

ITA training ala carte

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TESOL 2007

Seattle

Meeting the diverse needs and schedules of students

- We will present an alternative model of ITA training that allows flexibility, innovation and more in-depth training by offering a wide selection of workshops and classes

What types of diversity exist in your programs?

- Time frame for TA assignments?
 - E.g., always first year, by end of 3rd year
- Conflicts in scheduling ITA training?
- Wide variety in students training needs?
(language fluency and culture understanding)
- Other?

Advantages of the “Ala Carte” model of ITA training

- Provides a selection of classes, workshops, one-time seminars and tutoring offered each semester
- Allows each student to attend the work that focuses most directly on the skills he/she most needs to develop
- Accommodates a variety of schedules and department requirements (e.g., must TA in the first year or can wait several years) and differences in training needs (e.g., pronunciation work vs. fluency development).

A few caveats about the Carnegie Mellon program

- Not just for ITAs; same classes, workshops, tutoring available to **all** graduate students who are NNES
- No “dean of graduate studies”; each department acts independently so diversity in admission standards, TA requirements, etc.
- Population:
 - 1,525 international grad students (approx. 60% of total grad population)

Benefits for the students

- Maximum training in a minimum amount of time
- Support over the length of a graduate program
- Can choose support service that focuses on skills most needed; broader options
- Provides for those preparing for the ITA test and for ITAs who need continued support during the course of their TA assignments.
- Professional development for success after graduate school

Benefits for the university

- Cost effective
- Ease of scheduling
- Adaptable: easy to pilot new modules, adapt quickly to changing needs

Genesis of the program at Carnegie Mellon

- 1985: Initial focus: Support for NNES graduate students (four evenings of individual tutoring)
- 1986: add Speaking and Listening workshop
- Late 80's: add undergraduate tutors, an ITA training class, and individual writing appointments
- 1990's to present: constant growth and expansion of workshops and classes (currently 24 different sessions each semester, see: <http://www.cmu.edu/icc/calendar/index.shtml>)

2007 Program: **Classes/workshops**

- **Two 7 week credit classes:**
 - **Language & Culture for Teaching (ITA Preparation)**
 - **Building Fluency for Presentations**

- **Five Workshops (2 - 5 weeks, 3 hours weekly)**
E.g., Advanced Fluency Challenges, Advanced Grammar Monitoring , Presentation Basics, Public Speaking Clinic, Speaking & Listening

2007 Program:

Seminars/ Individual Work

- **Fifteen 2-hour seminars**

E.g., Becoming a Better Language Learner, Critical Listening, Elevator Talk, Hallway Talk, ITA Test Overview, Job Interviewing, Pronunciation for Advanced Speakers, Oral Qualifiers, Citing Sources, Improving Scientific Writing

- **Three weekly drop-in sessions**

Focus on Fluency, Focus on Grammar, Focus on Pronunciation

- **Individual**

Tutoring, Writing Clinic, Self-paced materials

“Hooking them in”; students join the program, not just a particular class

- Individual interviews to place students in the appropriate services
- Written plan for long-term study
- Realistic assessment of language strengths and weaknesses
- Motivation to want to develop these skills
- “Transcript” at the end of graduate work (if requested)

Keeping them interested: active participants in their language development

- Individualized plan: placement interviews/ITA test give students a plan for improvement and helps them understand their own strengths and weaknesses
- Continual individualized feedback after workshops and in tutoring
- Records kept for each student (and can even give students an ICC “transcript” when they graduate)

Defining the **robust fluency** needed for academic success

- Successful NNS must be able to:
 - Put their knowledge into words for a variety of audiences
 - Use technical and non-technical language easily
 - Reword terms and concepts
 - Define key terms clearly and simply
 - Give examples to illustrate technical/theoretical concepts
 - Coherently connect ideas through transitional language
 - Participate in small talk about academic topics
 - Master material presented in English in either spoken or written form
 - Write in the expected style for U.S. academic papers
 - Understand English as it is spoken in the US academy including the underlying meanings and connotations



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Department of Physics
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Credit Classes are offered as 3-unit mini (half-semester) classes, and are graded on a pass/fail basis.

Language & Culture for Teaching

Workshops are offered in modules of varying length, 2-8 weeks. Total hours for each workshop below are indicated in ().

Advanced Fluency Challenges (12.5)

Advanced Grammar Monitoring (11)

Focus on Fluency (3)

Focus on Pronunciation (6)

Focus on Grammar (4.5)

Presentation Skills I (8.5)

Public Speaking Clinic (6.5)

Seminars are one-time sessions that meet for 2 hours.

Citing Sources

Critical Listening

Elevator Talk

Improving Scientific Writing

ITA Test Overview

Job Interviewing Skills

This documents activities with
Carnegie Mellon University's
Intercultural Communication Center (ICC).

The Intercultural Communication Center's mission is:

- to provide support to help nonnative English speakers succeed in their academic programs
- to help international teaching assistants (TAs) and faculty develop the skills needed to provide effective instruction in the American university
- to help both the university and departments identify and respond to the changing needs of international students and nonnative English speakers

Individual Appointments allow students to work in depth on the specific skills they need to develop including discipline-specific language, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, conversation, listening comprehension and TA skills.

Spring 2004 - Fall 2005, 27 hours

International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Test

The ITA test is a rigorous test; candidates are required to teach an unrehearsed lesson from their field to a panel of raters. The candidate is rated on pronunciation, grammar, field specific fluency, teaching fluency, listening comprehension, and overall comprehensibility.

Category Two, Fall 2005: this category indicates that the student has the language proficiency to teach at Carnegie Mellon concurrent with continued language work.

ICC Services

Individual Work

- Tutoring - suggested work:

- Self-paced appointments - suggested material:

- Writing Clinic

Classes & Workshops

- Advanced Fluency Challenges
- Advanced Grammar Monitoring
- Exploring Pittsburgh
- Focus on: Fluency / Grammar / Pronunciation
- Language & Culture for Teaching
- Presentation Basics
- Public Speaking Clinic
- Speaking & Listening
- Other:

Seminars

- Becoming a Better Language Learner
- Conversational Styles
- Critical Listening
- Elevator Talk / Hallway Talk
- ITA Test Overview
- Job Interview Skills
- The Multi-cultural Classroom
- Oral Exams
- Pronunciation for Advanced Speakers
- Reading / Writing Seminars

Summary

Pronunciation Strength Weakness

Grammar Strength Weakness

Fluency Strength Weakness

Communicative Competence Strength Weakness

Listening Strength Weakness

Comments

ITA Test: before taking the test, student needs:

- Not applicable - will not test
- No preparation
- Preparation: _____ semester(s) of language work before taking the ITA test