English Language Institute

English Communication Strategies for International Teaching Assistants

Course Overview

This course is designed for international graduate students for whom English is an additional language who are currently teaching or plan to teach in the near future. In the course, students will improve their English proficiency with a focus on the culturally specific communication skills needed to succeed as an instructor.

Course Objectives

Cultural and emotional aspects of teaching

*Students will be able to*

- think critically about first impressions (video recorded)
- outline U.S. non-verbal language cues
- identify positive teacher traits in home culture and in U.S.
- discuss North American undergraduate definitions of “good” teachers
  - find ways to demonstrate these qualities (“easy ins”)
  - discuss high and low context culture and the effect on teaching (possible miscommunications)
  - collectivist and individualist culture and the effect on your academic career in the future
  - locus of control
  - cultural profile
- gain a general understanding of undergraduates studying in the U.S. and consider the definition of diversity
- accurately discuss the campus climate
- outline ways to fight nervousness
- choose the best volume, tone, and speaking speed for their classrooms
- brainstorm ways to solve typical conflicts with students (role plays)
- navigate supervisor relationships (role plays)
- review tips for emailing students and supervisors

Teaching Toolkit

*Students will be able to*

- use online surveys to learn about our students beforehand
- review preparation tips
- refine the syllabus (including objectives and contact information)
- introduce a syllabus in the front of the class (video recorded)
- sell the class
- use the board or PPT materials effectively
- present information in an organized fashion
- give clear definitions/explanations of terms
- give directions
- explain a visual
- name question types (for assessment)
- determine good questions to ask the students
- field questions appropriately (and use compensation strategies) – (video recorded)
- scaffold material
• use think, pair, share effectively
• brainstorm ways students can review material interactively

Language objectives

Students will be able to
• identify specific grammar forms and aspects of pronunciation to improve
• practice the pronunciation of key terms from our fields & learn about online EAL pronunciation resources
• practice the pronunciation of our current students’ names (if teaching this quarter)
• learn pronunciation compensation strategies
• discuss grammar compensation strategies
• learn and practice typical classroom language, classroom phrasal verbs, and classroom slang/idioms
• review abbreviations students and teachers use in the U.S.
• review visual names and types
• choose the most appropriate level of directness for specific scenarios (modals and set phrases that ask permission or indicate suggestions or orders)
• use organizational cues (cues to use when giving an overview, providing an example, making a transition between ideas, etc.)


Grades
This course is pass/fail. A passing grade requires an 87%, which is the equivalent of a B+. You will receive confidential detailed feedback on your performance in class.

Audio Journals: 25%
Presentations: 30%
Final presentation: 25%
Various In-class assignments: 20%
100% total

ELI Resource Page
http://tiny.cc/n64q0x
Please visit the English Language Institute’s resource page. Here you will find Chicago activities and a wide variety of recommended online resources.

Academic Integrity
High value is placed on academic integrity in North American higher education institutions, and the University of Chicago is no exception. We will be talking explicitly about the meanings and expectations of academic integrity in this class. For now, the important thing to keep in mind is that you are allowed to work together on homework and assignments; however, you are not allowed to turn in identical work for individually-assigned tasks (that is, when an assignment is NOT a group assignment).

Disability Statement
The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or you think you have a disability) and, as a result, need reasonable accommodation to participate fully in this course, you are encouraged to contact
Student Disability Services as soon as possible: disabilities@uchicago.edu. You must be registered with Student Disability Services in order to receive accommodations.

**Communication Policy**
Students in ELI courses are required to regularly access their UChicago email accounts. (Gmail can host your UChicago email, however.)

**Classroom Behavior**
UChicago maintains a strong commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression. In this treasured and open environment, members of the university community call upon each other to exercise professional courtesy and sensitivity with respect to people and topics dealing with differences in race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationality. ELI instructors will gladly honor your request to be addressed by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please let your instructor know as early as possible so they may make the appropriate changes to the information on their rosters. Read President Robert J. Zimmer's address at Colgate College: *Free Expression on University Campuses: The Chicago Principles*.

**Student Counseling Services**
In the U.S., nearly one out of ten university students use the mental health or counseling services offered on their campuses. In other words, seeking help for large or small life problems is very common. For professional, free, and confidential counseling services, visit [http://counseling.uchicago.edu](http://counseling.uchicago.edu).

*Student Counseling Services*
Location: 5555 S Woodlawn Avenue.
Phone: (773) 702-9800
Emergency after hours: (773) 702-3625

**Confidentiality and Title IX: A Note on Sexual Misconduct**
Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking — is also prohibited at our school.

Our school encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to talk to someone about what happened, so they can get the support they need and our school can respond appropriately. If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, want more information about filing a report, or have questions about school policies and procedures, please contact our Title IX Coordinator, which can be found on our school’s website.

Our school is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore it cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, but it will consider a request for confidentiality and respect it to the extent possible.

As a teacher, I am also required by our school to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident.