CTE-ELP Program Annual Report
2019-2020

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Executive Summary

For the first nine months of the reporting year, the Center for Teaching Excellence’s English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program, which is tasked with promoting effective classroom communication, operated as normal with predominantly face-to-face delivery while addressing areas for improvement that were identified in its 2018-19 Annual Report. During these nine months, more future and current international instructors availed themselves of ELP resources than in any year prior, and the accessibility of ELP resources, both at the flagship and its branch campuses, was significantly enhanced. One high-impact language learning resource - Conversation Partnerships - doubled its capacity, and others (e.g. Practice Groups and Private Consultations) enhanced their remote accessibility. These efforts proved to be invaluable when the COVID-19 pandemic compelled the CTE-ELP to go virtual. Efforts already underway were accelerated so that there was continuity in programming in March 2020, with all CTE-ELP resources (including a virtual language lab) remaining available to the future and current international instructors that utilize the ELP program to develop spoken English proficiency. Going forward, these enhancements will be more important than ever to ensure that undergraduate instruction is not interrupted by a shortage of instructors with the language skills required to facilitate students’ learning, be it face-to-face or online.

Overarching goals of the CTE-ELP

The aim of the Center for Teaching Excellence’s English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program is to improve classroom communication (understood as any communication related to instruction [i.e., office hours, lab, etc.]) at Texas A&M University. In so doing, the CTE-ELP aligns with the Center’s broader mission to support the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. In terms of the university’s strategic planning (Office of the Provost 2015), the CTE-ELP corresponds to Goal 1: “Provide an outstanding educational experience for all students” and in particular Strategy 3:

“Review and enhance all academic units’ curricular, pedagogical, and career preparation activities, especially the development of our instructors, to optimize value to our students” [emphasis added]

While the CTE-ELP makes its services available to any instructor at the university, the majority of its clients are international graduate students who are or will be Graduate Assistants-Teaching (GATs), Graduate Assistants-Lecturing (GALs), Graduate Assistant Instructors (GALs), and Graduate Teaching Fellows (GTFs). For simplicity’s sake, in this document, all of the aforementioned instructors are referred to as ITAs: International Teaching Assistants. Their primary language is one other than American English, yet they must be comprehensible to an audience of students who are predominantly speakers of American English. Many are current teaching assistants whose communication skills are already impacting undergraduate education. Others aspire to become teaching assistants but must first develop greater speaking proficiency to become eligible to teach.
Year round, the CTE-ELP serves university departments by ensuring that departments have a broad pool of graduate students who are qualified for instructional roles when their departments need them. It also serves the international graduate students themselves by offering professional development in speaking. In so doing, it supports the strategic goal of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) to "enhance the graduate experiences and development of all graduate and professional students, personally and professionally."

To be qualified for an instructional role, an international graduate student must, among other requirements, be English language certified. This is accomplished by achieving a Level 1 score on a recognized language test, such as the TOEFL speaking section or the university’s own English Language Proficiency Exam (ELPE). University policy allows for students who are Level 2 (close to achieving a Level 1 score) to be conditionally appointed as TAs, provided that they participate in the CTE-ELP simultaneously and reach Level 1 before the semester ends.

The CTE-ELP’s success can be measured not only by the number of conditionally-appointed TAs who achieve a Level 1 score during their first semester of teaching, but also by the number of TAs who participate with the CTE-ELP and achieve a Level 1 score before their first semester of teaching, and therefore enter the classroom with more preparation and no language-related conditions burdening them.

**Three-pronged approach**

To make the greatest impact possible, the CTE-ELP uses a three-pronged approach, informed by research from the fields of adult second language acquisition, intercultural communication, and speech perception and comprehension:

1. Coaching current and future instructors whose primary language is not English to speak more clearly;
2. Consulting units on university policies and best practices for preparing and selecting international teaching assistants; and
3. Providing opportunities for English-dominant Aggies to improve their comprehension and tolerance of accented speech.

As seen in Figure 1, the CTE-ELP works with campus units and individual students to effect improvement in classroom communication.

**Training instructors who use ESL to speak comprehensibly**

The first prong (training instructors who use English as a Second Language to speak comprehensibly) occupies the majority of the CTE-ELP’s efforts and resources. The bulk of this report will review the impact and effectiveness of this unit's efforts in this regard.

**Advising units on policies and best practices for preparing ITAs**

Also important are State and system requirements related to ITAs and the processes by which ITAs are selected and trained (the second prong). The CTE-ELP assists OGAPS in disseminating and clarifying expectations for ITAs, through events such as the New Graduate
Advisors Workshop. In addition to this, the CTE-ELP also shares best practices in ITA preparation and selection and the University’s process for language certification and required language training.

**CTE-ELP’s Three-Pronged Approach to Effective Classroom Communication**

Figure 1. CTE-ELP’s Three-Pronged Approach to Effective Classroom Communication

To be clear, the CTE-ELP does not decide who is eligible to be an instructor; that is done by test raters (including Testing Services in the case of the ELPE), by departments (in the case of faculty and post-docs), or by OGAPS (in the case of Alternative Certification and Emergency Deferrals of Certification). Rather, the CTE-ELP helps international students navigate the certification process and coaches students and faculty to speak comprehensibly.

Figure 2 is a flowchart “Recommended English Language Proficiency Process,” created by CTE-ELP staff, that illustrates the recommended path to certification.
Figure 2. Recommended English Language Proficiency Process
To efficiently advise units on policies and best practices regarding the appointment of international students to teaching positions, the CTE-ELP designed and publicized an interactive questionnaire (u.tamu.edu/TA-ELP) in July 2019. In a few minutes by answering a series of questions, faculty members and staff (such as graduate advisors) are able to determine if an international student is eligible to be hired as a TA, and if not, what steps must be taken by the student or by the department to secure eligibility. The report is available as a downloadable .pdf (see Appendix 3 for an example). This questionnaire, and its use by faculty, staff, and students themselves, is reported in more detail in the section “Other enhancements.”

Promoting listening comprehension

While the CTE-ELP primarily focuses on the speaking proficiency of instructors, it cannot be denied that communication is a two-way street. Listening comprehension (the third prong) can be enhanced by thoughtfully constructed activities that simultaneously develop international students’ speaking skills and enhance domestic students’ capacity to understand accented English.

Even if ITAs achieve a high level of English language proficiency, research indicates that their students’ listening comprehension can drop by as much as 40% if those students harbor negative language attitudes toward their instructors (Rubin, 1992). But these attitudes can be improved through structured, intergroup contact (Kang, Rubin, & Lindemann, 2015) among other interventions.

Through the generosity of the Galloway Foundation, the CTE-ELP has employed a graduate assistant from the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture, Xueyan Hu, whose research focuses on teacher training and perceptions of the comprehensibility of accented speech.

Hu conducted research in which one hundred and ninety-eight undergraduates from more than 40 different academic departments on the TAMU campus listened to seven audio files adapted from video-recorded ITAs’ micro-teaching presentations in a CTE-ELP ITA training program. While undergraduates listened to these samples, they rated ITAs’ accentedness, comprehensibility, and teaching ability. Undergraduates’ previous experience with ITAs, their attitudes towards ITAs, and their language attitudes were surveyed before they listened to the samples.

The findings of this study indicated that undergraduates’ previous exposure to ITAs was a statistically significant predictor for their evaluation of ITAs’ teaching ability. Generally speaking, the more contact undergraduates had with ITAs, the more positive an evaluation they gave for ITAs’ teaching ability. This study also showed that undergraduates’ attitude towards ITAs was a statistically significant predictor for their perceptions of ITAs’ speech comprehensibility and teaching ability. Undergraduates who have positive attitudes towards ITAs typically felt it was easier to understand ITAs’ speech and gave better evaluation of ITAs’ teaching quality (Cooper, Payne, Hu, Dixon, & Kuo, forthcoming).

Inspired by the findings of the above study, CTE English language consultants delivered a one-hour linguistic diversity workshop aiming to ameliorate undergraduates’ standard language ideologies and improve their attitudes towards unfamiliar accents of English.
Research suggests that explicit training in linguistic diversity can begin to close the communication gap between ITAs and American undergraduates. The gap diminishes even more when the same American undergraduates spend time in multicultural and multilingual communication environments, such as conversation partnerships (described in the section below “Continued Programming and Services”). Both activities enhance the climate of the university in terms of respect, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

By these three efforts (coaching ITAs in speaking, advising faculty and staff in university requirements and best practices, and promoting undergraduate listening comprehension), the CTE-ELP program endeavors to improve classroom communication.

Programming & services

Total number of touchpoints

Touchpoints by the CTE-ELP for the 2019-2020 year number 3743, including standard face-to-face programming pre-COVID (n=3491) and virtual programming offered during the COVID-19 pandemic beginning mid-March 2020 (n=252). This is the highest number of annual touchpoints yet in the short three-year history of the CTE-ELP. These touchpoints are of internationals at TAMU who speak North American English as a second language or dialect. The majority by far are graduate students; this number includes a handful of international faculty, postdocs, visiting scholars, and undergraduates.

Beyond these 3743 touchpoints, the CTE-ELP enriched the college experience of a few hundred domestic English-dominant undergraduate students who participated in conversation partnerships, formal dialogues with international graduate students, linguistic diversity workshops, Language Week, and socials designed for cross-cultural communication. Nor does this number include graduate advisors who attended workshops about ELP policy, or the ARCH faculty who requested a customized presentation.

The number of touchpoints from March 2020 through the end of April was, unsurprisingly, reduced due to an unprecedented pandemic that caused anxiety and disruption for many students, as well as the cancellation of the ELPE these two months.

A closer analysis of the numbers reveal that participation in intake assessments, intake follow-ups, lab appointments, lab walk-ins, teaching observations, formative assessments, and workshops (including practice groups) declined slightly. Perhaps this can be partially accounted for by the fact that the previous reporting period covered 13 months (to line up with the final ELPE of the academic year) while this reporting period covered only 12 months.

However, participation in private consultations increased slightly (from 111 in the previous reporting period to 117), and participation in videotaped microteaching increased markedly (from 26 to 61). Participation in special workshops (that is, workshops outside the mainstay Practice
Group series) increased from 936 to 1008. Most striking is the increase of touchpoints from conversation partner meetings, which more than tripled from 348 in the previous reporting period to 1138 for this one.

Despite the arrival of the pandemic, the total number of touchpoints remains strong at 3743, compared to 3083 touchpoints the previous reporting year.

Demographics of clients

International students who received individual attention in the CTE-ELP program, beginning with an intake assessment, completed a demographic survey in which they reported the ethnicity they identified as. Figure 3 shows the responses (n = 69) for the entire 12-month reporting period.

![Figure 3. Self-reported ethnicity of CTE-ELP clients](image)

These results largely mirror the statistics from the most up-to-date headcount by International Student Services (“Student Headcount Fall 2018”), which lists the top 5 countries sending international students to TAMU as follows: China, India, South Korea, Mexico, and Iran. Note that students from the first three countries identify as “Asian.” Note also that Iranian/Persian students identify as “White,” along with a European, according to their responses to the CTE-ELP questionnaire. This provides some reassurance that different demographic groups are utilizing CTE-ELP resources proportionately, and we have not identified any underserved ethnic
population. This has held steady over time; there is very little change between last year’s demographic makeup of CTE-ELP clients and this year’s.

In terms of colleges, Figure 4 shows that among CTE-ELP clients (n=67), the College of Engineering is by far the most highly represented, followed by the College of Architecture, the College of Science, and the College of Education and Human Development tied with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

![Figure 4. Self-reported college affiliation of CTE-ELP clients](image)

As compared to the presence of international students in graduate programs in these colleges reported in the ISS Fall 2018 Headcount, the proportions differ. For sheer numbers of enrolled international students in graduate programs, again the College of Engineering dominates, but it is followed by the College of Science, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Liberal Arts, the Mays Business School, and the College of Architecture.

This means that students in the College of Liberal Arts and Mays Business School are underrepresented in the CTE-ELP. Conversely, students in the College of Architecture and the College of Education and Human Development are overrepresented. There are several explanations for this. For one, students who are accepted into programs that place a premium on communication (such as English or an MBA) arrive at Texas A&M with stronger English speaking skills, on average, than students in other programs. Secondly, there are more opportunities for teaching assistantships in some colleges than others, which is a motivating factor for some graduate students to seek English language training. Finally, there is physical proximity; the CTE-ELP is located next to the Architecture building and far from Mays Business School, which offers its own Communications Lab.
Description of continued programming & services

Since August 2017, the CTE-ELP program has provided a flexible, individualized approach to language training. Rather than register and attend a semester-long course - the typical approach to language training for graduate instructors - clients of the CTE-ELP co-create individualized improvement plans with an ELP Consultant based on needs identified during their initial Intake Assessment - a 45 minute diagnostic interview. When individual needs have been determined, the client, with the guidance of a Consultant, selects from a suite of language improvement programming and resources that the CTE-ELP provides. Clients select resources based on the needs identified during their Intake Assessments. Not all clients partake of all resources.

Table 1 shows all of the standard resources and programming that the unit has offered since its inception and continues to offer year-round (i.e., during and between all academic semesters). The CTE-ELP has published in detail about its overall approach and learning outcomes for each service in Payne, Cooper, Hu, Figueiredo, and Felix (2018) (http://www.eijeas.com/index.php/EIJEAS/article/view/134) and Cooper, Payne, and Hu (2018) (http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolitais/issues/2018-11-30/5.html).

Table 1. Description of ELP services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intake assessment</td>
<td>Diagnostic interview by two ELP consultants to assess spoken English proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake follow-up</td>
<td>Private consultation in which ELP consultant shares findings with client (strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations); client and consultant agree to an Individual Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other private consultations</td>
<td>Weekly meeting of consultant with client, to tutor, give feedback, and hold client accountable to Individual Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formative assessment</strong></td>
<td>Private consultation in which consultant measures current proficiency compared to proficiency at Intake Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conversation partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Pair composed of one international grad student and one domestic undergrad student; meets weekly for 10 weeks to discuss cultural differences; builds listening comprehension and pronunciation accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practice groups</strong></td>
<td>Interactive workshop for ITAs (and aspiring ITAs) emphasizing pronunciation, functional vocabulary, and the culture of the American college classroom; series of 10 lessons led by consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom observations</strong></td>
<td>Visit by consultant to a client’s class/lab; feedback provided in a later consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workshops</strong></td>
<td>Information about adult second language acquisition, spoken communication, and linguistic diversity presented by consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Videotaped microteaching</strong></td>
<td>Opportunity for clients to teach a 5-10 minute lesson in front of a video camera and receive feedback from a consultant, as well as the opportunity to self-assess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronunciation software</strong></td>
<td>Listening and speaking practice via <em>American Speech Sounds for Academics</em> in the English Language Proficiency Lab, or via <em>Carnegie Speech NativeAccent</em> (web-based) at a location of client’s choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional resources
Referral list of educational opportunities outside the CTE-ELP, such as CTE workshops (for pedagogy) and the Writing Center, community conversation groups, and educational websites (for English language). Updated twice yearly.

Attendance of face-to-face workshops between May 12, 2019 - March 15, 2020:
- ELPE Oral Skills Overview (Fall 2019 n=136; Spring 2020 n=62)
- ELPE Presentation Practice (Fall 2019 n=62; Spring 2020 n=21)
- Keystones for Effective Group Presentations (n=127)
- Teaching Assistant Institute (TAI) elective sessions (Fall 2019 n=83; Spring 2020 n=9)
- Customized Intensive Programming for Chemistry TAs (n=214)
- Resources for Improving your English while in College Station (n=108)
- Liberal Arts International Teaching Assistants (Fall 2019 n=26; Spring 2020 n=20)
- American English Vowel System parts 1 & 2 (Fall 2019 n=34; Spring 2020 n=51)
- English Pronunciation Tips for the Three Minute Thesis (n=5)
- Academic Communication Skills Workshop: Office Hours (n=3)
- Linguistic Diversity (n=2 internationals; n=57 domestics)
- ELP Socials (n=20 internationals; n=74 domestics)

Thus the total touchpoints by internationals in continued face-to-face workshops is 983, not including new workshops, discussed in a later section.

Assessment of continued programming & services

Numbers of clients served
In addition to continued face-to-face workshops, the CTE-ELP program continued to offer a host of one-on-one opportunities and the ten part English Language Proficiency for Instructors Practice Group series, which all together amounted to 2513 touchpoints. Table 2 shows the touchpoints by level for each of these opportunities from May 11, 2019 through March 15, 2020. Compared to the previous report year, there has been a modest decrease in touchpoints across most categories, except for Private Consultations, which when the post-COVID period is included saw a modest increase from 111 appointments in report year 2018-19 to 117 appointments in report year 2019-20. Videotaped microteaching sessions saw a larger increase - up 35 touchpoints from the previous year, again when the COVID-19 period is included.

The largest increase in touchpoints came from the Conversation Partners program, which more than tripled (when adding in 142 from the COVID-19 period) over last year’s total of 348. This amounts to over 500 hours of high impact language development for international students.

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1 These touchpoints are reported in Table 2 under “Practice Groups”.
2 Excludes post-COVID LAITA Evening Chats, which are reported below.
3 Excludes rehearsal sessions and preliminary competition.
Table 2. Touchpoints (n=2513) for existing programs and services by English proficiency level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Level 1 (i.e., Z1, ZE, ZC, ZZ, &amp; ZA)</th>
<th>Level 2 (i.e., Z2)</th>
<th>Level 3 (i.e., ZV, ZW, &amp; ZN)</th>
<th>Other (i.e., faculty, etc.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total of All services</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>1159</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>2513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake Assessment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake Follow-up</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Appointment&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Walk-in</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Consultation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Observation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotaped Microteaching</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Groups&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Partners</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes of conditionally-appointed international TAs

Students who are conditionally eligible for a TA appointment and are hired must:
1. Begin working with the CTE-ELP program at the beginning of the semester;
2. Draft and abide by their Individual Improvement Plan (~5 hours weekly); and
3. Achieve a certifying score on a recognized language exam by the end of the semester.

<sup>4</sup> Includes use of web-based NativeAccent software.
<sup>5</sup> Includes attendees of customized series for Department of Chemistry. Excludes post-COVID virtual Practice Group option, which is reported below.
In this reporting year, as well as the previous reporting years, 100% of students who followed these requirements achieved certification by the end of the semester, making them eligible for rehire. Detailed data for each semester is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Outcomes of conditionally-appointed TAs by term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>The CTE-ELP was not informed of any conditionally-appointed TAs or TAs with emergency deferral of certification. (The CTE-ELP worked proactively to help students with upcoming Fall 2019 TA assignments achieve certification in advance.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>Twenty-three (23) TAs attended an intake assessment. Of them, 17 became certified before the end of the semester (including all 14 who began participating in the CTE-ELP in a timely manner). Three (3) more became certified in early January in time for the Spring 2020 semester. One of the remaining students improved from Level 3 to Level 2. Another achieved certification in Feb. 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>Seven (7) conditionally-appointed TAs attended an intake assessment. Of them, five (5) became certified before the end of the semester -- in fact, by February 15. The remaining two (2) began following an Individual Improvement Plan after Week 3 of the semester and are waiting for an opportunity to retake the ELPE; it has not been offered since Feb. 15 because of COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, the CTE-ELP served 25 conditionally-appointed TAs who reached certification within a semester or less. It should be noted that TAs who achieved certification just prior to the start of the semester with the help of just-in-time CTE-ELP linguistic support in August and early January are not included in this number.

External measurements of program effectiveness

Carnegie Speech NativeAccent results

One way to assess program effectiveness is via a comparison of pre- and post-intervention pronunciation accuracy and fluency using instrumental acoustic measurement. During the reporting period, ten (10) clients began using the software Carnegie Speech NativeAccent, which enables the CTE-ELP to perform such analyses.

Clients, usually conditionally-appointed TAs, used the software for an average of 5.08 hours of active learning, meaning speaking into a microphone while being recorded for analysis. (This does not include the amount of time the clients spent listening to model speech, reading instructions, and so on.) On average, they improved their pronunciation accuracy by 80.4% and their fluency by 670.2%.
or watching videos of the movement of the mouth to articulate particular sounds.) Clients, on average, improved their pronunciation accuracy by 80.4% and their fluency by 670.2%.

A closer look at the ten individual clients shows that language learning is a highly individualized process. Figure 5 shows the relationship between the amount of active learning time in Native Accent and the average percentage of improvement in the pronunciation of distinct sounds.

Figure 5. Time spent in active learning relative to percentage improvement of pronunciation

Figure 6 shows the relationship between the amount of active learning time in NativeAccent and the average percentage of improvement in fluency.

Figure 6. Time spent in active learning relative to percentage improvement of fluency
While it is impossible to predict, much less guarantee, the outcomes for each unique language learner, it is the case that all ten users of NativeAccent improved significantly in either pronunciation accuracy or fluency, and in many cases, both.

Passing rates of CHEM intensive practice group

A second external measurement of the CTE-ELP’s effectiveness is the ELPE scores of international students in the Department of Chemistry. This department is one of several that require all of their students to assume a TA position during their graduate studies. For funding reasons, newly-arrived international graduate students are expected to TA their first semester, but only a fraction have earned a Level 1 score on the TOEFL or IELTS before arrival. To increase the pool of eligible TAs in time for the fall semester, the CTE-ELP has collaborated with Chemistry for the past two years, providing a week of intensive English language training in August for newly-arrived international graduate students, after which the students take the ELPE, where raters from Testing Services assess them for comprehensibility.

Historically, without the assistance of the CTE-ELP, approximately one out of 6 international graduate students earned a Level 3 score on the ELPE and were ineligible to teach in their first semester. With the CTE-ELP’s customized training, that number is now one out of 20. The number of conditionally-appointed TAs (earning a Level 2 score) has dropped also, from approximately one TA out of 16 (prior to 2018) to one TA out of 46.

Table 4 shows the eligibility of first year CHEM students to teach on the first class day, by virtue of their ELPE, TOEFL, or IELTS speaking score.

Table 4. First Year CHEM international student eligibility for TA positions, with and without CTE-ELP intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TA Appointment Eligibility</th>
<th>Fall 2018 &amp; Fall 2019 (n=46) with CTE-ELP intervention</th>
<th>Fall 2017 (n=21) no CTE-ELP intervention</th>
<th>Fall 2013 – Fall 2016 (n=92) current TA standards applied for comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>93.4% (n=43)</td>
<td>76% (n=16)</td>
<td>78% (n=72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditionally Eligible</td>
<td>2.1% (n=1)</td>
<td>4.7% (n=1)</td>
<td>6.5% (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>4.3% (n=2)</td>
<td>19% (n=4)</td>
<td>15.2% (n=14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback from clients

Self-reported gains from international students and faculty themselves are evidence of program effectiveness. Anonymous survey responses, participants’ reflections, and email correspondence are analyzed below.

Survey responses

Practice group workshop series

Survey responses (n=41) indicated that attendees rated almost all the sessions as excellent or good. 100% of attendees felt that they were more prepared to be an effective instructor or teach more effectively as a result of the Practice Groups. More than 80% of attendees reported that their oral English communication changed since participating in Practice Groups. 100% of attendees would like to recommend this workshop to their peers.

Below in Table 5 are students’ open-ended comments on what they have learned that they were not aware of before participating in Practice Groups. (Two out of every three responses are included.)

Table 5. Responses to question “What have you learned about the English language that you weren’t aware of before participating in Practice Groups?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student feedback</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link effect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That there is a structure to stressing the syllables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What areas are important for native speakers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That American follow French method of pronunciation i.e. they stress on second syllable and British stress on the first syllable. That is the reason why there is difference in pronunciation of American and British English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The accent is different when I am not sure from when I am confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How different intonations can affect the emphasis or even the entire meaning that the speaker wants to express.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thought groups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pausing, Prominence, Stressing syllables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is worth noting that learning can continue after the last workshop in the practice group series has ended. Each participant is granted access to the CTE-ELP practice group eCampus community (like an eCampus course, but one that does not close at the end of a given semester, so that it functions like a repository). Educational material from each of the 10 workshops is available there, along with additional digital resources for extension activities. Since the CTE-ELP’s inception in late summer 2017 until the present, 571 unique individuals have attended at least one practice group workshop, and all who are still TAMU-affiliated have access to the eCampus community today.

Survey responses from Chemistry ITAs

In Fall 2019, the CTE-ELP continued collaborating with Chemistry to provide a week of intensive English language training for newly-arrived international graduate students with the goal of increasing the pool of eligible TAs in time for the fall semester. This training was based on the practice group series of 10 workshops that the CTE-ELPE offered to graduate students from all departments a total of 10 times during the reporting year (see preceding section).

The CTE-ELP received 11 responses from the participants this year. 100% of them indicated that as a result of this workshop, they were more prepared to be an effective instructor and they were going to make changes to their speaking or teaching in order to incorporate what they learned in the workshop. Many participants commented that they have learned some English language knowledge (such as thought groups and word stress) that they were not aware of before participating in the workshop. All of them indicated that they would recommend this workshop to their peers; many of them want to receive personal consultations from the consultants to further improve their pronunciation.

Survey responses from Liberal Arts International Teaching Assistants

The CTE-ELP, at the request of Associate Professor of History Dr. Hoi-eun Kim, continues to provide institutional and logistical support for a community of international teaching assistants in the liberal arts. Liberal Arts International Teaching Assistants (LAITA) meet once per month over lunch to discuss challenges they grapple with, to hear strategies, and to support one another. The LAITA lunch series is co-sponsored by the CTE and the College of Liberal Arts.

To more intentionally include the perspective of the ITAs themselves, this year the planning committee formally invited ITAs to join, two of whom accepted. The planning committee met at the beginning and end of each semester to discuss the needs and interests of ITAs, the theme of each lunch discussion, speakers to invite, and other logistical arrangements.

After each LAITA lunch, the CTE graduate assistant delivered an on-site anonymous survey to collect attendees’ feedback and comments. The survey results showed that 100% of them thought that this meeting met their expectation and that they felt less alone after the meeting.
Above 87.5% of them felt that they learned new knowledge or skills to handle challenges such as students’ misconduct and time management. They also commented that they liked the informal discussion style of this meeting which availed them of different perspectives and experiences about ITAs’ teaching on TAMU campus.

It is worth mentioning that this year, two lunch discussions were held (one per semester) on the same high-demand topic: how to cope with stress. The LAITA organizers invited a psychological consultant from the Division of Student Affairs to present some tips about how to reduce stress. These two meetings were most favored by the attendees. The survey results indicated that 90% of attendees learned new strategies for managing their stress and felt more prepared to balance the demands of work, school, and life.

Survey responses regarding microteaching practice for ELPE

Under the guidance of the CTE’s Graduate Teaching Consultants (GTCs), who are peer mentor TAs, international graduate students practiced their teaching/public speaking skills with a view to the most important section of the ELPE, the presentation. In small groups, each student took a turn to present a micro-lesson and then receive feedback from peers and the GTC. Out of 29 responses, 90% said that they thought that the ELPE Presentation Practice helped them perform better on the ELPE test. Since the goal of this event is not merely to boost students’ chances of passing the ELPE, but rather to foster effective instructors, the survey also asked about their future teaching. As a result of the presentation practice, 88% (n=40) reported feeling more confident to teach in the future.

Survey responses regarding American English Vowel System Workshop

The vowel sounds of American English are challenging to non-native speakers because there are so many, and because written English (spelling) does not convey the pronunciation predictably. Increasing one’s phonological awareness will increase one’s listening comprehension and intelligible speech. Through a variety of activities and handouts in this two-part workshop, attendees became familiar with each vowel and with resources to practice listening discrimination and pronunciation on their own.

The survey results (n=19) indicated that more than 90% of attendees felt that their speaking, pronunciation, and listening comprehension was improving, and they were aware of accessible resources that gave them opportunity to practice listening to and pronouncing vowel sounds independently. 100% of attendees were willing to recommend this workshop to their peers.

Below are all the attendees’ comments on the most valuable thing they learned from the workshop (duplicate answers deleted):
• How to pronounce some words correctly
• The number of vowels and understanding the location of them to make a correct pronunciation
• I love the exercises we do during the workshop. I don't consider myself a social person, but it's always fun the way the professor engaged us in a few exercises that will easily stay in our minds.
• I learned how to pronounce correctly the vowel sounds and distinguish them in a conversation.
• American vowels are totally different from what I have learnt before
• Number of vowels in North American English, The workshop really helped to pronounce better and more accurate
• There are 14 vowel sounds in American English.
• The vowel chart for differentiating sounds & many available cost-free resources.
• Word Stress
• Learning through practicing. And the pictorial graphs and example words in addition to many resources provided.

Survey responses regarding pronunciation software

The CTE-ELP offers three kinds of pronunciation software as a supplement to instruction by human consultants. The evaluation of each software is presented in Table 6:

Table 6. Survey responses regarding three software programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Overall quality</th>
<th>The most helpful aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American SpeechSounds for Academics</td>
<td>Excellent/Good: 75% (6 out of 8 responses)</td>
<td>Word stress; useful expressions; sound comparison; interactive learning &amp; user friendliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Speech NativeAccent</td>
<td>Excellent/Good: 100% (3 out of 3)</td>
<td>Word stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Voice Typing (speech to text) with exercises created by the CTE-ELP</td>
<td>Excellent/Good: 100% (2 out of 2)</td>
<td>Easily accessible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While most of the users found the software was useful for them, many respondents reported that they were not able to use the software consistently in the lab due to their tight schedules.

Feedback regarding dialogue between ITAs and undergraduate students

A recurring workshop offered by the CTE-ELP is a dialogue between international TAs (and prospective TAs) and domestic undergraduate students. Exit tickets (n=65) collected July 2019-
February 2020 from the participants document their “take-aways.” The most common recurring themes in these exit tickets are communication, reduced anxiety, and increased empathy. The selected quotes below are representative of these three dominant themes.

Exit tickets from international graduate students show, in their own words, their heightened appreciation of the need to communicate clearly, and reduced anxiety interacting with American undergraduates.

- Reply emails quickly, “good communication”, pause to ask/answer questions, language barrier
- Communication skills are important for both teachers and students
- Undergrads might be just as nervous as me. I shouldn’t be afraid of them ad should be more confident.
- I am very surprised that undergrads maybe feel more intimidated by they international TA. So, it is our responsibility to try to break this “ice”.
- Undergrads want a relatable and approachable TA who can answer their questions to the best of his/her ability.
- 1) Friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable TA are the best quality TA. 2) Be patient with the undergrads. They will ask lots of questions. Try to address most of those. 3) Communicate with your undergrads via email.
- Before I attend this session, I thought students in U.S. are active they are easy to contact the professor. Now I learned some of student are shy like Asian students, so they need TA to be a bridge between students and professors.
- TA is not just a grader. He is a mediator between professor and students.
- Thank you so much for these workshops. They are really helpful. In my opinion, hearing undergraduate students’ opinion showed me the other side of the picture, which is how important is being understandable. I put myself in their shoes and saw how they see international TAs. Also, hearing some international students’ comment was good, as well. For instance, someone told that it is important first to like students and then willing to put best effort to help them to understand. Or one of the most important characteristics of a good student is being committed to her study or research.

Some representative quotes from domestic undergrads express these same themes (communication, confidence, and empathy) from the undergraduate perspective:

- I found that international instructors are often just as nervous as students when it comes to interacting with one another.
- I learned that TAs are interested in learning from the student. TA's want to communicate with us and feel uncomfortable sometimes as undergrads do.
- I learned that TAs can be just as nervous as I am at times. It is important to communicate well if I have a question and they will be more than happy to help me out.
• I found that TAs experience is enhanced, as well as the undergrad’s, if all parties communicate with each other at an initial stage to make each other more comfortable as you advance into the semester.
• Grad students are nervous about teaching undergrads, which can be great because it means they care. Sometimes you forget that.
• I learned that I need to put myself in the shoes of international students more often. I would not want to go to a different country and not understand anything about their culture.
• During our discussion on Friday, I gained some understanding about how difficult it can be for a TA to explain a subject clearly and in depth if they are speaking their second language.

The CTE-ELP is optimistic that these dialogues, in a small way, promote a more inclusive campus climate.

Emails from clients

Unsolicited thank-you emails from international graduate students are a window into their concerns, hopes, and impressions. The following email was sent by an international graduate student who voluntarily participated in a one-hour diagnostic intake assessment. It is included here with her permission as Figure 7.

From: ---------@tamu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, December 5, 2019 5:06 PM
To: ---------
Subject: Thank you for meeting with me today

Dear ---------,

Thank you for the great meeting today.

The Intake Assessment session was very helpful. I enjoyed a pleasant conversation with you. The meeting made me realize I have a special support team. In a short meeting, I felt your sincere desire to help a struggling student.

I know we are still in the middle of the process, but I would like to thank you for a good start.

Thank you so much. I will see you tomorrow.

--------
Ph.D. Student, Graduate Assistant
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Texas A&M University

Figure 7. Unsolicited email from program participant
Since the CTE-ELP is not tasked with summative assessment (such as the ELPE), the consultants are not gate-keepers, but rather in a position to offer support and encouragement, which this client sensed. This added motivation can embolden a student to overcome test anxiety to face the ELPE and to reach certification, for their sake and for their department's.

Description and assessment of new programming & services

In addition to repeating the resources and programming from years 1 and 2, the CTE-ELP has added new initiatives based on requests from TAMU units with a vested interest in improving intercultural communication. New programming and resources are listed below with total touchpoints for each in the period from May 12, 2019 through March 15, 2020, all held face-to-face. Together, these new events account for 100 touchpoints. Descriptions for each are provided in Appendix 1.

Writing Effective Feedback for Students

(n=21)
With Alexis Smith of the University Writing Center, the CTE-ELP co-developed and facilitated a workshop for instructors (TAs and faculty) with the following learning outcomes:

- Understand different types of written feedback
- Understand student perception of feedback
- Gain linguistic strategies for framing feedback
- Gain confidence when delivering written constructive criticism

In paper survey responses (n=19) at the conclusion of the workshop, 89% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this workshop met their expectation, and that as a result of this workshop, they felt more confident about giving student feedback. They unanimously (100%) strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of the workshop, they have more strategies for sensitively delivering constructive criticism.

American Speechsounds Tutorial for English Language Proficiency

(n=11)
This hands-on workshop is designed to improve the user experience of the main software program in the CTE-ELP lab, so that attendees get the most benefit out of their self-paced practice sessions. Each workshop is capped at 4 attendees so that each can explore the software first-hand. Led by a CTE-ELP student worker with the support of a consultant, it provides a friendly introduction to not only one particular software program but also to other resources in the lab and to the CTE-ELP program in general.
Effective Presentations: Rhetorical and Verbal Strategies

(n=13)
This invited presentation was developed and facilitated with Alexis Smith of the Writing Center for graduate students in Electrical and Computer Engineering. The hour-long session covered the planning, organization, and effective oral delivery of academic presentations.

71% (5/7) survey respondents indicated that they had teaching responsibilities, and the session was favorably received by all. Additionally, all respondents selected “Moderately Agree” or “Strongly Agree” when asked whether they were going to implement information from the session in their teaching during the current or subsequent semester. “Facilitator Knowledge,” “Beneficial to My Stage of Career,” and “Fostered Respect for Diversity and Inclusion” were unanimously (n=6) rated as “Extremely Positive” by respondents.

Lunchtime Conversation Circle⁶

(n=51)
This small group is intended to give clients the ability to practice speaking and ask questions in a comfortable environment. A CTE-ELP student worker hosts this meeting. Each meeting is capped at 10 participants, and they are given the opportunity to propose conversation topics or ask questions in advance. It is conducted in a very casual conversational format where participants are encouraged to speak, ask questions, and respond to others with their personal experiences. This event can act as an alternative to the Conversation Partners program during long breaks or for those who could not be paired. Learning outcomes are as follows:

- Increase speaking fluency, with less delay and fewer hesitations
- Comprehend the speech of an English-dominant undergraduate student and other international students/scholars
- Make small talk (social, conversational, non-academic language)
- Practice turn-taking in group conversation
- Increase confidence and risk-taking in spontaneous speech
- Make social connections to reduce isolation

The survey response rate was low (n=4) given the overall attendance (n=51). Half of the respondents (n=2) reported some improvement in their ability to converse spontaneously, their listening comprehension, and their motivation to speak in English as a result of their participation in the circle, while the other half (n=2) gave a neutral reply.

When prompted to make suggestions for the improvement of the program, three responded (n=3). There was no constructive criticism other than a request to offer the conversation circle at more time slots per week so as to accommodate more students’ schedules. The CTE-ELP continues to offer conversation circles at two different times per week.

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⁶ Excludes post-COVID virtual meetings, which are reported below.
Academic Communication Skills Workshop: Language for the Lab

(n=4)

ITAs report that their most common duties are, in descending order, 1) grading, 2) office hours, and 3) lab. Thus the CTE-ELP saw a need for explicit training in the linguistic skills for lab TAs. Drawing upon publications about functional language in labs and also upon first-hand observations of various TAMU labs, the CTE-ELP piloted a new workshop specifically for lab duties, with the following learning outcomes:

- see labs as active learning environments
- be aware of responsibilities, even when students seem to be working fine on their own
- anticipate predictable communication, but also expect the unexpected
- choose the appropriate degree of assertiveness when giving students a suggestion or command
- feel more confident initiating interactions with undergraduate students
- have strategies for listening to confusing questions from students

This pilot workshop garnered a small turnout, so n=3 is a 75% response rate. When asked “Have you learned anything in this workshop that will change your way of communicating with your future students? If so, what is the change?” attendees responded as follows:

- Yes. I think I will interact more with students in the lab class. For example, I will ask questions to check whether they understand my instructions.
- Be careful about when to be indirect and when to be [direct]
- Yes. Be confident and strong firstly, then stay calm down when bad situations coming out, always remember to ask feedback from professor, other TAs, and lab students, it is never late to learn from the whole world.

When asked “What was the most valuable thing you learned from this session?” they responded:

- The different levels of tone in communicating with the students.
- To predict possible situation happening during labs in order to need less improvising when something comes
- Interactive teaching, Easy-to-understand communication, Equal treatment for each student

One survey respondent requested that this workshop be given multiple times in different locations, once to each TAMU department at a time.
Partnership with and/or support of other units

Within the university

In addition to the above, the CTE-ELP program has partnered with and supported numerous other units on campus to provide consultation or programming to meet their students’ and faculty’s needs with respect to intercultural communication. These are listed below with touchpoints where relevant. Descriptions for each of these are provided in Appendix 1.

- **Chemistry**
  - Customized intensive ELP for Instructors Practice Group (n=214)

- **Public Policy and Outreach with Dr. Suzanne Droleskey facilitating**
  - ELPE Oral Skills Overview (Fall 2019 n=136; Spring 2020 n=62)
  - Training of CTE GTCs by Dr. Droleskey (n=6)
  - ELPE Preparation Session (Fall 2019 n=62; Spring 2020 n=21)

- **University Writing Center, International Student Association, & International Student Mentors Association**
  - Resources for Improving your English while in College Station (n=108)

- **College of Architecture**
  - Introduction to Global Englishes at Fall faculty orientation
  - Faculty development in intercultural communication Fall 2019 (n=14)

- **International Studies field experience and service learning opportunities for ESL Methods I students (n=149 pre-service teachers) including:**
  - Conversation Partnerships
  - Microteaching feedback sessions
  - ELP Socials
  - Undergraduate dialogues with current and future ITAs

- **OGAPS**
  - Three Minute Thesis Development Session, Feedback/Rehearsal Sessions, & Preliminary Competition (n=29)
  - English Language Proficiency Certification Resources at New Graduate Student Orientation (Fall n=71; Spring n=9)

- **University Writing Center**
  - Effective Presentations: Rhetorical & Verbal Strategies (for ECEN Graduate Students; n=13)
  - Writing Effective Feedback for Students (n=21)

- **Office for Student Success**

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7 Interestingly, half of the finalists, and the winner of the 2019 competition, speak North American English as a second language. Count may differ from that of OGAPS because it includes only touchpoints for ELP Consultants.
○ Respect & Inclusion Curriculum Committee

● Communications (co-presenter Sara Rowe)
  ○ Communicating Effectively in the Classroom and Beyond (faculty workshop) (n=21)

● College of Liberal Arts with Dr. Hoi-eun Kim
  ○ Liberal Arts International Teaching Assistant Lunch Series8 (Fall 2019 n=26; Spring 2020 n=20)

● Language Matters Glasscock Humanities Working Group, University Libraries, & Hispanic Studies
  ○ Language Week 2019 - an international recognition of linguistic diversity
  ○ International graduate students (n=9) interacted with the public and shared their language script, as seen in Figure 8.
  ○ Screening of *Talking Black in America* followed by discussion led by student leaders from the Black Student Alliance Council and the Texas A&M University Collegiate Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (n=75 attendees)

Figure 8. International graduate students who are native speakers of Korean, Georgian, Ukrainian, and Kazakh volunteer to write visitors’ names in their languages.

**Beyond the university**

ESL professionals who train TAs who are non-native speakers of North American English are very specialized and may be alone in their institution. A professional association exists at the international level (TESOL ITA Interest Section), with members from the U.S. and Canada, and

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8 Excludes post-COVID LAITA Evening Chats, which are reported below.
a small regional association exists in the Northeast. A regional association in Texas would be beneficial because higher education institutions in Texas share the same legal landscape (state law Sec. 51.917) mandating English language proficiency standards and instruction.

By sharing information, such as assessments, curricula, trends, research, and best practices, all ITA programs in Texas could potentially be strengthened, for the benefit of both international instructors and their students statewide. The first collaboration of Texas ITA programs, in recent years, was at the state conference for Texas ESL teachers (TexTESOL 2018) in which the Texas A&M CTE-ELP program initiated two panel discussions involving speakers from 4 institutions. The consensus was that an informal working group would be beneficial. The CTE-ELP surveyed Texas ITA professionals in Dec. 2019-Feb. 2020 to confirm this, and began the Texas ITA Professionals (TexITAP) working group with the following purpose:

- “For our ongoing professional development as ITA trainers
- To improve our assessments, curricula, and services
- To stay abreast of trends, challenges, and research
- To anticipate ITA duties of the future (such as online instruction) and to prepare ITAs for them
- To articulate best practices in relation to the Texas law
- To be prepared in the event of the Higher Education Board enforcing the law
- To advocate for ITAs, but not at the expense of their students”

The first symposium was co-organized by Texas A&M University’s CTE-ELP and University of Texas’s English Language Center. With input from counterparts at other Texas universities, an agenda was drawn up (see Appendix 2). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, attendees met via Zoom videoconferencing rather than face-to-face. A total of 15 representatives from seven universities across Texas attended the half-day event on April 17, 2020.

One highlight of the event was the presentation by Dr. Lucy Pickering (A&M-Commerce), an authority on ESL pronunciation and ITAs’ speech. Her talk on intonation patterns honed the attendees’ ability to notice differences in pronunciation that may lead to misunderstanding, something they can apply when coaching ITAs.

Asked for a comment, Linley Melhem, director of the ITA program at Texas Tech in Lubbock, wrote: “The TexITAP symposium provided an enriching opportunity to connect with colleagues across Texas that are serving non-native speakers of English as they teach, the students whom they are teaching, and their home departments. I was inspired to learn of the various creative strategies employed to empower teaching candidates to communicate effectively. This meeting was especially timely as we collectively face new challenges in evaluating and training teaching candidates at a distance. I look forward to the ongoing collaboration that will surely be born from this inaugural symposium.”
Other enhancements

In addition to the new programming described above, the CTE-ELP also made a number of other enhancements. These include:

Tool for checking one’s eligibility for a TA position

To help manage the volume of frequently-asked questions, the CTE-ELP created an interactive questionnaire that tells users their ELP certification status and steps to take to reach certification. “Are you wondering about eligibility for a teaching assistant position at Texas A&M University?” It is intended for both international graduate students and TAMU faculty/staff who are making hiring decisions. This digital tool is available at u.tamu.edu/TA-ELP (https://u.tamu.edu/TA-ELP) and also on the CTE-ELP website. Graduate advisors and international graduate students were informed of it by email and at events such as Graduate Advisors’ Workshop, New Graduate Student Orientation, and Teaching Assistant Institute.

Since launching in July 2019, it has logged 751 inquiries by international graduate students, and 37 inquiries by faculty/staff on behalf of international students, potentially saving the CTE-ELP hours of time answering phone calls and replying to emails. The faculty, staff, or student can more easily (and sooner) find out if a graduate student is ineligible to teach, eligible to teach for one semester only with conditions, or eligible to teach for unlimited semesters. If the answer is “ineligible,” it will advise the student to take steps to become eligible. This advice can be downloaded and saved as a .pdf (see Appendix 3 for an example).

Cultural and linguistic diversity statement for syllabi

Given that one of the goals of the university is to prepare undergraduates to enter a global workforce and given the diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body of the university itself, it is advisable that, where appropriate, instructors adopt a syllabus statement regarding the reality of cultural and linguistic diversity at the university and in the twenty-first century workforce and the inherent value of intercultural communication skills to succeed as a member of the university community and a professional. Such a statement would help to set the expectations and tone for classroom interactions and would go a long way to improving classroom communication, indeed communication across the university. The CTE-ELP assisted a faculty member in the College of Architecture’s Department of Construction Science to draft just such a statement for his stacked course consisting of international graduate and domestic undergraduate students. This sample statement can be found in Appendix 4 below.
Five week terms for ELP for Instructors Practice Groups

Beginning Fall 2019, Practice Groups have been offered in two consecutive runs - one in the beginning of the term and one beginning at midterm. This has allowed latecomers to begin the groups at midterm without missing the content and skills practice that is offered in the first five sessions. It has also allowed motivated and conscientious students to participate in more lessons before taking the ELPE early in the semester.

Evening ELP for Instructors Practice Group

Traditionally, the CTE-ELP has offered its ELP for Instructors Practice Group sessions during normal business hours. While this works well for some graduate students, others simply cannot get away from their academic and vocational responsibilities during the day. To make the ELP for Instructors Practice Group more readily available, the CTE-ELP conducted one of its Practice Group series in the evening during each long semester (i.e., both fall and spring terms) this report year. This workshop met twice weekly from 5:15-6:15 PM. In the event that any TAs will be working from their home countries in the upcoming academic year, a late evening or early morning Practice Group series may be imperative to meet their needs.

Presentation at New Graduate Student Orientation

The CTE-ELP has hosted a resource table at New Graduate Student Orientation for the last two years. Each time, the table is congested with students who have routine queries about language certification, the ELPE, and CTE-ELP resources. On several occasions, the time allotted for the Resource Fair has expired before every student can be addressed. With the support of OGAPS, the CTE-ELP provided an elective session during both the fall and spring terms so that every student had an opportunity to have their questions answered in a more efficient way, freeing them up to visit more of the resource tables during the lunch hour of the New Graduate Student Orientation.

Recruiting English-dominant undergraduate volunteers

Each semester the CTE-ELP needs domestic volunteers to help provide training rooted in best practices for language instruction. And many more volunteers are needed than can possibly be recruited. Nevertheless, enhancements to the recruitment and assignment mechanisms significantly improved the program’s ability to find and match volunteers to the various resources for which they were needed. Among these improvements were:

- Preparing a flyer that lists all opportunities to volunteer with descriptions and, perhaps most importantly, logistical details (e.g. date, time, location) for distribution through appropriate marketing channels;
- Preparing a short video to accompany the above-mentioned flyer;
Coordinating with instructors, advisors, and other distribution outlets before the semester begins, to publicize these volunteer opportunities; and
Beginning volunteer-intensive programming in the fourth week of the semester rather than the third to provide adequate time for volunteers to be assigned to programs, to receive training if necessary, and to be notified of their respective assignments.

Accessibility of written communications
Since Fall 2019, CTE-ELP PowerPoint slide decks in use have been upgraded to meet accessibility standards (avoiding Errors, and where feasible, heeding Warnings and Tips). A spot check of Qualtrics surveys shows accessibility (Fall 2019 and Feb 2020). Student workers received basic training on accessibility of paper handouts and brought those into compliance in Feb. and March 2020. Website accessibility is still lagging, though the vast majority of issues relate to website-wide characteristics and require a developer to make changes.

Flyer of pedagogical resources for international TAs
The CTE-ELP has curated a list of recommended online resources for novice ITAs (covering topics of pedagogy and cultural differences). These resources have been promoted to attendees of the ELP Practice Group for Instructors. A digital flyer (“one-pager”) with hyperlinks to these resources is now available to visitors to the Virtual Language Lab (see Appendix 5).

Shortened response time to sign-ups on Waitlist
Students may indicate their interest at a waitlist for services (https://forms.gle/JXs8ouxeB7on7Bq58). A process for responding has been established, and student workers have been trained, thus reducing the wait time to an average of one week before an interested student receives instructions from CTE-ELP staff on how to begin participating in the program. (This applies to students who are not conditionally-appointed TAs or otherwise high-priority; high-priority students receive a response to an inquiry within one business day or less, on average.)

Publications and presentations
The CTE-ELP also contributed to their professional association and the scholarly community in the form of both publications and presentations at professional conferences. Relevant details for these are provided below.

Publications
Cooper, B., Payne, G., Hu, X., Dixon, Q., & Kuo, L. (forthcoming). The impact of linguistic diversity education on L1 English speakers’ ideologies, attitudes, and perceptions of


### Presentations


### COVID-19 and the shift to a fully virtual ELP

As a novel coronavirus made its way across the globe, the CTE-ELP began brainstorming how to keep its clients safe while maintaining services. Staff increased the sanitation of high-touch surfaces, particularly in the language lab where computer equipment is shared. During the first half of spring break, the CTE-ELP student worker responsible for coordinating the Conversation Partners program prepared communications and instructions in case the Conversation Partners program would need to shift to virtual rather than face-to-face meetings. Then came the Provost’s announcement on Thursday, March 12, that instruction would be carried out online.
until the end of April. Thus starting Monday, March 16, the CTE-ELP lab and offices closed to students and faculty; programming and services that were formerly held face-to-face were adapted for an online environment.

After a week of retooling, the workshops, conversation circles, and appointments proceeded using the Zoom platform. Conversation partnerships proceeded in a variety of platforms (FaceTime, WeChat, etc.). The user experience in the physical ELP Pronunciation Lab (LAAH 232) was replaced with a user experience in the shared Google Drive called the “CTE-English Language Proficiency Virtual Lab” containing instructional videos, exercises, and links to recommended resources.

The transition to Zoom was rapid. It helped that the consultants had already used Zoom videoconferencing to include a participant from the Galveston campus, and therefore were familiar with the use of Zoom for workshops and Private Consultations. The student workers learned the Zoom platform, and then communicated to clients how to use Zoom as well. It was even easier to adjust to working within a shared Google Drive, since the CTE-ELP staff have been sharing documents, spreadsheets, and forms in the shared Google Drive since its inception. It also helped that the Practice Group series was already hybrid in the sense that an eCampus community with an abundance of handouts and resources had been built two and a half years earlier and periodically updated.

Beginning with an email on March 20 to existing clients, the CTE-ELP communicated these changes to international students and graduate advisors via listservs and a small website update. For an example of an announcement, see Appendix 6 for the email “The English Language Proficiency Program Is Online!” sent April 22 to all international graduate students.

The disruption of the lives and work of administrators, staff, faculty, and students certainly decreased participation in the CTE-ELP, but did not end it. For example, the cancellation of the ELPE reduced the demand for ELPE preparation workshops. Nevertheless, 222 touchpoints were recorded from March 16 through April 30, 2020, as Table 7 documents, with an additional 30 touchpoints generated from special programming (LAITA Evening Chats and Virtual Lunchtime Conversation Circles). More importantly, no CTE-ELP staff members acquired the disease COVID-19, nor did any participating students, to its knowledge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Level 1 (i.e., Z1, ZE, ZC, ZZ, &amp; ZA)</th>
<th>Level 2 (i.e., Z2)</th>
<th>Level 3 (i.e., ZV, ZW, &amp; ZN)</th>
<th>Other (i.e., faculty, etc.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total of All services</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake Assessment</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intake Follow-up</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Consultation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pronunciation Lab⁹</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Observation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotaped Microteaching</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Groups</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Partners</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some key observations related to the CTE-ELP’s transition to virtual resources follow.

- The CTE-ELP observed a significant drop in Conversation Partner participation rates after the transition. Compare a 68% (61% Fall; 74% Spring) weekly participation rate in face-to-face partnerships prior to the COVID disruption with a 40% weekly participation rate for virtual partnerships after the disruption. It is likely that this sort of drop is due to the sudden and dramatic shift that impacted every aspect of participants’ lives. The CTE-ELP believes that a drastic difference in participation rates for face-to-face versus virtual partnerships would be eliminated where the conditions of the partnership

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⁹ Native Accent only.
remained consistent (i.e. partnerships remain face-to-face or virtual throughout the entire term).

- ELP for Instructors Practice Group (n=58) pivoted toward a flipped format utilizing videos (https://youtu.be/S_FiOWfbbTE) to deliver content before the session and free up more time for rehearsal during the session, which was conducted via Zoom.

- Virtual Lunchtime Conversation Circle (n=20)
These events shifted to Zoom and extended a few additional weeks to maintain a sense of normalcy and human contact in an environment where there are few opportunities for international students to strike up a conversation with a native speaker of English. An attendee cited “convenience” as one advantage this format has over the face-to-face format.

- LAITA Evening Chats (n=10)
The CTE-ELP supported three LAITA Evening chats after spring break, which had three to four participants, most of whom consistently participated in all three chats. In a post-event survey, all the respondents (n=3) reported feeling more confident in managing the end of this challenging semester. In response to the question “What did you like about the Evening Chat?” respondents (n=3) replied:
  - Getting to meet other TAs and just talk about how we are doing.
  - I loved the Evening Chat. It was a great place to talk about our new challenges with the transition to online classes both as students, and as instructors. It is vital to have these kinds of safe spaces of fruitful discussion during difficult times.
  - The safe environment to voice our concerns and the support from other graduate students.

- Virtual Lab (n=475 international students have been granted access)
When news of a shift to remote instruction was announced, the CTE-ELP immediately began work on a Virtual Lab to ensure the continuity of this service for its users. The unit added to existing exercises that were developed in-house and created numerous videos and guides to resources for self-study. Additionally, the CTE-ELP arranged for as many internationals as were interested to have temporary access to two high quality software applications for pronunciation at no cost to the users or the University. In future semesters, the addition of a Virtual Lab will allow newly admitted students or those traveling to access resources even when they are not physically present in College Station.

**Future directions**

During the course of the last year and, especially, during its annual program review, the CTE-ELP has identified a number of avenues for future action. These include:
• Updating communications about the CTE-ELP program
As the CTE-ELP expands and fine-tunes its programming, and particularly when the CTE-ELP moves its physical location from LAAH to Nagle, those updates need to be disseminated. The CTE-ELP webpages should be updated, as well as the main flyer describing the program. Qualtrics surveys should be reviewed and improved in Summer 2020 so that improved versions can be used in the new reporting year.

• Flipped instruction
The CTE-ELP aspires to put into practice, across all its programming, evidence-based techniques for engaging learners in asynchronous and synchronous virtual instruction, since this will be the new normal for the short term. Flipped instruction has already begun with the English Language Proficiency for Instructors practice group held in March-April 2020, but can be further refined and extended to other workshops and even to private consultations.

• High-stakes virtual assessments of spoken English
While the ELPE is unavailable, other routes to certification should be explored, such as affordable remotely-proctored commercial online exams. The applied linguists in the CTE-ELP can explore new tests such as English3PT, English3 Interview, and DuoLingo English Test (and their correspondence to test scores of currently recognized tests) and, if found appropriate, can initiate a conversation with OGAPS about considering these as evidence in a request for alternative certification, in these unusual circumstances of a pandemic. Down the road, if the CTE-ELP has access to the data, it can assess the readiness of incoming graduate students who were accepted to the university (English language verification) on the basis not of the TOEFL iBT or IELTS but of less proven oral English tests, such as the English3PT and DuoLingo English.

• Migration of eCampus community to Canvas
Currently, supporting materials for the English Language Proficiency for Instructors practice group series are in an eCampus community. When eCampus is discontinued, these will need a new home. The CTE-ELP consultants will learn Canvas and migrate the materials there for learners to access.

• Closer assessment of what clients are using in the Virtual Language Lab
During the next report year, the CTE-ELP plans to keep close tabs on what clients are accessing and, presumably, using in the CTE-English Language Proficiency Virtual Lab so that content and format of future additions can be planned accordingly. Early analysis shows that videos tend to be more popular than one-pagers. Both can be enhanced by cross-referencing them to one another so that users who favor a particular delivery format can easily access content in the medium that they prefer. Additionally, cross-referencing can drive traffic from one medium to another.
• Move to Nagle Building
After two and a half years at LAAH, the physical location of the CTE-ELP Pronunciation Lab and consultant offices will change to the renovated Nagle building. While moving, the CTE-ELP should minimize disruptions to services. Upon moving in, the CTE-ELP will have many more opportunities to collaborate more closely with other graduate student programming by the CTE (GSPDT) and with OGAPS.

• Studying comprehensibility of speech in the time of social distancing
To prevent the spread of COVID-19, people have begun wearing masks over their mouths and noses in some face-to-face conversations or have shifted those conversations to a virtual platform (for example, Zoom meetings). In both cases, speech clarity is reduced (muffled, distorted, etc.). The CTE-ELP should stay abreast of research findings and best practices for speech comprehensibility in these sub-optimal conditions, and share those, particularly with instructors. For instructors who speak English as a Second Language, or for native speakers of English who are teaching virtually to students who speak English as a Second Language, it would be helpful to find or create a list of evidence-based best practices for teaching via Zoom across a language difference.

• Instructional module on linguistic diversity for classroom communication
The pilot study for the CTE-ELP’s Linguistic Diversity workshop this past year gained positive results. The CTE-ELP plans to make the curriculum more widely available so that it can be scaled up and delivered by non-linguists to many more Aggies. For example, the workshop curriculum can be included in the instructor repository for the First Year Experience. The lesson materials will include a linguistic diversity toolbox with activities designed to identify linguistic bias and ameliorate negative attitudes and ideologies. This material can be accessible via a website, which would provide instructions with a lesson plan, activities, research, and teaching materials related to linguistic diversity as well as strategies for communicating effectively and appropriately in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom setting. CTE-ELP consultants could “train the trainer.”

• Software for language learning
Each year brings new and improved technology, including in the realm of self-paced language lessons, which are not taxing on the consultants’ time but complement the human-delivered instruction. The CTE-ELP consultants will become familiar with new pronunciation software programs, such as BlueCanoe Learning app and Native Accent version 4. Specifically, they will explore alternatives to the American SpeechSounds for Academics software, which is not web-based.

• Anticipated drop in international student enrollment
The COVID-19 pandemic has made many international students wary of international travel, and has also closed U.S. embassies that normally hold visa interviews, thereby
preventing students who are willing to travel from doing so. A decrease in enrollment of international students at TAMU means a decrease in the funding for the CTE-ELP, which comes directly from the international student fee. The CTE-ELP anticipates the need to take cost-saving measures, including the severe reduction of student worker hours. Also, the funding from the Galloway Foundation expires in August 2020, so the CTE-ELP most likely will not employ a GANT in the coming year. This means that some programming that is labor-intensive may have to be reduced or put on hiatus during the 2020-2021 reporting year.

Conclusion

Reflection on the last year of activity shows that the CTE-ELP continues to fulfill its core mission of enlarging the pool of international graduate students who are eligible to be hired as teaching assistants due to their oral proficiency in English, and more broadly, of improving cross-cultural communication in classrooms, hallways, labs, offices, and Zoom meeting rooms across campus and online. The cohorts of conditionally-appointed TAs who began CTE-ELP participation at the start of the fall and spring semesters all achieved certification by the end of the same semester. The impact of the CTE-ELP program extends far beyond these small cohorts because professional development in speaking comprehensibly is also provided to international students who are not yet teaching, as well as to those who are judged proficient enough to teach but who seek improvement out of a personal desire for growth. This year, the CTE-ELP exceeded the number of touchpoints in any previous reporting period, despite a disruptive pandemic and an unprecedented university-wide shift to virtual services in mid-March. It is well-poised to adapt to the uncertain conditions of AY2020-21 with the addition of remote tools for language development.

Contributors

Program review and assessment of the CTE-ELP, including the authorship of this report, was conducted by the following staff:

- **English Language Proficiency Consultant**
  - Brandon Cooper
- **English Language Proficiency Consultant**
  - Ginessa Payne
- **Graduate Assistant**
  - Xueyan Hu
- **Student Worker**
  - Elizabeth Smith
- **Student Worker**
  - Kelsey Walker
References


Appendices

Appendix 1: Workshop descriptions
in alphabetical order by title

- **Academic Communication Skills: Leading a Lab Class**
  Laboratory teaching assistants use oral language to enhance the learning of their students and to keep them safe while working with potential hazards. Attendees will practice intonation and functional vocabulary for lab instruction. This workshop is for current and future TAs who use English as a Second Language, or American English as a second dialect.

- **Academic Communication Skills: Office Hours**
  Attendees participate in a role-play workshop in which interactions between instructors and students are simulated, preparing both non-native English speakers and native English speakers for successful intercultural interactions in an academic setting.

- **American English Vowel System**
  The vowel sounds of American English are challenging to non-native speakers because there are so many, and because written English (spelling) does not convey the pronunciation predictably. Increasing one's phonological awareness will increase one's listening comprehension and intelligible speech. Through a variety of activities and handouts, attendees will become familiar with each vowel and with resources to practice listening discrimination and pronunciation on their own. This is a two-part workshop.

- **American Speechsounds Tutorial for English Language Proficiency**
  In this hands-on workshop, attendees will learn about and begin using the software program "American Speechsounds for Academics." Available in the Center for Teaching Excellence’s English Language Proficiency Lab, this software helps with listening and pronouncing English. Attendees will receive an in-depth tutorial on how to use this program and get the most out of their practice sessions.

- **Communicating Effectively in the Classroom and Beyond**
  It's a given that faculty members have expertise in their content areas. Communicating that expertise in an engaging manner -- whether to students via classroom lectures or to conference attendees via research presentations -- requires additional skill sets. This interactive session will provide participants with an opportunity to enhance their delivery methods, audience analysis, intercultural communication, and engagement techniques. Participants will learn important public speaking tips and also practice their skills to build confidence for the classroom and beyond. Lunch will be provided. Participants will
identify public speaking best practices as they relate to classroom teaching, research presentations, and intercultural communication and apply and practice public speaking best practices to facilitate increased audience motivation, engagement, and success.

- **Effective Communication in an International Context**
  This workshop demonstrates techniques from the fields of applied linguistics and intercultural communication that can help both speakers and listeners overcome communication barriers. Attendees learn about features of speech – usually unconscious to speakers and listeners – that affect comprehensibility, and leave with evidence-based strategies for speaking more comprehensibly and for comprehending others better.

- **Effective Presentations: Rhetorical & Verbal Strategies**
  With the Writing Center, the CTE-ELP program was invited to present about how to introduce (speaker and the topic); voice tone, volume, and intonation; non-verbal communication, effective communication despite the accent; how to structure a presentation: general parts; how to keep the audience engaged; how to break the ice and reduce the stage fear; and the do's and don'ts of giving a presentation.

- **English Language Proficiency for Instructors Practice Group**
  A series to prepare international graduate students for current or future teaching positions. Participants rehearse functional language for instruction; learn to anticipate and repair common communication breakdowns; develop peer support, pronunciation, and fluency; and cultivate an awareness and appreciation for diversity and cultural differences, including the American university culture. Led by a consultant, it runs for ten sessions with each session addressing a different topic.

- **ELPE Oral Skills Overview (with support from Public Policy and Outreach and Dr. Suzanne Droleskey)**
  Previously produced via collaboration with International Student Services, Public Policy and Outreach, and the CTE-ELP program, the ELPE Oral Skills Overview session is now handled by the CTE-ELP program and PPO exclusively. Dr. Suzanne Droleskey reviews the exam format and scoring and shares valuable strategies with international graduate students planning to take the exam. This workshop is offered three times a year - twice in August and once in January. Numbers reported here are only for the January session since ISS handled all logistics for the event prior to that time.

- **ELPE Overview**
  This monthly session provides a brief overview of the ELPE including information about the test format and scoring. It also provides some tips for the exam and an opportunity to ask any questions that test takers may have.
The Feedback Session builds upon the concepts covered in the Overview Session by providing practice for the presentation portion of the exam. Graduate Teaching Consultants (GTCs) from the CTE, trained by Dr. Suzanne Droleskey, facilitate the practice and provide feedback to international graduate students using a rubric.

- ELP Social
  In this well-structured intergroup contact activity, domestic undergraduates cooperate with international graduate students to solve a mystery problem. They must all take turns communicating orally, sharing clues, and working out the answers. All participants have equal opportunities to communicate with each other in a cooperative context so as to reduce undergraduates’ negative language attitudes and to provide more listening and speaking practice to international graduate students. This activity is based on Kang, Rubin, & Lindemann (2015).

- Intensive English Language Proficiency for Instructors Practice Group for Chemistry
  An intensive series of interactive sessions customized for Chemistry ITAs emphasizing pronunciation, functional vocabulary, and the culture of the American college classroom. Ten sessions are delivered in five days to incoming Chemistry graduate students, all of whom are expected to be credentialed for GAT positions (i.e., at language certification level 1 or 2) by the first class day of their first semester in the program. This series was created at the request and with the assistance of the Chemistry department.

- Keystones for Effective Group Presentations
  This workshop identifies key components in the planning and delivery of group presentations. Through a mix of lecture, discussion, and hands-on practice, participants work together to identify strategies to (1) develop and structure content, (2) analyze and manage group dynamics, and (3) utilize verbal and non-verbal strategies to effectively deliver content in presentations.

- Language Day 2019 (Language Matters Glascock Humanities Working Group, University Libraries, and Hispanic Studies)
  Day-long exhibit at Evans Library for International Mother Tongues, showcasing native languages of Aggies and their scripts.

- Liberal Arts International Teaching Assistant Lunch Series
  Designed in collaboration with Dr. Hoi-eun Kim and the College of Liberal Arts (CLLA), the Liberal Arts International Teaching Assistant (LAITA) Lunch Series meets about once a month for one hour to function as an informal supportive community for international graduate student teachers in the CLLA where they listen to guest speakers and share challenges. Sessions include:
  - “What I wish I had known!” facilitated by Kyung-Lin Bae (English), Laura Bernal (Hispanic Studies), Amit Ghoshal (Recreation Parks and Tourism Sciences), & Damián Robles (Hispanic Studies) [n=9]
- “My student plagiarized. What to do?” facilitated by Tanya Baker (Aggie Honor System Office) [n=9]
- “Stress Reduction” facilitated by Laurel Wade (Counseling & Psychological Services) [n=8]
- “Teaching ate all my time!” facilitated by Dr. Stephen Caffey (College of Architecture) [n=14]
- “How to cope with Stress” facilitated by Laurel Wade (Counseling & Psychological Services) [n=6]

- Linguistic Diversity (First Year Experience pilot)
  A one-hour workshop intended to raise undergraduates’ awareness of and tolerance of linguistic diversity on campus. In this workshop, through lectures and discussions, undergraduates gain knowledge about English as a Lingua Franca, understand the associations between different English varieties and their judgements about the speakers, and reflect on their own perceptions of the comprehensibility of English varieties based on these associations. This workshop is based on work by Wolf, Butler, Pertsova (2018).

- Lunchtime Conversation Circle
  This small group is intended to give clients the ability to practice speaking and ask questions in a comfortable environment. A CTE-ELP student worker hosts this meeting. Each meeting is capped at 10 participants, and they are given the opportunity to propose conversation topics or ask questions in advance. It is conducted in a very casual conversational format where participants are encouraged to speak, ask questions, and respond to others with their personal experiences.

- Resources for Improving your English while in College Station
  In this interactive workshop, attendees practice strategies for language acquisition and learn about many resources – on campus and online – that foster better vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

- Teaching Assistant Institute (TAI) elective session
  Teaching assistants who are not native speakers of North American English may face challenges that other TAs may not. This session encourages participants to capitalize on their strengths and to prepare to handle tricky interactions with their students. Attendees learn about a wealth of resources that support their linguistic growth, offered at no additional cost through the Center for Teaching Excellence's English Language Proficiency Program (CTE-ELP). Participants who are conditionally-appointed TAs (with Level 2 English proficiency) find out how to meet the conditions of their employment.

- Three Minute Thesis
  Customized workshop on pronunciation tips for contestants; several sessions of individualized feedback for contestants doing rehearsals of their speeches.
- Writing Effective Feedback for Students
  Participants will learn about different types of written feedback, students' perceptions of feedback, as well as strategies for framing praise and constructive criticism. Participants will have the opportunity to view and discuss examples of written feedback in small groups and with the workshop moderators. This workshop will be especially helpful for graduate teaching assistants and faculty who want to increase their confidence in providing constructive written feedback to students.
Appendix 2: Agenda of Texas ITA Professionals’ Symposium

Texas International Teaching Assistant Professionals (TexITAP)
Spring 2020 Symposium Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Presenter/Moderator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 17</td>
<td>Greetings, Zoom norms, Texas state law</td>
<td>Ginessa Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:10 pm</td>
<td>Ginessa Payne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introductions, descriptions of each ITA program</td>
<td>Ginessa Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Linley Melhem (TexasTech)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Laurel Collins [backup: Jeffrey Rasch] (UNT)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Brandon Cooper [backup: Ginessa Payne] (TAMU)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Crystal Kusey [backup: Christine McCourt] (UT Austin)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Juliet Langman [backup: Davy Tran] (UTSA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cynthia Kilpatrick and Joshua Atherton (UT Arlington)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Break (offline)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20-2:30</td>
<td>Discussion of ITA language assessments in use</td>
<td>Christine McCourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Linley Melhem (TexasTech)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Jeffrey Rasch [backup: Laurel Collins] (UNT)</td>
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<td>● Ginessa Payne [backup: Brandon Cooper] (TAMU)</td>
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<td>● Christine McCourt [backup: Crystal Kusey] (UT Austin)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Davy Tran (UTSA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Cynthia Kilpatrick and Joshua Atherton (UT Arlington)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10-3:45</td>
<td>Workshop on discourse intonation</td>
<td>Lucy Pickering</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45-4:00</td>
<td>Q&amp;A on discourse intonation</td>
<td>Lucy Pickering</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00-4:10</td>
<td>Break (offline)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:10-4:40</td>
<td>Discussion about future directions</td>
<td>Brandon Cooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:40-5:00</td>
<td>Plan for next gathering, conclusion</td>
<td>Brandon Cooper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: TA Eligibility Survey Report

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Below is a summary of your responses

Download PDF

Are you wondering about eligibility for a teaching assistant position at Texas A&M University?

To be eligible for a TA appointment as a Graduate Assistant – Teaching (GAT) or a Graduate Assistant Lecturer (GAL), international students must be language certified. This survey will help to identify the student’s English proficiency level and provide guidance for additional steps to take towards language certification. It can be completed anonymously. On the final page of this survey, you will have the option of downloading a PDF of your results for your records.

The Center for Teaching Excellence’s English Language Proficiency (CTE-ELP) program is a linguistic service provided to Texas A&M’s international instructors (and prospective instructors) who wish to improve their spoken English skills. Support services are confidential and at no additional cost to the participant. The CTE-ELP does not decide who is eligible to be a TA; that is done by test raters or by OGAPS. Rather, the CTE-ELP helps international students navigate the certification process and coaches students and faculty to speak comprehensibly.

Are you an international graduate student or are you taking this survey on behalf of a student?

☐ I am an international graduate student

☐ I am inquiring on behalf of a student. (I am a faculty member, staff member, etc.)

Are you a citizen of one of the following countries (exempted from some language requirements)? (List current as of July 2019.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Samoa</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>Gibraltar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
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<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>Belize</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (except Quebec)</td>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>Trinidad/Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia</td>
<td>Turks and Caicos Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ Yes

☐ No
Are you an international graduate student who has received a baccalaureate degree following four years of study at an accredited institution located in the U.S.?

- Yes
- No

Have you submitted (to the Office of Admissions) official test scores from a recognized oral English exam? e.g. TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, ELPE

- Yes
- No

Which test have you submitted scores from? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] TOEFL
- [ ] IELTS
- [ ] PTE
- [ ] ELPE

What was your highest TOEFL speaking section score?

- [ ] below 23
- [ ] 23-25
- [ ] 26 or higher

With a score between 23 and 25, you are Level 2 in English proficiency. You may hold a teaching position conditionally for one semester while complying with an individual improvement plan from the CTE-ELP. By the end of the semester, you must achieve a Level 1 score on a recognized oral language test (for example, a score of 80 or higher on the ELPE). Note that this does not guarantee you a teaching position. For more information, refer to [engps.tamu.edu/English-Language-Proficiency-Requirements](http://engps.tamu.edu/English-Language-Proficiency-Requirements). (Please note that the highest score on any test, not the most recent score, counts.)

We hope this has provided you with information about English proficiency status. Teaching assistants must meet other obligations as well, including attending a day-long training session, such as the TAI (Teaching Assistant Institute) or a departmental equivalent.

To begin participation in language training offered by CTE-ELP (which is open to graduate students of all levels of proficiency),
1. email ctc@tamu.edu
2. call 979-458-3966
3. register for an English Language Proficiency event at [crs.tamu.edu](http://crs.tamu.edu)
4. visit the CTE-ELP lab at LAAH 232 during normal business hours,
or
5. add your name to the [waitlist](http://waitlist) for CTE-ELP services.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at ctc@tamu.edu.
Appendix 4: Example linguistic diversity statement for syllabi

*The statement below was developed with a faculty member in the College of Architecture’s Department of Construction of Science for a stacked course where international graduate students worked closely with domestic undergraduate students. It was adapted for content and a more inclusive perspective from the University of Arizona’s Graduate College (https://grad.arizona.edu/funding/ga/english-speaking-proficiency-evaluation).

**Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Statement.** “Information, communication, and travel technology have produced a highly connected global society” (Vision 2020, Imperative 6). And in a global society, you need a global education. This is why in your career, you are likely to be dealing with people from all over the world. Construction Science is globalized at virtually every step in the process – from contract negotiations, to planning a project, to acquiring the raw materials, to construction. As such, intercultural communicative competence is essential for your professional success. Learning to accommodate to unfamiliar accents of English is a critical skill. Future colleagues might have an accent that is unfamiliar to you, just as you might have an accent that is unfamiliar to them. In this course you will work with fellow students who may, at first, be difficult to understand. But with more exposure, it will become easier, and you will gain vital skills in intercultural communication that will serve you throughout your career. In the meantime, remember that communication is a two-way street, and you have to do your share to improve the experience. Below are some strategies for dealing with fellow students who have an unfamiliar accent:

- Focus on what your classmates are saying by studying their verbal and nonverbal cues rather than superficial differences in accent.
- Ask for clarification or paraphrase what you have just heard, and do not be offended if someone asks you for clarification or to paraphrase what you have just said.
- Ask your classmates to write down words you do not understand.
- Ask your classmates to slow down. Talking fast is a sign that a speaker is fluent in a particular language. If your classmates are talking fast and you do not understand what they are saying, ask them to clarify what they have just said.
- Be aware of cultural differences. Adjusting to a new culture is difficult for anyone, so explain cultural references that may not be known by your classmates.
- Be cautious about using slang. If you use slang, be sure to explain the expression in other words as well.
- Be patient. The more you communicate with your classmates, the more you will understand each other. All classmates want to be understood, so ask questions, and seek clarification.
- Remember, your classmates are colleagues with the academic and/or work experience to face the rigors of this course. Please give them appropriate respect.
• Get to know your classmates and take this opportunity to ask questions about their culture and life experiences. The more you know and like your classmates, the easier it will be to be patient and even understand them.
• If you try these suggestions and are still having difficulties, discuss the problem with me.
Appendix 5: One-pager of Pedagogical Resources Online for ITAs

**Online Resources for Pedagogy (Teaching)**

### Resources for International Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching in America: A Guide for International Faculty (38-minute video)</td>
<td>“Insights from more than 20 experienced international faculty members and teaching assistants at Harvard... topics including breaking down cultural barriers, dealing with language problems, keeping discussions lively and responding to student concerns.”</td>
<td><a href="https://vimeo.com/101456757">https://vimeo.com/101456757</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIT Open Courseware for International TAs (Videos and handouts)</td>
<td>“The User-friendly Classroom video training series was created specifically for teaching assistants for whom English is a second language and the USA a second culture by A.C. Kemp, a lecturer in MIT Global Studies and Languages (GSL).”</td>
<td><a href="https://ocw.mit.edu/resources/res-21g-001-the-user-friendly-classroom-spring-2016/index.htm">https://ocw.mit.edu/resources/res-21g-001-the-user-friendly-classroom-spring-2016/index.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A View from Three International Teaching Assistants (7-minute video)</td>
<td>International teaching assistants at Carnegie Mellon University discuss cultural differences in higher education, and share their experiences adapting to a new environment.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.cmu.edu/icc/languages-training/videos/view-three-ita.html">https://www.cmu.edu/icc/languages-training/videos/view-three-ita.html</a></td>
</tr>
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### Resources for All Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>URL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K. Patricia Cross Academy Teaching Techniques (Videos)</td>
<td>Search by activity type, teaching problem addressed, or learning taxonomic dimension</td>
<td><a href="https://kpcrossacademy.org/videos/">https://kpcrossacademy.org/videos/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide to Getting Started with Active Learning (Interactive guide)</td>
<td>By TAMU’s Center for Teaching Excellence. List of numerous activities that can be integrated into university teaching to make learning more active.</td>
<td><a href="http://cte.tamu.edu/CTE/media/">http://cte.tamu.edu/CTE/media/</a> Images/2017-04-20-getting-started-w-active-learning-guide_1.pdf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where’s the evidence that active learning works?” (Article)</td>
<td>By Joel Michael. “Employment of student-centered, active learning pedagogy, is now well supported by evidence.” This article presents the evidence and results of active learning in a convincing manner.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.queensu.ca/teachingandlearning/modules/active/documen">http://www.queensu.ca/teachingandlearning/modules/active/documen</a> ts/Where%20there%20evidence%20that%20active%20learning%20work s.pdf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloom’s Taxonomy, explained by Vanderbilt’s Center for Teaching (Article)</td>
<td><em>Taxonomy of Educational Objectives</em> by Benjamin Bloom et al has had a lasting impact on U.S. educational philosophy. The taxonomy of skills and abilities moves upward from simple to complex.</td>
<td><a href="https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/bloomstaxonomy/">https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/bloomstaxonomy/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised: 2/25/2020 bc & gp
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poll Everywhere used for comprehension checks (Advertisement)</th>
<th>“Dr. Yan Tang, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, uses student interaction and constant feedback drive learning in engineering.”</th>
<th><a href="https://vimeo.com/153818155">https://vimeo.com/153818155</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observe an Expert Leading a Discussion (Article and 30-minute video)</td>
<td>“Watch this Harvard professor [Chris Christensen] lead a discussion like a pro” from Teaching and Learning in Higher Ed</td>
<td><a href="https://teachingandlearninginhighered.org/2018/08/30/watch-this-harvard-professor-lead-discussion-like-a-pro/">https://teachingandlearninginhighered.org/2018/08/30/watch-this-harvard-professor-lead-discussion-like-a-pro/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Challenging Student Behavior (Video vignettes)</td>
<td>Watch each scenario (there are 12) and consider how you as an instructor would respond. From AE3 Training by Engineering Illinois.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1zoZ00HqU0&amp;list=PLFk5iy5C9fA_J17b1_3oxCL3HiuokQ8r">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1zoZ00HqU0&amp;list=PLFk5iy5C9fA_J17b1_3oxCL3HiuokQ8r</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering GSIs Demonstrating Elements of Lesson Planning (Videos)</td>
<td>At some U.S. universities, TAs are called GSIs (Graduate Student Instructors). From MICHIGAN ENGINEERING Center for Research on Learning and Teaching in Engineering.</td>
<td><a href="https://crite.engin.umich.edu/resourc/ps-videos/">https://crite.engin.umich.edu/resourc/ps-videos/</a></td>
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Appendix 6: Email announcing virtual services

Howdy!

The Center for Teaching Excellence’s English Language Proficiency (ELP) Program is happy to announce a number of exciting opportunities that are available to you and accessible from the comfort and security of your own home (or wherever you may be working).

Virtual language lab
Although our physical language lab space will remain closed for the foreseeable future, our Virtual Lab remains open. This lab features videos about helpful tools and techniques for practicing your speaking and listening skills, as well as self-guided exercises produced by the ELP program. To begin using the Virtual Lab, visit the [CTE-English Language Proficiency Virtual Lab](mailto:VirtualLab@tamu.edu) and request access using your TAMU credentials. New exercises and content will be added regularly, so continue checking for more activities and resources.

Free pronunciation software
The CTE-ELP is excited to announce that visitors to our Virtual Lab may also request free, temporary access to one of two outstanding programs designed for rehearsing accurate pronunciation of North American English.

- [NativeAccent 4 by Carnegie Speech](https://www.nativescript.org) retails for $300 per license, but for a short time the CTE-ELP program has been granted permission to issue temporary licenses to Texas A&M students at no cost. These licenses will allow users to access the entire suite of over 100 pronunciation exercises and receive immediate feedback on the accuracy of their North American English pronunciation. Users will have access to the full range of features available on both the web-based and mobile software until July 31st, 2020 - just in time for those seeking language certification to be a Graduate Assistant - Teaching for Fall 2020.
- [BlueCanoe Learning](http://bluecanoellc.com) is a user-friendly mobile app, which uses games and activities to promote clear pronunciation of vowel sounds and words. The Color Vowel® System, combined with leading-edge speech recognition and machine-learning technology, create a virtual ESL teacher on your mobile phone. The CTE-ELP program has been given a free subscription through June 30, 2020.

To request either software, go to the [CTE-ELP Virtual Lab](mailto:VirtualLab@tamu.edu) and open the document “Request a free license for pronunciation software here.” To be granted access to either of these apps, requests must be made before May 16th.

Ongoing activities led by CTE-ELP staff
Workshops, conversation circles, and private consultations continue via the [Zoom virtual conferencing platform](https://zoom.us). The process of booking an appointment or registering for a session remains the same as before social distancing measures:

- Register via [ERS](http://ers.tamu.edu) for group activities
  - [Lunchtime Conversation Circle](http://ers.tamu.edu) meeting twice weekly (Tuesdays 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM & Wednesdays 12:00 - 1:00 PM). Looking for an opportunity to practice
English speaking and listening, discuss American culture and other cultures, and talk with a diverse group of people. Join this casual conversation during lunchtime, hosted by an undergraduate student worker from the Center for Teaching Excellence.

- Register via SWAN for one-on-one consultations (priority goes to current instructors; email cte@tamu.edu for access)

**Upcoming activities**
The ELP will continue its virtual services throughout the summer to include:

- **Conversation Partnerships** meeting weekly for five weeks each during Summer I and Summer II. International students will be paired up with English-dominant American undergraduates to have weekly, hour-long meetings to practice speaking in casual, informal environments. Topics will be provided to facilitate conversation and intercultural communication. These meetings will be conducted via video chat. To request a partner, please complete this form.
- **Lunchtime Conversation Circle** meeting twice weekly (Tuesdays 12 - 1 PM & Wednesdays 12 - 1 PM) (see description above)
- **ELP for Instructors Practice Group** meeting twice weekly for five weeks during Summer I. This is an interactive workshop for teaching assistants (and aspiring teaching assistants) emphasizing pronunciation, functional vocabulary, and the culture of the American college classroom. It is a series of 10 lessons led by a consultant and, while we recommend that participants attend all 10 sessions, participation in all sessions is not required. The attached flyer provides details about each session.

After booking an appointment or registering, you will receive a calendar request via email with a link to connect to the Zoom meeting at the scheduled day and time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact us at cte@tamu.edu.
We thank you for your patience as we make this transition.

**English Language Proficiency Team**
Center for Teaching Excellence, Dean of Faculties | Texas A&M University

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