

The International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Training Program

Program Description:

The ITA Training program

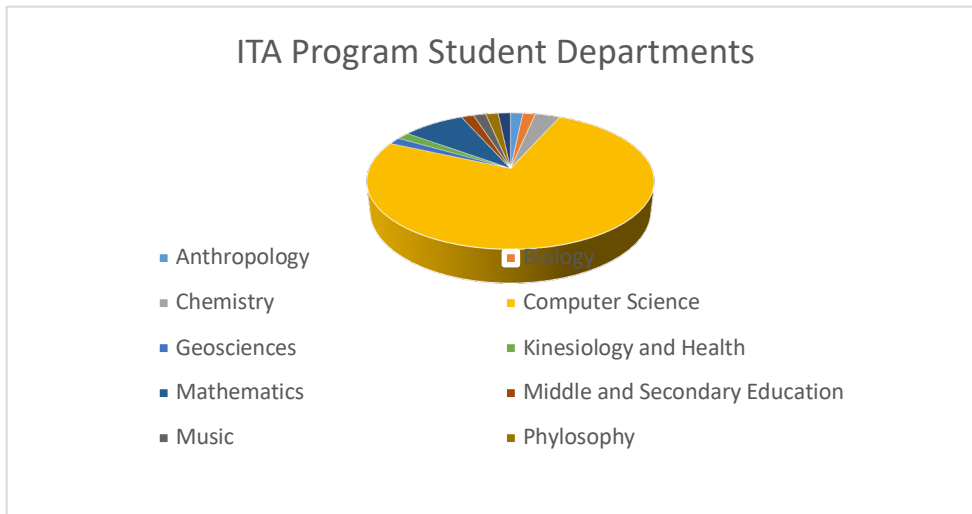
- aims at preparing Non-Native Speaker of English (NNSE) future faculty at GSU for their classroom assignments.
- started with a university-wide needs analysis with focused groups of ITAs in the fall 2014. The program was piloted in the fall 2015.
- initiated in 2016 and consists of three modules that cover three semesters:
 - a course ESL7500, offered by the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL and sponsored by CETL
 - a set of workshops In the first module, students enroll in a semester-long course, ESL7500 Teaching at the University, offered by the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL and sponsored by CETL
 - four workshops that focus on general classroom practices: presentation clarity and teacher immediacy, student engagement, motivation, and issues pertinent to students' attitudes towards NNSE instructors' accents.
 - a series of in-class observations after the ITAs are designated instructors of record, with follow-up meetings to discuss classroom practices and review ITA development.

Coordinator:

Dr. Viviana Cortes is Associate Director for Intercultural Communication and English as a Second Language (ESL) at CETL, and Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and ESL. Dr. Cortes is well-known in the area of English for Specific Purposes and Teaching English to speakers of other languages. She is the new editor of *English for Specific Purposes*, a top journal in her field.

Participants:

- 62 students from 11 departments have passed through the ITA program
- 20 students completed the three modules. (many participants finished the first two modules but may not have gotten teaching assignments yet.



Impact and Outcomes:

- The ITA program brought university-wide attention to some problematic issue of accented faculty.
- GSU is working on a plan for early assessment of this population.
- The twenty students who completed the whole program have been instructors of record at the university teaching a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate classes in their disciplines.
- Students shared their Student Evaluation of Instructor (SEI) with the ITA program coordinator, showing great development and improvement in their evaluations across the program.
- Other outcomes are just now starting to arise: students in the first ITA cohorts who successfully completed the whole program are currently in the job market for academic positions in their disciplines.

Highlights:

- The ITA Training Program is not a mandatory program for NNSE teaching assistants but it is the first program of its kind at GSU and it has proven to be of great help to ITAs who are instructors of record in their disciplinary programs and those who are planning to engage in academic careers upon graduation.

Evolution:

- Online workshops: invaluable accomplishment. It facilitates the completion of this module avoiding scheduling conflicts.

- More ITAs will be taking part in the program when the university makes a final decision on new assessment procedures for incoming ITAs, a policy that other universities in the University System of Georgia have already implemented.