Ensuring Successful International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)

Dyanne Foskey
Western Michigan University, dyanne.foskey@wmich.edu

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Ensuring Successful International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)
Dyanne Foskey, MA TESOL
Center for English Language and Culture for International Students (CELCIS)
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To ensure the success of both the ITAs and their students, various types of training and support are needed.

More than Just Language – 4 Take-A-Ways

1. Training

Issue: ITAs may be unfamiliar with the expectations for their role and unfamiliar with the campus.

Solution 1: Summer Prep Program on-site
- Taught through one or all of these:
  - ESL programs
  - Graduate College
  - Center for Teaching Excellence
- Allows ITAs to become familiar with the campus
- Familiarize ITAs with Generation Z expectations
- Provide common strategies used in facilitating discussions, such as language use for
  - changing the topic
  - backchanneling
  - summarizing

2. Facilitating Discussions

Issue: This type of classroom activity may be unfamiliar to some ITAs due to the format of teaching in their home countries.

Solution 1: Provide specific instruction on expectations of American students
- Familiarize ITAs with Generation Z expectations
- Provide common strategies used in facilitating discussions, such as language use for
  - changing the topic
  - backchanneling
  - summarizing

Solution 2: Provide tips for common situations that occur in discussions, such as
- students who dominate the group
- students who don’t participate
- students who haven’t completed their homework prior to class

Solution 3: Provide workshops that have undergraduate volunteers who are “students” for the ITAs to practice their strategies
- undergraduates could earn service learning credit for participating

3. Utilizing Authentic ITA Teaching Videos

Issue: Most instructional videos used for ITA Training are staged by professional actors and are outdated.

Solution: ITA Programs collect authentic videos of ITAs in the classroom/lab. We can have a central location for all to use, including transcripts/worksheets for discussion during training.
- problems and their solutions
- language used to resolve problems

4. Repairing for Virtual Office Hours

Issue: This format for holding office hours is becoming more common at American universities; therefore, ITAs need information and support on how to hold virtual office hours. It hold unique challenges and opportunities for ITAs and their students.

Solution 1: Provide information about various platforms used for this
- Blue Jeans
- Zoom
- Google Hangouts
- Photo Booth (MAC)

Solution 2: Reveal typical challenges ITAs may encounter
- inappropriate discussions
- informal / unprofessional language

Sources

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Contact Information

Dyanne Foskey, Language Specialist
Center for English Language and Culture for International Students (CELCIS)
Ellsworth Hall
Western Michigan University
1903 W. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

dyanne.foskey@wmich.edu
(269) 387-4800