taken when FTA is already at the university.		

OVERALL SOLUTIONS

1. FTA attends pre- and in-service training programs.

2. FTA is provided with as much pre-arrival information as possible, such as, readings in above areas and textbooks used in classes s/he may be teaching.

APPENDIX 2
Part 3
"AMERICAN STUDENT"

EXPECTATIONS	REASONS Expectations based on:	SOLUTION
1. University teachers well-qualified	a. Professors have higher degrees b. Student is paying "good" money to attend Reality: Most university professors are average teachers. Not all classes are taught by full professors.	Orientation for freshman students includes reality about different types of teachers and the need for graduate TAs
2. A "foreigner" isn't as good as an American	a. Zenophobia b. Never traveled or lived in another country Reality: Good teaching is not dependent on nationality.	a. Internationalize campus b. Do some PR on FTAs regarding education, background, and good teaching c. Foreign students do presentation in new student orientation
3. Classroom behavior and events are basically the same everywhere; thus, foreign teacher should be no different.	Lack of knowledge about other educational systems Reality: The FTA is in a very new environment.	Orientation includes cross-education awareness (videos, foreign students, Americans who have lived/studied abroad)

OVERALL SOLUTION

Orientation for American students should include significant portion about the international aspects of the campus and how that enhances one's educational experience.

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Culture in FTA Training Programs: An Overview

Rosslyn Smith, Texas Tech University

Most foreign teaching assistant (FTA) training programs have a minimum of three curricular elements: language, pedagogy, and culture. The division of the curriculum into these elements is somewhat artificial, since one cannot separate culture from pedagogy nor language. Aspects of culture can be interwoven into the curriculum at many levels and will sometimes appear to overlap with the notions of pedagogical or linguistic skills.

A major premise of this paper is that there is no one culture curriculum that will be adequate for every program. Therefore, the nature of the cultural component should be determined by an analysis of the structure, goals, needs, and resources of each institution.

The Importance of Culture. In order to understand the importance of culture in the FTA curriculum, the following definitions may be helpful. Triandis (1972) defines subjective culture as "a cultural group's characteristic way of perceiving the man-made part of its environment" (p. 4). He includes the perception of rules and the group's norms, roles, and values as aspects of subjective culture.

Hall (1950) writes that culture is "a way of organizing life, of thinking, and of conceiving the underlying assumptions about the family and the state, the economic system, and even of man himself" (p. 46). He goes on to say that "culture controls behavior in deep and persisting ways, many of which are outside of awareness and therefore beyond conscious control of the individual" (p. 48). The extent to which culture influences behavior is also demonstrated in the classroom by both teachers and students.

Since FTAs come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, most FTA program directors now include a cultural component in their training program. However, not all participants nor their home country sponsors are enthusiastic about cross-cultural training. Concern has been expressed in some quarters that students who study abroad could be subject to cultural indoctrination (Byrd, 1986). In an FTA training program, students may perceive that the instructors are attempting to turn them into clones of what the instructors believe a good teacher to be, irrespective of cultural or individual differences. Program directors and instructors should seriously consider the ethical implications of this issue. At the same time, participants need to learn about a variety of teaching behaviors. They should be aware of how students will respond to different instructional techniques and behaviors as well as those teaching styles that students at particular institutions tend to expect and value.

Where Have We Been?

The understanding of appropriate and effective cross-cultural training for FTAs has evolved since the emergence of the "foreign TA problem" as a national issue in the 1980s. In the early stages of their development, many FTA programs addressed three main cultural issues: new student orientation, general adjustment problems, and general contrastive culture.

New Student Orientation. New student orientation is clearly an important activity for any recently arrived foreign student. Orientations typically provide information about the campus and local community. For example, orientation often includes campus tours, information on using the library, registration procedures, health insurance, banking, and obtaining a driver's license. Although this information is useful, many of these topics are also discussed in a general orientation program for all new foreign students. When this is the case, many instructors now do not duplicate this information in the FTA training program.

Personal Adjustment Problems. Certain personal adjustment problems have often been included in programs. These include dealing with a sense of alienation, discomfort with western-style clothing, cultural barriers, dating and marriage, discrimination, employment, finances, food, government regulations, and individual habits (e.g., personal hygiene) (Burke, 1962). The training program can assist FTAs in understanding the ramifications of some of these problems in the classroom. For example, students' perceptions of teachers may affect how much students communicate with teachers, how they perceive messages, their cognitive learning, and the influence the teacher may have on them. One important category of students' perceptions is homophily, or sameness (Hurt, Scott, & McCroskey, (1978). FTAs whose manner of dress, for example, is considered bizarre, different, or out-of-style could experience difficulty as a result of a perceived lack of homophily.

General Cultural Issues. Some FTA programs have also included general cultural issues. These range from social amenities to friendship and association patterns to holidays. Instructors must evaluate which of these areas would be the most appropriate to include in a TA training program.

Where Are We Now?

As more and more institutions have begun FTA training, there has been increased interaction nationally between FTA program directors and instructors at different universities. This has led to something of a consensus on additional cultural issues that are of critical importance to the FTA, issues that fall outside the traditional notion of cross-cultural training. Some of these new areas that have recently been included in the curriculum include institutional culture, academic or disciplinary sub-cultures, classroom culture and behavior, and the relationship between culture and learning styles. As these new topics are incorporated into the curriculum, instructors must also be more aware of the demographics of the FTA population itself.

FTA Populations. Many institutions attract graduate students from around the world into their FTA programs. If the FTA population were homogeneous, the curriculum would be much easier to plan. However, many schools must assess and train transfer students from U.S. universities, students newly arrived from abroad, and students who have been on campus for at least a semester. These three groups have different needs, expectations, and levels of awareness of the culture and the institution. Some friction may exist between the various nationalities and ethnic groups represented in the training program. Another problem is that two or three departments may be heavily represented and others may have only one participant, making it difficult to assure that the information presented is relevant to all the students. For example, departments such as Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics may be well represented in the FTA program, whereas History may have only one participant. Program instructors must consider this type of ethnic, cultural, and disciplinary diversity among the FTAs themselves in planning a curriculum.

Institutional Culture. Since each institution is different and has its own culture, programs must be designed to fit the needs of that institution. One very important cultural consideration is the composition of the undergraduate student population. Where do the students come from? What is the nature of their high school preparation? Are they rural or urban? Have they ever interacted with people from other countries or other cultures? Does the school have high admission standards or does it have an open admissions policy? Does the institution have a reputation for being a "party" school? FTAs should know who their students are.

Another aspect of institutional culture involves the organization of the administration. TAs need to know how they fit into the administrative structure, and how the university, their college and their departments function. FTAs may find it helpful to discuss the dichotomous nature of their role as student/faculty. Do TAs on the campus have any prestige? Are they regarded as peers of the faculty, cheap labor, or as something in between? What do the students think of TAs in general and FTAs specifically? The FTA training program can help TAs learn the set of responsibilities, prerogatives, and limitations that correspond to this new role.

Institutional culture can also be seen in sets of formal and informal traditions and accepted practices. The formal traditions, such as special celebrations or special days, are fairly easy to learn about. The informal traditions are much more difficult. For example, it could be an unspoken tradition that students are allowed to miss class three times without a penalty. Another unspoken tradition might be that no tests are given on the days immediately before holidays. An accepted practice might be that students and instructors may drink soft drinks in class even though there are signs posted disallowing this. Most American faculty and TAs are aware of these traditions and practices, whereas most FTAs are not. Each program must identify those practices unique to its institution that should be included in the curriculum.

An additional aspect of institutional culture concerns the importance of extracurricular activities to the FTA. FTAs need to know whether or not attendance at such activities as departmental picnics or softball games is expected. Do American undergraduate students or TAs expect the FTAs to engage in any outside activities or clubs? Does the department expect it? An awareness of all these aspects of institutional culture should make it easier for the FTA to function both as a student and a teacher.

Academic Sub-Cultures. A third area that is receiving much attention currently is that of academic sub-cultures. Many FTA instructors are in the field of ESL, often in an intensive English program that is considered to be peripheral to the primary academic mission of the institution. FTA instructors in this situation may not have a working relationship or much familiarity with the TAs' departments or with American undergraduate students. This is a potential problem that FTA instructors from the field of ESL, especially, may need to address.

A knowledge of the academic, or disciplinary, sub-culture is important not only to the FTA instructor but to the FTA as well. The students in FTA programs are required to function as professionals within their own fields of study. They are expected to use methodologies and behaviors that are accepted in their disciplines. Thus, FTA program directors and instructors must learn more about the characteristics of other disciplines in order to provide appropriate and accurate information and classroom preparation.

Classroom Culture. A parallel issue is that of the culture of the classroom. Some aspects of classroom culture seem to be common to most disciplines; others are specific to a given discipline. Although classroom culture overlaps with pedagogical concerns, there are numerous examples of classroom matters that could be discussed as cultural variables. These include such issues as taking attendance, class participation, procedures for administering tests, the role of homework, disclipline in the classroom, attitudes toward cheating, interaction with and attitudes toward students and other faculty, teacher/student relationships, and socializing with students. Other pedagogical issues that are often influenced by culture include the students' attitudes toward the teacher, teacher and student expectations, and even the way teachers begin and end class.

Cognitive Learning Style. Another important area that is discussed in some FTA programs is that of cognitive learning styles and how they affect student performance and teacher behavior[1]. Although there are many variables that contribute to learning styles, FTAs can benefit from an awareness of at least the basic variables of introversion/extraversion, reflection/impulsivity, and field dependence/field independence. This awareness can help them select appropriate teaching techniques for a heterogeneous class. For example, a class with both field dependent and field independent students may need the content presented in several formats. A field independent classroom teacher who is not aware of different learning styles may choose techniques that appeal only to field independent learners, thereby placing the field dependent students at a considerable disadvantage.

Where Are We Going?

As we learn more about the needs of FTAs on our campuses, new areas of interest, research, and training will emerge. One such area that has sparked a certain amount of controversy is that of orienting American undergraduate students to FTAs. The goals of such programs are to reduce the anxiety of the undergraduates in the FTA's class, to improve interaction between students and teachers, and to inform the students of appropriate and constructive steps to take in case they have a problem with one of their TAs. Opposition to this type of orientation comes from some who fear a backlash effect. Others fear that orientation programs will create problems where none exist or exacerbate existing problems. Program directors must analyze the situation at their own institutions in this regard.

Those who believe that orientating undergraduates to FTAs is a good idea have access to somewhat limited resource materials. One university has prepared a brochure about (F)TAs that the FTAs distribute to their undergraduate students. The brochure contains information on the TA system and suggests interaction strategies for use with FTAs (vom Saal, 1988). The university also has a letter for parents of freshmen informing them of the use of FTAs on campus as well as the campus training program.

Some universities show and discuss a NAFSA-funded videotape, "You and the International TA: Paths to Better Understanding" (Smith & Slusher, 1988). The tape has been used in freshman orientation at some universitites as well as in FTA training programs. The content includes a discussion of the TA system, interviews with FTAs and administrators, and suggestions for improving interaction and resolving conflict between the American student and the FTA.

Neither a videotape nor a brochure is likely to quiet student complaints about FTAs; such materials are, rather, an effort to address the issue from a different perspective. Methods must be sought to enhance the mutuality of the educational process, to promote cross-cultural tolerance, if not understanding, and to empower students to take greater responsibility for their learning.

Another positive spin-off for the 1990s is the influence of FTA training programs on the internationalization of the campus. Institutions need to look to international students and international TAs as resources rather than liabilities. American students need greater perspective on the world situation, international politics and economics, and global interdependence. The fact that many FTAs return to their countries to assume positions of leadership in politics, business, and education is an excellent argument for finding ways to enhance the FTAs' experience in the U.S. and to open additional channels of communication between them and the American student.

New roles are also emerging for FTA program directors and instructors, including working with foreign faculty or providing training and/or orientation for supervisory faculty. Some states have mandated assessment and training for all non-native English-speaking (NNS) instructors, ranging from full professors to TAs (see Brown, Fishman, & Jones, 1989). FTA program directors may be asked to develop appropriate training for full-time NNS faculty that would respect the faculty member's status and still provide needed information and instruction. Graduate advisors or other supervisory personnel may also be seeking ways to implement or improve departmental training for their TAs, both foreign and American. They may look to the FTA program director for suggestions about curriculum or program design. Foreign faculty and American supervisory personnel should also have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding of the cross-cultural variables affecting them in their jobs.

Notes

[1]One instrument that is sometimes used to determine learning style preferences and other personality characteristics is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). In at least one program, FTAs are typed using the MBTI and are given a lengthy feedback session. During this session they receive an individual printout of their results. A faculty member who is an authority on the MBTI discusses why this information is useful to them as teachers and how it can make them more aware of their own preferences and prejudices. They learn that their students will also have a variety of learning styles and preferences that need to be considered (Smith, 1989).

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Nonverbal Communication for the FTA: An Annotated Bibliography

Nancy Frampton, University of Iowa

The appropriate use of nonverbal communication is an integral part of successful classroom communication. It is particularly important for the FTA, whose reliance on compensatory skills contributes greatly to overall instructional effectiveness. The following annotated bibliography is a description of selected resources on nonverbal communication for the FTA trainer.

I. Materials for Classroom Adaptation: The following materials can be easily adapted for use in FTA training.

A. FTA Texts:

Althen, G. (1988). Manual for foreign teaching assistants (2nd ed.). Iowa City: The University of Iowa.

A three-page unit, "Communicating Without Words," introduces the concept of nonverbal communication, describes relevant types of behaviors, and suggests approaches for familiarization.

Byrd, P., Constantinides, J. C., & Pennington, M. (1989). The foreign teaching assistant's manual. New York: Collier MacMillan.

A two-page unit, "Nonverbal Communication," introduces the concept and describes various forms of nonverbal communication. Several relevant activities for sensitizing students are provided, including focused classroom observations. (Observation sheets provided.)

B. ESL Materials:

Barnes, G. A. (1982). Communication skills for the foreign-born professional. Philadelphia: ISI Press.

Part I, "Verbal & Nonverbal Communication," includes the following units: Chapter 2, "Rules for Social Behavior"; Chapter 3, "Public Speaking"; Chapter 4, "Oral Presentations." These units discuss general social behavior, addressing

an audience, and using audio-visual aids.

Clark, R. C., Moran, P. R., & Burrows, A. A. (1981). ESL miscellany: Resource handbook number 2. Brattleboro, VT: Pro Lingua Associates.

One unit, "The Paralinguistic Aspect," covers sounds, body language, and use of time and space. Illustrations of classroom gestures and a photographic catalog of American gestures are included.

Echeverria, E. W. (1987). Speaking on issues: An introduction to public communication. New York: CBS College Publishing.

A five-page unit, "Using Nonverbal Communication," introduces students to aspects of nonverbal communication for presenting. Student and teacher evaluation sheets for informative and persuasive speeches include specific nonverbal behaviors. A separate unit focuses on small group discussions and also includes evaluation sheets.

Ford, C. K., & Silverman, A. M. (1981). American cultural encounters. San Francisco: Alemany Press.

The authors provide a set of realistic American cultural situations for which several responses can be selected, one of which is culturally appropriate. Explanations are appended for both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.

Gaston, J. (1984). Cultural awareness teaching techniques: Resource handbook number 4. Brattleboro, VT: Pro Lingua Associates.

A teacher-resource unit outlines the instructional use of short skits emphasizing nonverbal communication.

Levine, D. R., & Adelman, M. B. (1982). Beyond language. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

The "Nonverbal Communication" chapter of this book provides a cultural reading on the various types of nonverbal communication. Activities include determining the possible meanings of gestures from pictures, acting out situations and emotions,

rating nonverbal cues by degrees of positiveness, determining appropriate behaviors for cultural situations, and observing nonverbal behavior.

Porter, P., Grant, M., & Draper, M. (1985). Communicating effectively. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

The "Demonstrating & Explaining" chapter includes descriptions of nonverbal aspects of presenting. Suggestions for how body language can be used in demonstrating and explaining, observation activities, and a description of audio-visual aids prepare students to give a presentation for which nonverbal behavior is rated. (Evaluation sheet provided.)

Zanger, v. V. (1985). Face to face: The cross cultural workbook. Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Two chapters, "Gestures" and "More Nonverbal Communication," provide students with information and activities on body language. Students identify nonverbal cues from pictures, analyze the use of body language through case studies, interview classmates and Americans, role play, and discuss the nuances of nonverbal communication (sex, age, setting).

II. FTA Literature: The following resources contain discussions of nonverbal communication in FTA training.

Andersen, J. F. (1986). Instructor nonverbal communication: Listening to our silent messages. In J. M. Civickly (Ed.), Communication in college classrooms. New directions for teaching and learning, No. 26 (pp. 41-49). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This text addresses TA instruction in general. The chapter on nonverbal communication examines how nonverbal behavior enhances student learning.

Case, B. A. (Ed.). (1989). A verbal snapshot: The classroom observation. In Responses to the challenge: Keys to instruction by teaching assistants (pp. 71-76). Mathematical Association of America Notes, No. 11.

Case study evaluations of FTAs highlight nonverbal behaviors and their impact on overall classroom effectiveness.

Christy, E. E., & Rittenberg, W. (1988). Some typical problems in the training of Chinese teaching assistants: Three case studies. In J. C. Constantinides (Ed.), Proceedings of the University of Wyoming 1987 Summer Institute on FTA Training (pp. 111-130). Laramie: The University of Wyoming.

Three case studies describe Chinese FTA instructional problems and the intervention responses employed by supervisors.

Costantino, M. (1987). Intercultural communication for international teaching assistants: Observations on theory, pedagogy, and research. In N. Van Note Chism (Ed.), Institutional responsibilities and responses to the employment and education of teaching assistants: Readings from a national conference (pp. 290-300). Columbus: The Ohio State University, Center for Teaching Excellence.

The author evaluates communication models and their relevance to FTA programs. Classroom discussion topics and activities which address cultural communication problems of FTAs are described.

Donahue, M., & Heyde Parsons, A. (1982). The use of roleplay. TESOL Quarterly, 16, 359-365.

The authors present an eight step role-play procedure for teaching the subtleties of social behavior.

Dunkel, P. A., & Rahman, T. (1987). Developing listening and speech communication skills: A course for prospective international teaching assistants. In N. Van Note Chism (Ed.), Institutional responsibilities and responses to the employment and education of teaching assistants: Readings from a national conference (pp. 301-306). Columbus: The Ohio State University, Center for Teaching Excellence.

Preparation, presentation, and evaluation of FTA speeches are discussed.

McNamara, L. A. (1986). Cross-cultural awareness: Understanding ourselves and sensitivity to others. In J. C. Constantinides (Ed.), Proceedings of the University of Wyoming 1987 Summer Institute on FTA Training (pp. 11-19). Laramie: The University of Wyoming.

This article includes a discussion of the use of a "simulated foreign-language experience" to illustrate how body language influences communication.

Sarkisian, E. (1984). Training foreign teaching assistants: Using videotape to observe and practice communicating and interacting with students. In P. Larson, E. L. Judd, & D. S. Messerschmitt (Eds.), On TESOL '84: A brave new world for TESOL (pp. 325-331). Washington, D.C.: TESOL.

The viewing and analysis of videotapes of FTA instruction are discussed.

Zukowski/Faust, J. (1984). Problems and strategies: An extended training program forforeign teaching assistants. In K. M. Bailey, F. Pialorsi, and J. Zukowski/Faust (Eds.), Foreign teaching assistants in U.S. universities (pp. 76-86). Washington, D.C.: NAFSA.

III. Classroom Application: The following references deal with the teaching and use of nonverbal communication in the classroom.

Brown, G. (1978). Lecturing and explaining. New York: Methuen.

Budd, R. W., & Rubin, B. D. (1975). Human communication handbook: Simulations and games. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Co.

Darling, A. L., & Staton-Spicer, A. Q. (1987). Teacher-student interaction in the classroom: An annotated basic bibliography. ED 289217.

Davis, J. J. (1988). Teaching cultural gestures in the foreign language classroom: A review of the literature. ED 295501.

Green, J., & Weada, R. (1985). Reading between the words: Social cues to lesson participation. Theory Into Practice, 24, 14-21.

Gullette, M. M. (Ed.). (1984). The art and craft of teaching. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Harvard-Danforth Center for Teaching and Learning.

Hinton, B. E. (1985). Selected nonverbal communication factors influencing adult behavior and learning. Lifelong Learning, 8(8), 23-26.

Holmes, H., & Guild, S. (Eds.). (1971). A manual of teaching techniques for intercultural education. Paris: UNESCO.

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Richmond, V. R., & McCroskey, J. C. (1984). Power in the classroom II: Power and learning. Communication Education, 33, 125-136.

Stacks, D. W. (1985). Nonverbal communication: Theory, assessment, and instruction: A selected, annotated bibliography. ED 289211.

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Woolfolk, A. E., & Galloway, C. M. (1985). Nonverbal communication and the study of teaching. Theory Into Practice, 24, 77-84.

IV. General Readings: The following literature provides general information about nonverbal communication.

Althen, G. (1988). American ways. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

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Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (1984). Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hall, E. T. (1976). Beyond culture. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Hall, E. T. (1969). The hidden dimension. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

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Lanier, A. R. (1981). Living in the U.S.A.. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Smith, E. C., & Luce, L. F. (Eds.). (1979). Toward internationalism: Readings in cross-cultural communication. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

III. THE LANGUAGE CONNECTION

Talking: The Central Act of Teaching in U.S. Universities

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Complaints from students, parents, legislators, and others about the teaching of international graduate teaching assistants (ITAs) have focused on what is perceived as poor pronunciation. ITA trainers, university administrators, and others have countered this complaint with suggestions that the real problems have to do with cultural differences and lack of teaching experience rather than solely with pronunciation differences. Research questions need to be formulated that acknowledge the realities in both of these positions. Such research would begin from a consideration of the possible range of meanings for the term *pronunciation* when it is used by non-specialists. Rather than referring to articulation, the word seems more a cover term for a whole range of issues involved in the use of language in the college/university undergraduate classroom.

Twelve questions related to classroom talking need to be considered in a search for better understanding of what might be going wrong in these classes and what might be done to improve the teaching done by ITAs and the learning done by their students.

1. What is the role of a classroom teacher in a U.S. university?
2. What does it mean to be a good talker?
3. How is talking carried out in different instructional contexts?
4. What kinds of talking are admired by different academic disciplines?
5. What are the subcategories of talking?
6. How is talking in the classroom different from talking in the cafeteria?
7. How does culture influence talking?
8. How does listening interact with talking in various instructional contexts?
9. Can someone be a good talker if people cannot understand the person's pronunciation? Or, to what extent does un-English pronunciation limit the effectiveness of talking? Or, just how does pronunciation influence talking?
10. How do stress and intonation influence talking? Or, to what extent do un-English stress and intonation limit the effectiveness of talking?
11. How does body language influence talking? Or, to what extent is body language part of

talking?

Out of the answers for such questions, we can come to a better understanding of the unhappinesses of U.S. students and of the communication skills that are needed by their instructors.

Improving the Intelligibility of FTAs: How ESL Teachers Might Be More Effective

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Language teachers are well aware that pronunciation is an area in which adult learners have difficulty achieving native-like fluency in a second language. Indeed, because of the widespread assumption that pronunciation improvement will be minimal at best, many FTA training programs pay only secondary attention to improving the intelligibility of FTA's. However, because speaking is so central to the act of teaching in academic settings (Eble, 1983), the need for FTAs to speak clearly is at least as critical as other areas of focus in FTA training programs.

Given the urgent need for FTAs to use comprehensible spoken English, it is a matter of concern that pronunciation teaching practices are neither keeping pace with nor reflecting current wisdom in other areas of FTA training, such as cultural awareness, instructional methods, and competence in classroom language. It is of additional concern that a number of current practices in pronunciation teaching may be ineffective, and even counterproductive, although, on the surface, they appear consistent with current theories of pronunciation.

In the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's, dissatisfaction with traditional approaches for teaching pronunciation led to a decrease in amount of time devoted to pronunciation in ESL programs (Morley, 1987). In the early to mid-1980's, however, pronunciation theory and practice were redefined, and updated programs began emerging. Some fundamental aspects of these new programs have been described by Morley (1988).

1) The teacher has assumed the role of a facilitator who guides and uses, rather than models.

2) The learner has adopted a more active role in the process of changing speech patterns.

3) The goal of remediation is speech that is relatively easy to understand, rather than speech that is perfect or accent-free.

4) The definition of pronunciation has been expanded to include not only segmentals (consonants and vowels), but also suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm, intonation, juncture, and linking).

5) The emphasis of remediation has shifted from a focus on segmentals to a focus on suprasegmentals because of their primary contribution to overall intelligibility.

6) Pronunciation practice is now based in more natural communication events.

Though these welcome trends are being reflected in pronunciation and/or oral skills components of FTA training programs, weaknesses in pronunciation programs remain in two realms: WHICH features are included in the spoken English coursework for FTAs and HOW these features are incorporated into the curricula and materials of the courses. Thus, in addition to the biological and socio-cultural theories that have been put forth to account for the limited pronunciation progress in adult second language learners (Scovel, 1969; Brown, 1975; Stevick, 1975), it is possible that ineffective teaching methods are contributing to the limited gains FTAs are demonstrating in improving comprehensibility. This paper will detail current problem areas in pronunciation remediation for FTAs.

The areas of concern that follow are broadbased, but each is related to one of three tenets of pronunciation teaching. First, pronunciation needs to be taught to FTAs in the appropriate contexts--linguistic, cultural, and academic. Second, a pronunciation teacher should have a grounding in English phonetics and phonology and their application to second language teaching (Morley, 1987). Finally, sufficient listening practice of segmentals and suprasegmentals should precede oral practice of the various speech patterns in that "audition provides the person with a permanent monitoring system for his own speech" (Powers, 1971).

PROBLEMS RELATED TO CONTEXT

Linguistic Context--Avoiding Artificial Past Tense Forms

That authors of most pronunciation texts stress the need to teach the variant pronunciations of the past tense <u>-ed</u> inflection in single words at all demonstrates a disregard for other principles of clear speaking, and, in fact, puts the teacher in a situation of having to unteach aspects of pronunciation that compete directly with the learner's ability to link words smoothly within thought groups.

As noted by Temperly (1987), the final <u>t</u> in the word <u>picked</u> is very different from the final <u>t</u> in the phrase <u>picked it up</u>. Rather than releasing the <u>t</u> at the end of the word, the speaker releases the consonant <u>t</u> into the vocalization of the successive vowel /I/ in <u>it</u>. Similarly, notice the difference between <u>kissed</u> in isolation and <u>kissed</u> in the phrase <u>kissed children</u>. And what happens to the past tense marker which is present in the word planned but barely discernible in the phrase planned to go?

Although the complex phonological rules for deletions and resyllabifications that occur in linking words together probably should not be explicitly taught, it is suggested that teachers bypass the single word stage and present past tense verbs in a phonological context, whether that be a phrasal verb or a complete verb phrase. Phrasal or sentence contexts should be a part of the pronunciation materials in a curriculum for FTAs. Such inclusion would achieve the following:

a) Reinforce the notion of speaking in meaningful phrasal units.

b) Allow the learners to passively acquire some of the, as yet, not clearly defined rules for linking sounds between words.

c) Avoid reinforcing the prevalent non-native patterns of speaking in a series of completed, isolated, hyper-correct words in connected discourse.

d) Provide an opportunity to present some of the many phrasal or two-word verbs that occur in English, ideally those that are common to the FTAs' academic subculture.

CULTURAL CONTEXTS AND ASPECTS OF SPEECH PERFORMANCE

Materials on delivering oral presentations are replete with warnings to speak slowly (Gilbert, 1984). Most teachers involved in FTA training programs are aware that slowing the rate of speaking is relatively easy for the learner to adopt and improves overall comprehensibility substantially.

However, teachers often address rate of speaking as an isolated pronunciation issue, when, in fact, it may need to be considered in a cultural context. For example, can a non-native FTA successfully modify his or her rapid rate of speech without a discussion of the underlying value that might be placed on quantity of material covered in a university classroom in his or her native country? Can a female FTA, who is unaccustomed to being in a position of authority, learn to raise vocal volume or to utilize stress patterns for sentence focus when lecturing without an understanding of her new role?

Indeed, cultural contexts, as well as linguistic contexts, are essential adjuncts to the presentation of various pronunciation features in an oral skills curriculum for FTAs.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO PREPARATION OF ESL TEACHERS

Adequate teacher preparation in English phonetics and phonology would enable ESL teachers to individualize FTA pronunciation programs and thus use time more efficiently. For example, conducting individualized speech assessments in various speaking contexts would reveal whether the error or variation is global or whether it occurs only in specific linguistic or speaking contexts. In other words, if an FTA substitutes an <u>s</u> for a <u>th</u>, does he do so consistently, or only in the final positions of words, or only in initial consonant clusters, or only when speaking spontaneously, but not when reading?

Furthermore, a well-prepared ESL teacher will be able to prioritize remediation based upon the extent to which the variation interferes with overall intelligibility. For example, omissions of sounds interfere with intelligibility more than substitutions. The phrase "both problems" is more likely to be understood if the <u>th</u> is pronounced with a substitution --<u>bos problems</u>--than if pronounced with an omission--<u>bo problems</u>.

Finally, knowledge of phonological development in first and second language learners will heighten the ESL teacher's sensitivity to speech variations that are evidence of an acquisition sequence. For example, learners incorporate new speech patterns in structured speaking situations before unstructured speaking situations. Also, like a child acquiring a rule in his or her first language, a second language learner often manifests the phenomenon of overgeneralization in the acquisition of phonological rules. The learner might integrate a rule regarding the use of the <u>th</u>--<u>metho</u> and <u>teory</u> become <u>method</u> and <u>theory</u>. Then the learner overgeneralizes the rule--<u>better</u> and <u>time</u> become <u>bether</u> and <u>thime</u>. Subsequently, the learner refines the rule, generally without intervention.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO DEFICIENT AURAL TRAINING

The minimal pair drill is a structurally-based teaching device which evolved out of the audio-lingual approach (Bowen, 1975). Although most pronunciation texts in current use (Bens, 1977; Prator and Robinett, 1985) present minimal pair drills in words and sentences, such drills are not natural enough for learners to incorporate automatically what they learn into everyday conversations in English (Celce-Murcia, 1987) and are falling from favor as a pronunciation teaching techniques.

However, the problem has not been with the minimal pair drills per se, but with the limited goals of the drills and the limited contexts in which the drills have been presented. There is an essential role for minimal pair discrimination if the learner is to actively develop a self-monitoring and self-correction system, as Morley (1988) suggests he should. In order for the learner to monitor his speech production effectively, he must be trained to discriminate readily between minimal pairs consisting of error patterns and target patterns in increasingly complex linguistic contexts.

A listening sequence for an FTA who substitutes an s for a voiceless th might be the following:

1) The learner signals every time he hears the th in words, sentences, and the connected discourse of his academic subculture. The learner should focus not on the mental image of the written word, but on the acoustic perception of the target pattern.

2) The learner identifies the correct production in minimal pairs consisting of a correct production and a simulated error production (e.g., theory--seory; sirty--thirty).

3) The learner identifies the correct production in minimal pair sentences utilizing common vocabulary as well as key vocabulary from the learner's field of study (e.g., There are four variables in a force-order system--There are four variables in a fourth-order system).

4) When the learner is proficient at recognizing the correct utterance in each pair, the teacher can read sentences at random, some correct, some incorrect, and ask the learner to make judgments about the accuracy of the sentences. This aural training sequence can proceed into longer academic passages and academic dialogue, both formal and informal. Once the learner can easily distinguish patterns in the speech of others, he should be in a position to monitor more readily his own production when the production phase of remediation begins.

Sequences like the above should be developed for suprasegmental, as well as segmental, features of spoken English. These listening practices are most effective if language typical of the FTA's field of study is utilized.

CONCLUSION

Several suggestions for strengthening the oral skills components of FTA training programs have been offered. The widespread adoption of more effective instructional methods in the area of pronunciation is necessary before the question of adult learners' ability to achieve long-term improvement in intelligibility can be answered.

RESOURCES

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IV. The Science Connection

The Assessment and Training of Teaching Assistants in Biology and Chemistry: Overview of Problems and Suggested Solutions

Linda Mantel, City College of New York

First problem:

1--Students from abroad who have a TOEFL score of 550 or better and appropriate records and letters may be admitted to a Doctoral program. The department that accepts the student agrees to support him or her, normally as a teaching assistant (TA). At no point in this process is the aspiring foreign TA (AFTA) assessed as to the suitability of his/her language skills for teaching.

2--Levels of language skills among incoming FTAs vary widely. Most FTAs manage at least to "make do" in the classroom. However, cases may occur wherein a student cannot be permitted to have sole responsibility in the classroom.

Suggested solution:

Require an assessment of each AFTA for suitability of language skills for teaching. Students whose skills are not adequate will not be allowed to teach.

Considerations:

1--At what point in the admissions process should assessment take place?

Ideally, it should occur before the student is admitted to the department. This is unlikely. Thus it should occur as soon as possible after admission.

2--What does an unsatisfactory assessment imply as to a Department's responsibility to support the student as a TA?

If the student cannot be in the classroom, another mechanism for providing the equivalent level of support should be devised. This could include grading, working in a resource center, or other non-classroom duties.

3--What other sources of support could be available for someone not suitable to be a TA?

Ideally, one should be able to award a non-teaching fellowship to such a student.

4--Who should design and carry out the assessment and provide an evaluation?

Development of the assessment instrument should be done by the ESL faculty in collaboration with *the biology or chemistry department and carried out by ESL. Ideally, the assessment should include an interactive component. Department chairs or advisors should be able to see the evaluation and, if necessary, review any of the assessment materials before deciding whether or not to award a teaching appointment.*

5--Who should foot the bill for this service?

Costs of assessment and evaluation are part of the business of the science departments and ESL. Perhaps some appropriate cost-sharing arrangement can be worked out.

6--What corrective measures can be taken to improve the language skills of a student with an unsatisfactory assessment? How will we know when the skills are appropriate?

A language skills course appropriate to the student's level should be developed. This course should be at least one semester long and should be required before the student an retake the assessment. A student will not be allowed to teach until a satisfactory assessment is achieved.

Second problem:

1--Most TAs, both foreign and local, have had little or no experience in teaching undergraduates. They receive a minimal amount of instruction from the department for their courses, usually focusing on mechanics of the course and what is to be covered in each laboratory section.

2--Recent developments in pedagogy make it clear that students have a variety of learning needs and learning styles. Departments often have no mechanism by which to acquaint TAs (or faculty, for that matter) with this information and give them the opportunity to practice working with students in new and different ways.

Suggested solution:

1--To develop a training workshop for TAs that will cover cultural and pedagogical topics within the context of the types of teaching and learning that occur in biology and chemistry. The course would have a separate beginning component for FTAs and be followed by a component for all TAs.

Considerations:

1--When should this workshop take place?

The workshop should take place in mid-August.

2--How long should it take?

It should start with a 2-day orientation for FTAs who have passed the assessment exam and proceed to a 3-day training workshop for all TAs.

3--Should all TAs be required to take it?

Yes, at least before their first term of teaching.

4--Who should pay whom?

All TAs should receive a stipend for attending the workshop.

5--Who should teach which components?

Some components should be taught by pedagogy specialists and others by faculty in the departments.

6--Who should foot the bill for instruction?

Whenever possible, grant funds should be used to design and pilot the program. However, in order to institutionalize the program, it will need to be supported by a combination of appropriate institutional funds.

7--How and by whom should the workshop components be designed?

Components of the training workshop should be designed by the relevant faculty in academic departments, ESL, and teaching specialties.

8--What kind of follow-up can be done to see if TAs are putting theory into practice?

A series of monthly seminars, relevant to current classroom concerns, should be held, for which students will neither pay nor receive credit. However, attendance and participation may constitute a part of their overall teaching evaluation for the year.

SUGGESTED COMPONENTS FOR 2-DAY FOREIGN T.A. ORIENTATION AND 3-DAY T.A. WORKSHOP

Many successful models for these programs exist, most of which are designed collaboratively by faculty from subject departments, ESL, and pedagogy. The FTA component may be open both to students who have passed the assessment and those who have not, because it will include information necessary for success as a student as well as a teacher.

1--FTA component could include:

>Orientation to the College and surrounding community: how to get around and find what is needed

>Culture of the American classroom

>Communication skills, verbal and non-verbal

>Workshop on special difficulties with pronunciation, etc., if necessary

Participants might include, in addition to new FTAs, experienced FTAs from similar countries and fields and undergraduates who can discuss their feelings about FTAs in the classroom.

2--TA component to include:

>Culture of the classroom, with participation by undergraduate students

>Effective teaching skills--discussion and demonstration, to include cultural expectations of FTAs and American TAs

>Content-based skills I: Meeting the first class, preparing exams, how to grade student lab reports, ethics and plagiarism; leading a discussion section

>Content-based skills II: laboratory safety, use of animals in teaching and research, introduction to equipment

>Content-based skills III: preparation and videotaping of minilessons, followed by feedback evaluation and discussion.

Follow-up sessions to include additional practice in preparing exams, dealing with cheating, grading of examinations and papers, and involving students in classroom activities. As the semester progresses, TAs will encounter in their classes particular situations that could be ideal test cases for discussion by the entire group.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN BIOLOGY

Teaching assistants (TAs) in a Biology department normally supervise either laboratory or recitation sections. At City College, TAs are in sole charge of a section--that is, the faculty member directing the course is not present during the activities. The laboratory materials and reagents are prepared by a College Laboratory Technician, so that the TA does not need to prepare these materials in advance. However, in some institutions, set-up is also the responsibility of the TA.

In a laboratory situation, the TA will normally lead the students as they proceed through a three or four hour process of exploration--making and observing biology lab preparations, recording data, interpreting their results, and cleaning up afterwards. In introductory classes, the TA often demonstrates the preparation and the students observe the results. Ideally, given availability of instruments and live materials, groups of two to four students are able to make their own preparations and carry out their own experimental procedures.

What are the requirements for success as a TA in a biology laboratory? Both technical skills and language skills are important. I will consider these in turn. In the technical area, the TA should be familiar with the biological phenomena under consideration--both what "should" happen and what "may" happen, given the diversity of biological specimens and the inexperience of students in handling biological materials and biological instrumentation. Text-book knowledge of the material is essential; first hand experience at actually carrying out the procedure is even better. When training new TAs (and new faculty) in our Cell and Molecular Biology course, I suggest that the new instructors actually come to a laboratory section and carry out the exercise as if they were students. Success depends on the pacing of the work--in order to finish in the allotted time, the class must be doing the right things at the right time.

Second, the TA must know the instruments to be used--many a class has been hung up by blown fuse or an inappropriate setting on a spectrophotometer. TAs should have a feeling for what students may do to a machine to make it falter and how to correct such (usually minor) defects. Experience is by far the best teacher in this respect. Third, the TA should have a feeling for biological materials, from animals to cells to biochemical preparations. Some students are uncomfortable facing an intact frog or rat and have no idea where to find the liver, or how to procure a tube full of blood or hang up a gastrocnemius muscle.

Each of the activities mentioned above requires particular skills in language and communication on the part of the TA. Normally, the instructor gives an introductory lecture of about 30 minutes, to provide theoretical background on the exercise to be done, and to discuss how the data is to be collected and recorded. This introduction should be well organized, presented clearly with appropriate use of the blackboard or other visual aids, and provide opportunities for clarification of points raised by students. Thus it requires the ability to observe comprehension and answer questions, as well as the oral skills, including proper pronunciation, to present the material in the first place.

Following an initial presentation, the instructor then demonstrates the procedures to be used and the function of any specialized equipment. Explanations should be clear, precise, and to the point, and particular areas in which students might find problems should be highlighted. Again, feedback from students on the level of their understanding is an important component. Once the students are carrying out the exercise, the TA should circulate around the class, both to ask and to answer questions. This one-on-one interaction requires good questioning techniques and good listening abilities. Finally, when students have completed their work, the TA leads a discussion of the data and helps the students to draw the appropriate conclusions. At this time, skill in eliciting information from students and helping them to clue each other is essential.

In summary, the language skills needed as a laboratory instructor in biology include the following: ability to prepare and deliver an organized lecture of about 30 minutes; to demonstrate procedures with words and actions; to ask and answer questions in both group and individual situations; to be observant and responsive to various levels of student understanding; and to be able to elicit information that will help both a particular student and the entire class.

Instructors in recitation sections normally work in courses that do not have a laboratory component and often include students whose primary interest is not science. This presents an additional problem of motivation, and a successful TA in such a section will be one who not only has technical knowledge of the field, but also enthusiasm and the ability to entice students into thinking beyond their normal interests. Language skills at least at the level of those required in the laboratory are necessary for a recitation instructor. Interactions among students, as well as between students and instructor, are important components of a recitation section, and the instructor needs to be aware of the flow of information and to be able to move the discussion along and to change course when necessary.

For both laboratory and recitation sections, TAs will often be asked to grade written work, including laboratory reports and examinations. Here again, both technical expertise and language skills are essential. Laboratory reports are usually written in a formal style, with which the TA may be familiar but which is often new to the students. Encouragement and careful comments on early drafts will helps students learn how to communicate in a scientific style. Preparing exams for recitation or laboratory sections also requires skills in precise and unambiguous formulation of questions. I often suggest that course instructors preview initial drafts of exams prepared by new TAs.

Teaching assistants in biology are expected to be both technically and linguistically competent. Many international TAs have the appropriate level of technical expertise but lack the language skills to translate their expertise into functional behaviors for the classroom or laboratory. A training program for

TAs should be designed to take advantage of the technical skills of the TAs while increasing their capabilities in language and pedagogy. A thorough understanding of what TAs are called upon to do in their classes is necessary for development of such a program.

Duties and Activities of Chemistry Teaching Assistants: Background Information for FTA Training Program Development

Kim E. Gilmore, University of Idaho

An important aspect of a foreign TA training program is the preparation of foreign graduate students for imminent teaching assignments. Much of the training involving teaching strategies is focussed on the types of classroom situations anticipated by the trainers. The same criterion is used to choose the types of communication skills stressed during training. Since many programs have a limited amount of time allotted for FTA training, only the most important skills can be presented. Accurate information about the types of classroom skills needed for teaching assistants to perform well in various disciplines would increase the likelihood that the training provided would meet the needs of those being trained.

Often, those involved in the design and delivery of FTA training programs are faculty from the disciplines of English, education, faculty development, and ESL (English as a Second Language). These faculty members have a good understanding of the nature of classroom duties usually assigned to teaching assistants in courses in the humanities. They generally have more difficulty predicting teaching responsibilities in store for TAs in the areas of mathematics, engineering, and the sciences. As a result, some FTAs may be well-prepared to face classroom situations which they never encounter, and extremely ill-prepared for the assignments which they are given.

The following is a discussion of the roles of teaching assistants in most university chemistry departments. The activities discussed and the communication skills deemed necessary for successful job performance are presented as an aid to those designers of FTA programs in the hope that programs more effective for all of the students being trained may be designed. It would also be helpful if spokespersons from other scientific disciplines came forward with similar information.

Graduate students supported by teaching assistantships in the chemistry department may have a variety of assignments. A majority of these students are assigned to work with freshman-level courses. This assignment usually involves teaching either laboratories or recitation sessions. The kinds of activities associated with these two different types of teaching will be discussed separately.

Laboratory instructors generally give a 10-20 minute introductory lecture, discussing the main purpose of the experiment to be performed, potential hazards involved, calculations required, and demonstrating unfamiliar techniques and equipment. The remainder of the three-hour session is spent moving about the laboratory, questioning students to determine their understanding of the procedure and theory and answering questions about the laboratory exercise. The main purpose of this activity is helping the students, rather than quizzing them. Laboratory instructors grade the formal reports prepared by students, and some teaching assistants may prepare and grade quizzes covering laboratory topics.

Recitation instructors conduct 50-minute question-and-answer sessions once weekly. Topics may range from solving homework problems to discussing points in the lecture course which were unclear to the students. Recitation instructors do not lecture. Generally, homework problems form the major topic of discussion. Quizzes are given during the recitation session, as well. The quizzes may be written by the teaching assistant or by the principal lecturer for the course, depending on the lecturer's preference. Quizzes are generally graded by the teaching assistant, and discussed during the following recitation session. Exams for the main course are often proctored by teaching assistants. These exams are usually written by the principal lecturer, and may be graded by this individual, or by the teaching assistants as a group. Graded exams are also discussed during recitation sessions.

A variety of English language skills and general communication skills are required to perform satisfactorily as a teaching assistant in the chemistry department. For the pre-lab lecture, laboratory instructors must be able to organize their material and talk for somewhat extended periods of time. They must be able to pronounce the names of specialized equipment and experimental techniques properly. As this is an informal setting, they must also be sensitive to non-verbal signals from the students indicating lack of understanding, and be willing to pause and answer questions. After the brief lecture, questioning and listening skills are needed for the remainder of the session. Reading proficiency is needed for grading lab reports, as well as familiarity with the informal language often used by American undergraduates. Good writing skills are required as well, as written comments can be very helpful to students. Preparation for each lab involves reading the laboratory manual and the additional tips provided in the instructor's manual.

For the most part, the skills required for lab assistants are also important for recitation instructors. These TA's do not lecture, but there is a great deal of interaction between the instructor and the students as a group. (Lab assistants generally work with one or two students at a time.) Listening skills and awareness of nonverbal communication are very important in this setting. Questioning skills, for clarification at least, are also valuable. Writing proficiency, <u>including</u> legibility, is important due to the large amount of time spent at the chalkboard working problems. Reading and writing are also used in grading quizzes and exams. Discussions of graded materials can be lengthy, so speaking proficiency is essential. This includes accurate pronunciation of technical terms, and the ability to explain a difficult concept in a variety of ways. Preparation for each session involves thorough reading of the text for the course, and may include attendance of class lectures as well.

In short, proficiency in the full range of communication skills is vital to successful performance as a teaching assistant in the field of chemistry. Decisions about whether a foreign student should be assigned to recitation or laboratory teaching (often made within the chemistry department) usually places students with marginal communication skills in charge of laboratory classes. After careful analysis, this seems to be ill-advised, as a lab assignment appears to be equally demanding in terms of necessary English-language skills.

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